

President's Message

Successful Membership Social sets stage for volunteer opportunities

Thank you to the members who attended the recent Membership Social in July. We had a great turnout and time to visit with new and established members! We recognized 50-year League members Irene Pritzker, Fran Kepler,



and Mary Jane Crowell for their service to the League over the years. Although we did not have an award for members who traveled the farthest to come to this event, I want to recognize Franki Cunningham and Anissa Wanat who live in Moline and joined our League in the past year. They will be working on voter registration in Moline for the upcoming election.

Thanks to Teresa Koehler for planning this event!

If you are/were employed by a company that provides matching gift program, please consider that when updating your membership to the League.

League of Women Voters Convention 2024 UPDATE

The LWWUS Convention was held in June 24-30 this year with in-person and virtual options for attending. I opted to go the virtual route and was impressed

with the organization and quality of speakers and issues presented. The convention is held in Washington, D.C., in presidential election years. The Illinois delegation attended lobby day and met with Senator Richard Durbin to advocate for the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. Other legislative topics of interest that the judiciary committee had held hearings on were Supreme Court ethics, recusal, and the Transparency Act of 2023. Over 1,600 members were in attendance to elect leadership for the League, approve recommended program items, and approve budget for the current term. Celena Stewart is the new Chief Executive Officer and has served as the Senior Director of Advocacy and Litigation since 2018. LWV President is Diana Wynn and Vice President is Sania Irwin, Immediate Past President, and member of Illinois League.

Some of the Resolutions that passed for Program topics are establish D.C. Statehood, Convention on all forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW, One Person One Vote/Abolish Electoral College/National Popular Voter Interstate Compact, Equal Rights Amendment, Immigration, Voting Rights, as well as Ethics in Government.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO LWVIL

1. Position open for IL Voter Service co-chair to help coordinate IL Voter Guide and/or Vote 411.
2. Training for Observer Corps and Poll Watchers and training for Get-Out-The-Vote activities (GOTV).
3. The LWVIL Convention will be held in July 2025. Member needed to be on Committee to plan event in downstate area: location, date, program, etc. Event will be hybrid of in-person and virtual.
4. Issues and Advocacy Committee needs one or two local members to join Lobby Corps. This involves making an appointment and visiting lawmakers in Springfield one day a month during the Legislature's spring session. This will help to establish and maintain relationships with our Legislators. Training provided. Kathy Cortez is leading this effort.

These are all opportunities to get more involved with the League and promote issues LWVIL has prioritized. Contact Connie Romanus at cromanus1249@yahoo.com for more information.

Finally: Several leagues in central Illinois are being asked to help register voters on Wednesday, Aug. 14, at the State Fairgrounds in Springfield. Two hundred people will become citizens at a Naturalization Ceremony at 11 a.m. We hope to have four to five registrars help with this event that will be held in the Orr Building; we will organize a carpool for those that can attend. Mary Jane Crowell has sent out an email to her list of registrars. Members from McLean County, Champaign area and Springfield will be providing registrars as well.

————— Connie Romanus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

- Aug. 7:** First day to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot for November election
- 8:30 a.m. - noon Sat., Aug. 10:** Illinois State Assembly 2024 (in-person and virtual).
See details in LWV update in this newsletter
- 4 p.m. Mon., Aug. 12:** LWVGP Board meeting (via Zoom)
- 5:30 p.m., Weds., Aug. 21:** Drinks & Dialogue at Peoria Public Library North Branch
(note temporary location change and earlier time!)
- Noon and 7 p.m., Weds., Aug. 28:** GOTV Roundtable (virtual). Details in this newsletter
- 6 – 8 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 29 AND 9-10 a.m. Sat., Sept. 7:** Leadership Training (Aug. 29) and
Breakout Sessions (Sept. 7) conducted virtually. Details on both sessions below.
- 5:30 p.m. Tues., Sept. 10:** Rank Choice Voting forum at Peoria Heights Public Library
- 4:00 – 5:45 p.m. Thurs., Sept. 12:** Peoria Chapter ACLU program on voter suppression
at Peoria Public Library Downtown featuring ACLU's Ed Yohnka
- Tues., Sept. 17:** National Voter Registration Day promoted by LWVGP. Volunteers who are registrars
are needed, contact Piper Petrocelli (piperpetrocelli@gmail.com),
Eileen Steed (eileensteed@sbcglobal.net) or Rob Parks (robertamparks7513@gmail.com)

