



Volume 75 Issue 8

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President's Message

Communicating into the future

Several years ago, your Board of Directors decided to make our organization younger and more diverse, both ideologically and demographically. In part, we wanted to access the talents and insights of people born after the baby boom generation. That decision is now paying real and important dividends.

Our new Communications Committee is one example. Originally, we aimed to have greater visibility and impact on local public policy. Fortuitously, we also hit that other goal when one of our younger members, Katie Kelly, agreed to chair and recruited very talented professional writers and marketing experts to help.

The committee's first finding was that our social media, website, and email communications need to be reviewed. Turnover of volunteers who generously managed these platforms in the past led us to consider new ways to move forward.

Questions include: Is the process of sending information from committees to social media, website, email, and newsletter efficient? Do we have a consistent voice as an organization? What are our priorities and strategic goals? Are we actually reaching who we want to reach? Are we communicating consistently enough to get views, but not so much as to overwhelm the audience? Is our process sustainable past changing membership and volunteers?

It's a lot. The transition won't happen overnight, but the committee has been working diligently. This summer, local company Central States Media is conducting an audit of our website, including our current navigation, information, and analytics. A report and recommendations will be provided in the coming days.

Change is hard and this has been uncomfortable for some members. We should all respect and appreciate what was done in the past. But technology and, indeed, the way the world works continues to change. We must evolve and adapt accordingly. Fortunately, we have members with the talents, skills, and desire to do exactly that. Don't you just love it when a plan comes together!!

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., Aug. 8: LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom

5:30-7 p.m. Wed., Aug. 17: Drinks & Dialogue

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: Aug. 17

Voting rights and responsibilities are taught at home — and at school.

Barbara Pierce, Marketing Communications Specialist for Peoria Public Schools, will discuss ways PPS intersects with LWVGP goals at the August Drinks & Dialogue. The event takes place from 6 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 17, at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen Ave. in Peoria. Social time starts at 5:30 p.m.

Among the topics Ms. Pierce will address: Engaging 18-year-old students to become election judges; Senate Bill 825, which requires high schools to provide voter registration information to students and requires high schools to allow non-partisan voter registration activities on site; and the new school calendar.

As always, the event is free and the public is invited.

———— Cathy Molchin, D&D Chair

MEMBERSHIP

The heat let up and Mother Nature sent a nice breeze as nearly 50 members gathered at Oliver's Pub and Pizza on Willow Knolls Road on July 20, for networking (fun), food and drink! What a lovely evening and thanks to all who helped with arrangements and to all who came.

We have 98 paid members for 2022-23. Our focus now is to contact those who have not renewed membership. If you happen to be one of those who have not renewed, dues can be paid at any time by going online to www.lwvgp.org and clicking the "Join Us" link. Levels of membership are described. You select the level of support you want to provide the League and use your credit card to complete the transaction. To avoid a phone call, please renew NOW! Thanks.

If you have a friend or colleague who is a prospective member – be sure to invite them to join. Our goal is 165 members this year!

Remember this is a national election year and we need you to be involved in our local League. We will be conducting candidate forums and participating in a variety of ways to support the election. We are committed to having representatives from the Committee at every live event during the coming year – armed with forms, brochures and other membership materials.

If you are available to help, please contact me via text or email 635-1872 or jandeissler77@gmail.com. See you at Drinks & Dialogue on August 17!

———— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services is working on candidate forums for state and federal races:

17th Congressional District — King (R) v Sorenson (D)

92nd Illinois House – Watt (R) v Gordon-Booth (D)

46th Illinois Senate – Anderson (R) v. Koehler (D)

These forums will be both in person and streamed. For the 17th Congressional race, we are partnering with the Leagues in McLean County, McDonough County, Kewanee, Rock Island, and Freeport. Equally important, we will again partner with WCBU, WGLT and other public radio stations in the district. This event will be in person, streamed and broadcast on the radio. This is similar to the partnership we had for the 17th Congressional Democratic primary race.

Additionally, we hope to do forums for the contested Peoria County Board races. Because of the geographical size of these districts, particularly those in the city limits, we will be combining two or three districts that are close to each other into a single forum as follows:

District 2 and 4

District 2 – Glass (R) v Coates (D)

District 4 – Johnson (R) v Bryant (D)

Districts 8, 10, and 11

District 8 – Hoerr (R) v Jones (D)

District 10 – Hoerr (R) v Reneau (D)

District 11 – Daley (R) v Droste (D)

Districts 13 and 15

District 13 – Ruhland (R) v Antonacci (D)

District 15 – Rieker (R) v Salazar-Zupancic (D)

Because of redistricting many people during the primary were unaware of what district they were in and were sometimes surprised because xyz person was not on their ballot. The easiest way to find your Illinois State Representative or Senate District is by going to <https://illinoisvoterguide.org>. To determine your Peoria county board district, go to <https://www.peoriacounty.gov/1195> to check the maps of the new districts. If you live in a county other than Peoria, please contact your county clerk for this information.

