

President's Message

Renewed focus on DEI policies

Hopefully we are all enjoying a break from the severe heat and able to experience some cooler weather (in the 80s!). It's hard to believe Labor Day is just a few days away! The LWV of Greater Peoria Membership Committee has been busy updating the member roster, as well as email list for new members. Voter Services Committee is planning several opportunities for voter registration and will be looking to engage registrars to help with this.

The LWVUS is asking local leagues to review their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies and look at how this is used in program planning, recruitment and other aspects of the League. Our Board members will be completing a self-evaluation on how we have incorporated our DEI policy and practices. In addition, LWVIL is putting together a focus group that is led by Diane Hodges; one of our members, Mollie Bright, will be participating. Board member Andy Diaz will also be offering some insight to this group. Our League was recognized because of the diversity we have in gender, as well as race and ethnicity. Thank you to all our members who have brought a friend to our recent social or Drinks and Dialogue to see if the League is a good fit for them. I will be sharing take-aways from the DEI self-evaluation and focus group, as well as any changes for implementation by the Board.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY of the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER PEORIA

Section 1. The LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER PEORIA is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

Section 2. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age,

generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity. (Adopted 07/13/2020)

————— Connie Romanus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

10 a.m. – noon Sat., Sept. 9 (virtual): Observer Corps Training – more info below
4 p.m. Mon., Sept. 11: LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom.
Sept. 19: National Voter Registration Day – more info below
5:30 p.m. (social), 6-7 p.m. (program), Wed. Sept. 20: Drinks and Dialogue at Lariat Steakhouse

UPCOMING EVENTS: DRINKS & DIALOGUE

Drinks & Dialogue is on quite a roll. After a terrific program in July about the work of the Regional Superintendent of Schools, in August we heard from ICC's Board of Trustees Chair Gale Thetford and President Shelia Quirk-Bailey.

Five of the main takeaways from their presentation were:

1. While not everyone needs a 4-year degree, almost everyone who wants to earn a good living needs some sort of post-high-school, skills-related credential
2. For our community to prosper, 60 percent of our workforce needs a post-high-school credential
3. ICC is affordable and is committed to helping students with financial assistance.
4. ICC needs help finding additional faculty and people willing to serve as mentors for students.



5. Spreading the word about what ICC has to offer is an ongoing need and challenge.

ICC is still bouncing back from the COVID shutdowns, and it was encouraging to hear about the progress they are making. It is another example of something I learned long ago: **Leadership Matters**. Special thanks to Gale for her help arranging an excellent program.



On Sept. 20, we will shift away from education as a topic and hear from Chris Setti. Chris is the CEO of the Greater Peoria Economic Development Council. I have asked him to tell us about the region's current and future economic prospects.

D&D seems to be increasingly popular based on the growing attendance of our members. Please try to join us again at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen for the 5:30 social time and our program starting at 6:00.

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VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services is back at it after a month off! Since candidates can begin passing petitions this month to be on the primary ballot in March 2024, we are already identifying potential races in which we will want to do a forum. We know that there will be some uncontested races, but we want to be prepared!

We also had the amazing opportunity to register newly naturalized citizens on Aug. 18 at the Peoria Public Library downtown. The Honorable Jonathan Hawley swore in 89 people from 32 different countries around the world ... from Barbados to Yemen! And League members had the opportunity to register 47 of them to vote. We also passed out mail-in voter registration forms and cards with information about how to register online to other newly minted US citizens.

We will be participating in National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 19. We are currently arranging several places where we will have volunteers available to register individuals during that week and the next. We will be at Quest Charter Academy High School on Sept. 19 and at Neighborhood House on Sept. 28. We are working on scheduling more opportunities.

———— Rob Parks and Eileen Steed, Voter Services Co-chairs

MEMBERSHIP

Happy fall – well, almost! Let's hope the temperature moderates a bit in the next week or so.

Our membership currently is 110 – including new and renewed memberships. We continue to gain new members – some from the summer social and others who have heard about us. This should be a good year for recruitment because of the upcoming elections, and the League will be hosting a number of candidate forums. This will also be addressed by Voter Services, but hear it twice. We are limited in the forums we can do because we need more volunteers to step up.

The Membership Committee met on Aug. 25. The agenda was long and included what we as a committee and you as members need to do to help us grow. Beth Jensen is new to the committee, but she has volunteered to recruit especially younger members – but if you have a friend interested in joining, age is not a limiting factor. Beth will make the contact if you'd give her your information.