DRINKS AND DIALOGUE

Our next D & D event features a slightly different location, meaning a change to the “drinks” part of the equation.

We'll meet beginning at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 21, in the McKenzie Room at the Peoria Public Library – North Branch for a discussion of rank choice voting presented by Rebecca Williams from Fair Vote Illinois. This is a different start time for the discussion than our usual meetings and, being the library, drinks will not be available for purchase.

The rank choice voting question is of particular interest because a nonbinding resolution on the topic will be on the November ballot for residents living within Peoria Township, which covers all but a few portions of the city of Peoria.

KEY LWVIL MEMBER BULLETIN UPDATES

- **Plan ahead to attend Illinois State Assembly 2024 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 10.**

Open to all Illinois League members, the in-person / hybrid state assembly will focus on crucial actions all 43 local Leagues in Illinois can take in the coming months.

You may attend virtually or in person. The in-person location is Trinity Lutheran Church and School, 405 Rush St., Roselle, IL.

Items covered will include:

- Elections Task Force
- Rapid Response Plan
- How to Get Out the Vote with Smart Voter Data
- Misinformation and Disinformation
- League in Action
- LWVUS One Person One Vote Campaign

A full agenda will be available before the event. Register to attend (online or in person) at lwvil.org/assembly-2024

- **Recap on plenary sessions from LWV National Convention 2024**

Members adopted changes to bylaws that:

- Clarify the definition and purpose of “convention” and “council” and the makeup and role of delegates to each.
- Clarify the authority granted to emergency special council meetings.

Adopted changes to Positions and Program were:

- To retain all current LWVUS Positions in the areas of Representative Government, International Relations, Natural Resources and Social Policy
- To re-adopt the campaign for Making Democracy Work (MDW)
- To adopt a concurrence with LWV of Washington’s position on the Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy
- To approve an LWVUS study on the federal judiciary (failed: A motion to limit the study only to the U.S. Supreme Court)

Members also approved the recommended LWVUS budget.

- **GOTV Roundtable, Weds., Aug. 28, noon and 7 p.m. (virtual)**

Join LWVIL's voter services team for an open-ended discussion in which attendees can share ideas and plans for getting out the vote ahead of November's election.

[Register for the noon session.](#)

[Register for the 7:00 pm session.](#)

- **Leadership training (virtual) – 6-8 p.m. Thurs., Aug. 29, and breakout sessions 9-10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 7**

ENERGIZE: Empowerment Network for Engaging and Revitalized Growth, Inspiration, and a Zest for Excellence

LWVIL is re-introducing regular annual training for all local Leagues! This virtual event is open to all new and experienced leaders of Illinois local Leagues and MAS Units, as well as any interested members.

We will cover officer, board member, and committee expectations and responsibilities, with special breakout sessions for focused discussions. Topics include Issues and Advocacy, Voter Services, ChapterSpot, Membership Handbook, Yearly Calendar, Roster Management, and new structures on the horizon. We work best as we learn and share with each other!

This training is open to all League members. Registration for this training closes 24 hours in advance.