These forums will also be a combination of in person and streamed to our YouTube channel. Please watch future newsletters for dates, times, and locations.

Please consider becoming an election judge. All election officials need more judges. In Peoria County, contact the Peoria County Election Commission at 309-324-2300. In Tazewell County, contact the Tazewell County Clerk at 309-477-2264. In Woodford County, contact the Woodford County Clerk at 309-467-2822.

———— Roberta Parks, Voter Services Committee Chair

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Have you been following the weather lately? England just recorded its hottest day ever! Wildfires have been raging throughout France, Greece, Spain and Italy. Large parts of the American Southwest are on fire and St. Louis just had the worst rainstorm in its history — nine inches in a few hours in some places!

For years, climate scientists have been warning us that such scenarios would happen. Now their predictions are coming true.

It was supposedly Mark Twain who said, “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.” Well, that may have been true in Twain’s day, but it isn’t necessarily true today. We all can do something about the weather, at least to the extent that climate change impacts and is driving extremes of that weather.

The LWVGP is trying to do more than just talk about the weather: we’ve created a Climate Change Committee. You can do something, too, by joining that committee. Get more information at climate@lwvgp.org.

If you are unable to join, but want to help, there’s something else you can do that takes less time and effort, but is extremely important nonetheless. The committee will soon be contacting units of local government to assess what actions they are currently taking, and to encourage them in the efforts to address climate change. Local government officials will be more receptive to that message when the LWVGP contacts them if they think that their citizens want action on this issue – as polls show that more than 70% of Americans do.

So, while the idea is still fresh in your mind (right after you finish reading the other great information in the Voter), pick up your phone, or head to your tablet or computer. Call or write to an elected official. Tell them that you are concerned about climate change and that you want them to do more to combat it. If all of 130+ members of the LWVGP made just that one phone call, it would have an impact on how the challenges of climate change are being addressed in central Illinois. And, of course, you don’t have to stop at just one call. This is one more area where: “the more, the merrier.”

Put Mark Twain to shame: show him that, yes, people can do more than just talk about the weather. The world is waiting for you to do your part. Don’t let Mother Earth and future generations down when they – and we — need your help.

Please contact me at LWVGPGreen@gmail.com.

———— John Brady, Climate Change Chair

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: June 28

Mayor Rita Ali presented an overview of the community-based Safety Network group's efforts over past year with focus on reduction of gun violence. Assistant Peoria Police Chief Bradley Dixon reported on recent decline in shootings as a result of factors, such as partnerships with county and state police, technology-based programs, and license plate readers. Chief Eric Eschevarria spoke of other cities reaching out to ask what Peoria Police are doing to get these results, such as department policies, TIP 411, and other efforts.

Several councilors were concerned regarding Safety Network meetings not following Open Meeting Act, focus by Safety Network to single out the Cure Violence Program and why other violence reduction programs had not been presented to the Council. City Manager Patrick Urich reported the city has approximately \$7 million in funding for violence reduction. Councilor Sid Ruckriegel spoke of need to make sure funds used appropriately, as well as identifying any restrictions set by state and need to be transparent in how funds used.

A presentation was made by Carolyn Vasquez, community advocate from Project Amani, on violence reduction program focused on youth in Chicago area. In addition, Marc Porch gave an overview of the Performing Open Hearts and Violence Interrupters program.

The council met July 9, 2022 for closed session to try to get consensus on transparency and moving forward on prevention of gun violence in our community. Twelve citizens addressed the council at citizens opportunity to comment.

For more detail of discussion on these issues and other business, go to www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings to view video and meeting minutes.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: July 12

Council voted to hold a July 19 policy session on violence reduction funding. This would give council members opportunity to identify available state and federal funding available, as well as timeline for funds to be allocated to budget and dates funds must be used.

Purchase of fire apparatus from Pierce Macqueen to replace aging equipment. Lead time to purchase has gone from 8-9 months to 26-27 months; council approved \$3.2 million purchase, paid on receipt of equipment in 2024. This is part of five-year equipment/maintenance schedule to control fleet costs.