Theresa Koehler is doing the Membership Data Base. Currently the committee is looking at inactive members who might rejoin if invited. If your information changes, please let her know.

As we head into a season of uncertainty in the political sphere, accurate information is invaluable. Although the League is nonpartisan, factual reports are a part of what we do. Visit our website or attend a meeting to learn more about what is happening.

Please come along with us and help us grow. Last year ended with 150 members. We can increase that number significantly if we work together. Remember “Democracy is Not a Spectator Sport.”

————— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

COMMUNICATION

If you are a Facebook user, be sure to check the [LWV Greater Peoria Facebook page](#) and like us and share events to help our visibility. We need 3-4 members to help review our website, as well.

Jan Deissler has identified some updates for Members pages of our website; Katie Jordan is our go-to person for updating website.

For more information, contact: cromanus1249@yahoo.com

CO2 PIPELINE UPDATE

- Follow Central Illinois Healthy Community Alliance for news and updates on Facebook
- Get your CO2 Questions answered: Sept. 14 at 7:00 P.M., virtual meeting on Zoom, Register after Sept. 1 at <https://noillinoisco2pipelines.org>
- Above website is good source for information on CO2 pipeline proposal
- Contact your state legislators and let them know you are concerned and want a moratorium until safety standards in place, such as HB3319 and SB2421.
- Consider supporting Citizens Against Predatory Pipelines, a legal intervention group that is fighting the Wolf/ADM pipeline. Contact is: info@capp-illinois.org
- Follow Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) Docket No. 23-0475

LWVIL GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION STUDY

Please consider volunteering to help with the Gun Violence Prevention position study. Interested members should email issues@lwvil.org.

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OBSERVER CORPS

We have several League members who will be participating in Observer Corps Training on Sept. 9. This program trains members who are interested in observing local governmental bodies' board meetings and reporting on them, such as the reports below.

This promotes transparency in government and provides information on actions taken by the governing body. With a decline in reporters and local press coverage, this is an important service to our members and the community.

Our League shares our reports with The Community Word, as well as The Tazewell Chronicle and the Weekly Post in western Peoria County.

If you are interested, and have not reached out, contact cromanus1249@yahoo.com

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: Aug. 10

Peoria County Board held its Aug. 10 regular meeting with all members present.

The board unanimously approved a new strategic plan replacing the previous one passed in 2016. Five key priority areas were identified:

- Infrastructure Maintenance and Improvements
- Financial Stability
- Regional and Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Workforce and Organizational Development
- Community Investment, communication and Marketing

A high-priority goal is prioritization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that must be committed by the end of 2025 and spent by the end of 2026. The new Health and Human Services campus, and significant capital improvement and maintenance projects at the jail, courthouse and other county-owned facilities will account for the majority of those funds. County workforce development and retention activities were also identified as high priorities given that 10% of county positions are vacant at any given time.

The strategic plan can be [found here](#).

In regular business the board approved a zoning request in Hallock Township and two outstanding bids for work at the new Health and Human Service campus. Demolition of the prior Health Department building on Sheridan Road is underway.

A proclamation was read recognizing the 40th anniversary of the Wheels O' Time Museum in north Peoria.

Among items approved unanimously on the Consent Agenda were:

- Writing off more than \$2 million in uncollectable Heddington Oaks accounts receivable as bad debt.
- Tuck pointing and other structural work at the county jail over the next three years.
- Re-roofing work at the juvenile detention center and the county jail.

Links to the meeting agenda and video are here: [Agenda](#) & [Video](#)

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION: Annual Meeting, Aug. 15

The Annual Meeting of the Peoria County Election Commission was held on Tuesday, August 15, 2023. It began with a re-swearing in of commissioners and election of officers. All of last year's officers were re-elected. All public comments addressed the use of pre-paid envelopes for vote by mail. Asking voters to provide their own stamps affects people overseas, including the military, and people who do not have the ability to go out to buy stamps. All speakers wanted the Commission to reinstate pre-paid envelopes.

The Commission approved the budget request that was reviewed last month. It will be sent to the County Board. Several voting precincts were moved because of comments by voters, election workers, or the locations. A bid was also accepted for voter maintenance mass mailing. The federal government requires that voter registration cards be sent every two years in order to maintain clean voter lists.