[Register to attend on August 29.](#)

[Register to attend a September 7 breakout session.](#)

LWV TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE 2024-25

Timeline	TOPIC/ACTION	OUTCOME / RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
July – September 2024	Complete DEI evaluation	Task Force
August Board meeting	Review member rights and responsibilities	Board approval. Share with members in September newsletter
Aug 2024 & Jan 2025	Per Member Payments due (PMP)	LWV will send invoices to Leagues
Sept-Oct 2024 *	Set up Stripe Account	LWV will direct Leagues on process
October 30, 2024	Approve By-laws changes	Board approval, Membership approval at special meeting. Jim, Hind and Connie reviewed current bylaws, draft template from LWVUS
October 2024	Security review LWVUS	LWVUS
Oct-2024	Reports and dashboard	LWVUS
November-Dec 2024	Chapter website	Training and implementation by LWV
Nov-Dec 2024 *	Training and Implementation ChapterSpot	LWVUS will set up
January 30 2025 *	Launch Chapterspot, new dues	Pay what you can: \$75 base. \$20 minimum Levels: \$150, \$250, \$500.
	Distribution Dues begins	Local –20%, State 47%, National 33%

* Steps all Leagues need to take action

GREENING OF PEORIA CONTINUES

The City of Peoria Department of Public Works Forestry Division was awarded a \$50,000 subgrant by The Morton Arboretum's Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) to improve its community tree canopy.

The competitive subgrant is among 17 provided to government entities through Inflation Reduction Act funding to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, administered by CRTI.

The four-year grants, which do not require matching funds, are available for communities that meet the federal requirements as disadvantaged. The funding can be used for projects that increase tree canopy, improve forest health, and create or enhance community forestry programs.

“As stewards of the City’s urban forestry and green spaces, the Public Works Forestry Division is deeply committed to contributing to the Morton Arboretum's vision of fostering greener and healthier communities where people and trees thrive together,” Forestry Program Supervisor Shawn Johnson said. “This grant will enhance the City’s tangible impact on its dedication to sustainability and community well-being through increased tree plantings throughout Peoria.”

With the grant, the Forestry Division plans to introduce a wide variety of trees in areas of the City where green spaces are scarce or limited. The grant will fund 117 trees to be planted in coordination with schools, community centers, and residents. These coordinated tree plantings will help foster awareness of the numerous benefits of urban forestry.

“Improving the distribution of trees and green spaces directly impacts the health and economic outcomes for communities,” said CRTI Director Zach Wirtz. “Projects like this improve quality of life and boost the urban tree canopy’s resilience to threats posed by climate change, pests and diseases.”

Funding support for this project was provided by the Inflation Reduction Act through the Urban and Community Forestry Programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the USDA Forest Service Eastern Region. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

———— Submitted by John Brady

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VOTER SERVICES

The Voter Service Committee is actively working on Voter Registration, Candidate Forums for the November election, Mock Election in our local High Schools and Get Out the Vote initiatives.



In June, the **Voter Registration team** registered 5 voters at the Peoria Police Summer Safe Zone Block Party, 6 voters at the Peoria Pride Family Cookout, 2 at the Carver Community Center, and 33 at the Naturalization Ceremony. We are awaiting results from the Freedom Fest - Southside Community Center, the Peoria Pride - Chiefs Game, and the Streets Belong to Me with the Peoria Park District. Members have been very active not only registering voters, but also increasing our visibility in the community. They are passing out information on signing up to be an election judge and early voting information.

The **Candidate Forum team** has reached out to the candidates for the State's Attorney race Robert Boucher and Jodi Hoos. The forum will be held at the North Branch of the Peoria Public Library (3001 W. Grand Parkway) in the McKenzie Room on Saturday, Sept. 28. The forum is scheduled for 11 a.m. to noon.

Regarding the Woodford County District races, we are looking at Eureka College for the venue. We are going to host two 90-minute forums: pairing the 105th House race with Woodford County District 1, and then pair Woodford districts 2 and 3 together. These two back-to-back forums will allow each pair their own time. More details to come.

The Peoria County Board districts 6 and 8 races will be paired with the Judge of the 10th Circuit Court for a 90-minute forum at the Peoria North Branch Library on Sept. 14. The judicial race will go first, followed by districts 6 and 8.