Finance Director Cratty gave budget presentation requested by Councilor Denis Cyr on drivers for revenue growth, inflation and planning for 2023 budget in

light of recession. General fund target balance for city is 25%, currently at 24%. Discussion included impact of online sales tax revenues, as well as the City's unfunded pension liability. Director Cratty reviewed the 2023 Revised Budget timeline; goal to present final budget for approval November 15, 2022.

Note: Special policy session July 19 to review violence reduction funding was held. Seven members of community spoke during citizens opportunity to comment.

As always, you can view video, minutes and agendas on www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings.

———— Connie Romanus, Observer

COUNTY BOARD: July 14

The Peoria County Board met July 14th with all present but Member Brandy Bryant.

Proclamations were read recognizing IVC student, David Russell, 2A discus state championship, and the Richwoods Marine Corp Jr. ROTC program for their 1st (women) and 3rd (men) placements in the national physical fitness competition.

The Consent Agenda passed 17-0. Items included:

- o Professional services agreement to help resolve the \$1.2M in outstanding Medicaid balances related to Heddington Oaks.
- o Agreements for the County to provide police services for the Greater Peoria airport and Dunlap Schools.
- o Engineering and architecture services for renovation of the IT and public defenders departments in the County Courthouse.
- o Improvements to Cedar Hills Drive, Glen Ave, and Brimfield Jubilee Road.
- o Evaluation services provided by ISU staff of the four Peoria County Problem-Solving Courts (DUI, Drug, Mental Health and Veterans).
- o Demolition of six unsafe structures in unincorporated Peoria County

The regular agenda consisted of few items. All were approved following questions and discussion.

o The appointment of Christopher Watkins as Peoria County Sheriff. This follows the recent resignation of the former sheriff, and Mr. Watkins victory in the June 28 primary since he had no Democratic opponent.

o Project Labor Agreement for the construction of a new Health and Human Services Campus.

o 2023 Adult Redeploy Grant Agreement.

o Authorization of bond issuance related to the debt owed on the former Heddington Oaks facility.

Items of note during Miscellaneous and Announcements:

- o Introduction of the Brooke Petty Sommerville as the new Deputy County Clerk.

- o Member Phil Salzer encouraged board members to attend the upcoming 73rd Heart of Illinois Fair.

You can link to the agenda and video here: [Agenda & Video](#)

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

ELECTION COMMISSION: July 12

Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners met July 12, 2022, with Commissioner Sandra Burke absent.

The biggest news to come out of this meeting was the resignation of long time Executive Director Tom Bride. He will be moving to Florida after 17 years as the director, first of the City of Peoria elections, then the combined city and county elections office.

Expenditures for primary election judges were approved for up to \$58,000 to cover judges for election day, early voting, and vote by mail. Runbeck Election Services was approved for printing for the November general election. They were chosen two years ago after an RFP, and gave excellent service. They will do a first mailing 40 days before the election. This will entail printing and mailing of at least 5,000 vote by mail ballots. That is too much for the office to handle in-house.

The day of the Board meeting was the last day that mail in ballots for the primary could be received. It was also the last day for challenges and acceptance of provisional ballots. Out of 1,000-2,000 mail in ballots, only two were not post-marked, but they were dated. Feedback from election judges was positive overall for the new voting system.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT: July 13

Every ten years the Peoria Park District is charged with changing the voting boundaries of the district.

Certain criteria must be met. These include the following: compact, contiguous, proportional (each Trustee represents an equal number of people), maintaining a majority of minority voters in the Southern district and respectful of geographic boundaries. A vote was taken to approve one of the four redistricting maps devel-

oped by park district staff based on 2020 census data. A motion was made by Trustee Joyce Harant to approve map 2. The motion failed 2-5. A motion was then made by Trustee Alex Sierra to approve map 3. That motion was approved unanimously. All maps can be accessed on the PPD website, peoriaparks.org.

In new business, a report was given by Central States Media on their collaboration with the PPD marketing team. Trustee Tim Bertschy asked for clarification on how measurement of goals achieved with this particular marketing firm were being reported. Executive Director Emily Cahill indicated that information would be forthcoming at a future meeting.

Recognition was made of Carl Cannon with his retirement after 21 years with PPD. Originally hired as a Program Coordinator in 2001, Carl went on to found the Elite Program in 2006, becoming the Elite Youth Program Outreach Supervisor. The program is no longer under PPD jurisdiction, having become Elite Outreach, Inc. Motions were made and passed unanimously to transfer the car Carl used and donations designated for Elite directly to Elite Outreach, Inc.

All trustees were present in person for the meeting that was called to order at 6 p.m. and adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

———— Melanie Anderson, Observer



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

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**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2021-2022**

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