The Board also accepted recommendations from the Peoria Police Department and County Sheriff to improve security at the election office. These include glass at the front counter, Safety Shield glass added to exterior windows and doors, a panic button, and badge entry to the door leading behind the counter.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: July 25

The Councilors approved consent agenda without discussion. Some of highlights approved:

- Amended rules of City Council.
- Amended municipal code to add language for withdrawing site for liquor license before Council consideration.
- Amended municipal code adding language to withdraw proposed zoning change before Council consideration.
- Appointments to various city boards.

Terra Engineering representatives George Reed and Kevin Graham presented overview of Riverfront Plan to council. This plan has been in development since 2017

with demolition of Riverfront Village structures. Input received from Citizens Advisory Board and Council members. (See details <https://peoriail.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>)

Amended East Village Growth Cell Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Economic Development Advisory Committee Charter to update membership representation after 2020 census redistricting and modify plan. Councilor Tim Riggensbach highlighted some of the success of East Bluff TIF area over past ten years: OSF Jump Trading Center and OSF Cancer Treatment Center, Heartland Health, updates to Wisconsin and Nebraska Streets that include new sidewalks and paving, with lighting on Nebraska to be done this year. In addition, TIF has generated \$450,000 for residential updates to homes in 2022, new construction of eight homes by Habitat for Humanity, eight duplexes and six new homes using funds from state grant. In addition, Peoria Opportunities Foundation has built 32 new homes.

Peoria City Council meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of month at 6:00 p.m. Watch on cable channel 22, or listen on WCBU radio.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: Aug. 8

Consent agenda approved without discussion. Presentation was given by executive director Dr. Mae Gilliland Wright on Arts Partners of Central IL annual report and impact arts have made in Peoria. Grant received from IL Arts Council for \$10,000 that will be used for K-12 programs for students, as well as individual artists. Upcoming event Ignite Peoria will be held Aug. 12 at Peoria Civic Center with something for all ages.

Council approved the following:

- Sign-on bonus as recruitment tool for experienced EMTs and paramedics who are certified in state of IL; \$2,500 for EMT Basic, and \$10,000 sign-on bonus for paramedics. Bonus will be given 50% upon hire and remainder at end of first year of employment. This will result in savings for training expense for Peoria Fire Department.
- Comprehensive plan for Peoria Riverfront development between Murray Baker and Bob Michel bridges that will include boat marina, dog park, family activities, fitness, new fountain, festival area with bandshell and stage. Budget for project is \$26 million; funding will be mix of public and private

dollars. City Manager Patrick Urich mentioned discussion with state Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth regarding release of \$15 million in previously approved state funds for project.

- Deferred request from Chief of Police and Director of Public Works on traffic calming program to Aug. 22 meeting.

There were no citizens requests to speak to the Council.

The Council will hold special meetings for Strategic Planning on Aug. 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Twin Towers, Room 420, and, if needed, will reconvene from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the same location Aug. 10. (Note: The second meeting was not needed.)

Agendas and prior meeting minutes available at www.peoriagov.org/civicweb/portal/meetinginformation.aspx

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: Aug. 22

Annual audit of Town of City of Peoria was presented by Adam Pulley, Auditor, CliftonLarsonAllen. Audit unmodified or clean, with two findings recommended. The two recommendations are how bank reconciliations reviewed and approved and how journal entries reviewed and approved. Mr. Pulley stated these are not unusual findings with small offices and have been noted in past. The Township Clerk, Stephanie Tarr, reviews journal entries made by bookkeeper. Bank reconciliations are also done by Township Clerk and reviewed by her Assistant. Corporation Council for Township, John Redlingshafer, will make recommendation on these items going forward.

Consent agenda approved by Council without any item pulled for discussion.

Finance Director Kyle Craddy presented month-end June 2023 financial report. Revenue slightly below anticipated revenue due to lag in sales tax recognition. Revenue \$9.8 million year over year. Civic Center debt will come off books in August. Councilor Cyr thanked Director Craddy for explanation and availability to discuss aspects of budget. The Council will begin budget sessions for 2024 soon.

Andrea Klopfenstein, Deputy Director of Public Works and City Engineer, gave presentation on traffic calming program. Focus is on education, enforcement, physical measures to reduce speeding and provide safety for all including pedestrians, bike riders, and vehicles.

At Citizens opportunity to address council, two citizens spoke regarding missing person Alexis Camry Scott, who disappeared in 2017.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

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League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2023-2024

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