Our League will be partnering with the McClean County League on the IL Senate District 46, State House District 91, and U.S. House 17th District races. These forums will be broadcast live and be available for re-viewing on the YouTube and Facebook pages for both Leagues. Dates and times TBD.

The **Mock Elections** team will be confirming this month the dates/times for Mock Elections at Richwoods and Manual HS. More to come.

The **Get Out The Vote** team are awaiting the reports from Smart Data to refine the scope of the GOTV plan to reach out to inactive voters in Peoria for the upcoming election. We determined that voter turnouts in the Woodford and Tazewell counties were great enough that they do not warrant direct mail communication.

———— Eileen Steed, Voter Services Chair

MEMBERSHIP

We had an amazing turnout and a great time at the Membership Social event with almost 50 people attending. Several members mentioned that they enjoyed catching up with those they don't see very often.

Thanks to all who rejoined or joined for the first time. And, if you didn't get a chance to renew your membership, you can renew online at www.lwvgp.org or print a form from that website and mail it to the post office box listed.

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Thank you to the additional members who have joined in donating beyond the membership fee as Defenders of Democracy:

Eleanor Roosevelt Membership

Tim and Patricia Howard

Rita Kress

Carrie Chapman Catt Membership

Jan and Emil Deissler

Ida B Wells Membership

Sherry Hillman

Mary Matthews

Jackie Owen

Raymond Keithly

Connie Romanus

————— Theresa Koehler, Chairperson

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PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: July 11

The Peoria County Board held its July 11 meeting with all members present but Brandy Bryant, Brian Elsasser and Daniel Kelch.

Prior to regular business the board held a 40-minute policy discussion on the City/County Landfill #3 issue. Chairman James Dillon sought a board consensus to provide direction to county staff and legal representatives as negotiations with GFL continue. Peoria County, the City of Peoria and the Landfill Committee, which is appointed by those two entities, have a contract with GFL for the long-delayed construction of Landfill #3. This is an urgent issue since the current Landfill #2 is nearing the end of its usable life. The #3 site is permitted and is awaiting final EPA approval for construction to begin.

GFL has proposed to delay construction for 15 years and to construct a transfer station at a former PDC site near Pottstown. Waste would then be transported from the transfer station to a GFL-owned landfill near Hopedale in Tazewell County. The two options placed before the board were to hold GFL to the existing contract and begin construction once EPA approval is received, or to continue negotiations with GFL on the 15-year delay and transfer station use. Ten of the 15 members present spoke in favor of the existing contract, one in favor of the negotiation option, one abstained due to a business relationship with GFL, and three did not express an opinion. Chairman Dillon announced that insistence on the existing contract was the consensus view of the board. The City of Peoria and the Landfill Committee will form their own positions.

In regular business, the board unanimously approved zoning for two adjacent solar farms on Rt. 91 in Radnor Township. Both will have solar panels on approximately 28 acres of the 80-acre site. Combined the two farms should produce sufficient power for 2,200 homes. The board also approved a kennel and training facility in Hollis Township at the former RP Lumber site on U.S. Route 24.

The board also approved two engineering contracts with Midwest Engineering to undertake design work for the replacement of the Main Street steps of the county courthouse, and for courthouse façade repairs and cleaning. A five-year external auditing contract with Baker Tilly was approved with costs ranging from \$120K in

year one to \$149K in year five. Two collective bargaining agreements with deputies and lieutenants in the sheriff's office were approved along with equipment for the dental clinic within the new Health and Human Service building, and creation of a new facilities master plan covering the courthouse, juvenile detention center, Gift Ave. complex, PCAPS/PAWS, the Election Commission, and Emergency Management.

A proclamation recognized Mya Strahm for her second consecutive championship in the IHSA pole vault event and qualifying for the US Olympic Trials.

Link to the meeting [Agenda and packet](#) is here

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION: July 9

The Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners met on Tuesday, July 9. Most of the meeting was concerned with next year's budget. The Commission will need to vote on it at the August meeting, after which it will be forwarded to the Peoria County Board for its approval. The only major change from previous budgets would be a raise for temporary employees and election judges.

The following actions were all approved by the Board: All election judges on the 2024-26 appointment cycle list must be approved by the circuit court. The Runbeck contract will be in effect for two years and includes the first Vote by Mail mailing. That entails approximately 18,000 mailings on Sept. 26, and is too large for the Election Office to handle. New expenditures include collapsible storage crates for voting equipment.

Executive Director Elizabeth Gannon reported on changes to 2025 municipal election cycle. July 30 will be the first date for collection of signatures, with filings due between Oct. 21-28. Nov. 4, will be the last date to challenge signatures for the next election.

The Commission then went into executive session to discuss the purchase or lease of real property.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: June 25

Hearing was held regarding the submission of Grant Application to State of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for the Urban Shelter Grant Program. Grant applied for by city on behalf of Salvation Army and funded through DCEO, as well as funds from Salvation Army. This shelter will increase the beds available to house men and increase the capacity of beds for homeless in the area. No public comments were made. Grant submission approved.

Council members took action on following:

- Approved multiple appointments by Mayor Ali to various city committees and commissions.
- Received and filed first reading on ordinance amending unified development code related to ground-mounted solar energy devices which would be disallowed in front yards.
- Received and filed first reading on ordinance amending Unified Development Code related to Parking. Asst. Community Development Director Leah Allison reported the amendment would clean up language and clarify parking category. Both items will be voted on at the July 9 Council meeting.
- Deferred vote on approval of Class B liquor license for restaurant, Highly Flavored, until July 9 Council meeting so councilors could get additional information related to public safety.
- Received and filed communication from Kimberly Girardo proposing Peoria residents be allowed to raise chickens in their backyards. There were nine citizens that spoke in favor of the proposal, as well as four against. Some concerns were health measures, Peoria County Animal Protective Services capacity, lot size, flock size, spacing near neighbors, and capacity of city staff to gather information. Council voted to bring topic back in 30 days; no further action by staff at this time.
- Opportunity for citizens to address the council: 11 citizens spoke on various issues.
- Council adjourned for executive session 5ILCS 120/2(c)(11) pertaining to litigation. Adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Meeting agenda, minutes and video are available at:

<https://peoriagov.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingSchedule.aspx>

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: July 9

Meeting started on time at 6:00 P.M. with all members of the Council present. The consent agenda passed without discussion. Kimberly Richardson, Assistant City Manager, made a presentation regarding the City of Peoria's 2024-29 Strategic Plan. City staff will post information on goals, data points, budget and outcomes on the City of Peoria's website by Q1 2025 and update at regular intervals. The Council approved the plan draft in October 2023.

Finance Director Kyle Cratty presented month ending May 31, 2024, unaudited financial report. Overall revenue lags 8.3% due to federal funds not being received yet and expenses increasing 8.6%. Director Cratty anticipates the city will meet budget as planned for the year. He noted the revenue is skewed due to larger sources for revenue (state and local taxes) not being received to general fund until March/April. Councilor Denis Cyr asked Director Cratty to share with Councilors how city uses reserves to pay bills until anticipated funds are received.

In other business, Councilors deferred decision on liquor license for Highly Flavored restaurant until the August 13 meeting, to allow Councilor Chuck Grayeb to meet with constituents on concerns. Vote to defer passed with ten in favor and Councilor Bernice Gordon-Young voting against the motion.

City Manager Patrick Urich discussed communication with GFL Waste Management was on-going and would defer motion until Aug. 13 until further information is available on use of transfer station, additional services from Foth Engineering and other issues related to support for Landfill #2 and the future of Landfill #3. The City/County Landfill Committee's FY 2024 Budget will need to be amended, as well as be approved by both City Council and County Board.

Four citizens addressed the Council related to the conflict in Gaza.

The next meeting will be July 23 at 6:00 p.m.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

DUNLAP DISTRICT 323 SCHOOL BOARD: July 17

The regular school board meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. on July 17 with eight members present.

Public comments: concerns about the proposed \$8.5 million indoor athletic facility, especially about lack of a swimming pool, need for more baseball, softball facilities, and funding.

June 2024 Treasurer's Report and bill payment for \$4,395,442.78 was approved.

With an 8-0 vote the board passed a resolution for issue and sale of \$35,000,000 debt certificates for new Wilder Waite school. This does not require a referendum nor an increase in tax rates.

Superintendent Scott Dearman explained options for the proposed athletic facility. After lengthy discussion, the proposal for the \$8.5 million athletic training center was approved with a vote of 7-1.

AP Government & Politics & Psychology textbook proposals approved 8-0. Also approved resolution for health safety funds.

Public meeting closed at 7:37 p.m.

———— Dottie Strickler, Observer

GREATER PEORIA SANITARY DISTRICT: July 16

All board members were in attendance for the 9:30 a.m. meeting except assistant clerk John Kepple, who was traveling.

FY 24 Audit Presentation. The auditor presented the report which was based on the audit of the basic financial statement of GPSD for the year ending April 30, 2023. The auditor statement determined that there are no reportable issues and stated that "financial statement disclosures were neutral, consistent, and clear." The auditors reported no significant difficulties in dealing with the management and completing audit. No major changes were found necessary and one recommendation was given to strengthen the purchase order system. *The auditor discussion included current policy of capitalizing construction projects.*

Operating Reports (Finance, Administration, Operations, Engineering)

The financial report did not indicate outstanding issues. On a Year-to-Date basis, Total Operating Expenses are slightly lower than the budget at 89.7%; Scheduled Revenues are higher than budgeted by 5.6% and the total assets are higher than last year.

Consent Agenda Items discussions and approvals

Monthly invoices, Investment Committee and Water Shutoff on Delinquent Accounts reported to the Board of Trustees.

No outstanding issues with Monthly Invoices were presented. A reported increase of 1,400 past-due statements compared to last month have been mailed and the staff is monitoring these numbers. Water shutoffs as reported were approved unanimously for batches #236, #133 and #131.

Automation Project and SCADA are a focus of the Information Systems Supervisor. Quickbase software will be used in the Administration and operations departments.

Safety report showed that there were **zero** cases listed by OSHA. Significant safety trainings are conducted and planned.

Effluents reports were within the limits set by the EPA. One parameter (Effluent Fecal Coliform) exceeded the limit once during June. The limit fell to low levels afterwards.

Operations report showed the progress towards the 2024 maintenance goals and the general maintenance of the sewer systems. The progress is within GPSD plans.

One issue was reported due to vandalism of a manhole between Desoto Dr. and Fair Oaks Ct. in Bartonville. Crews assessed the damage and corrected the issue. Damage to nearby systems appeared minimal. GPSD brainstormed processes to reduce the potential the vulnerability of manholes for vandalism.

The Board of Trustees approved unanimously to Authorize Bond Payment: \$2,068,625.00 to Amalgamated Bank of Chicago

GPSD approved a bid by Synagro Central, LLC in the amount of \$221,524 for Digester cleaning. This bid was one of three received and considered. The funds for this project have been allotted in the 2025 budget.

Action Item(s):

The Exec Board approved unanimously the consolidation and utility easement projects as given in the presented documents.

Executive Session: 5 ILCS 120/2.06(d), Reviewed Minutes of Closed Meetings and approved the Release of Minutes of Executive Sessions.

No attendees from the public beyond the League observer were present.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 am.

Investment Committee Meeting: The report by GPSD accounting indicated plans to reinvest \$1.5 million due to favorable market conditions. This ensures the current economic conditions are used to support the investing strategy of GPSD

————— Hind Abi-Akar, Observer



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

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League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors 2024-25

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