



Volume 77 Issue 9

September 2024

President's Message

Make your plan now for voting – and for our League election activities

As we celebrate Labor Day on Sept. 2, this is a time to recognize our nation's labor force and continue to fight for justice and equality for all persons. As a grass roots organization, the League of Women Voters continues to be non-partisan, independent group of persons supporting issues that are important to our local and national members.

As we are closing in on the November election, our League members have been tirelessly working on planning candidate forums to educate voters on candidates' views locally, registering voters at numerous public events and planning postcard efforts to get out the vote in low-turnout areas of our communities.

Watch for our message promoting early voting on the Peoria Public Schools Stadium electronic sign. We will also be participating in National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 17, at Illinois Central College, Bradley University and Peoria Lincoln Branch Library.

And most importantly, have your plan to vote and get to know the candidates that will represent you and your values! Early voting begins Sept. 26, 2024.

———— Connie Romanus, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

- 4 p.m. Mon., Sept. 9:** LWVGP Board meeting (via Zoom)
- 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Tues., Sept. 10:** Rank Choice Voting forum at Peoria Heights Public Library presented by Rebecca Williams, Fair Vote IL
- 4:00 – 5:45 p.m. Thurs., Sept. 12:** Peoria Chapter ACLU program on voter suppression “Let People Vote” at Peoria Public Library Downtown, lower level
- 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Sat., Sept. 14:** Candidate Forum, Judge of Circuit Court Peoria 10th Circuit & Peoria County Board Districts 6 and 8, Peoria North Branch Library
- Tues., Sept. 17:** National Voter Registration Day
- 6:00 – 7:00 p.m., Tues., Sept. 24:** Peoria NAACP presentation of documentary “The Right to Read” at Peoria Public Library Downtown
- 11 a.m. – noon, Sat., Sept. 28:** Candidate forum Peoria County State’s Attorney at Peoria North Branch Library

DRINKS AND DIALOGUE

Drinks & Dialogue will be on hiatus during September, as we’re encouraging everyone to make time to attend candidate forums throughout the month.

Our next D & D event will be Oct. 16.

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VOTER SERVICES

Voter Registration is going great guns thanks to Voter Services Committee member Piper Petrocelli. She is getting the LWVGP everywhere. So far this summer we have registered over 100 voters at the following places:

- Summer Safety Zone Block Party (twice)
- Peoria Proud Family Cookout
- Juneteenth Celebration
- Streets Belong to Me (three times)
- Peoria Proud Chiefs Game
- RiverCity Pride Fest
- RiverCity Gospel Fest
- RiverCity Soul Fest
- Peoria Riverfront Market (twice)
- Springfield Naturalization Ceremony (assist the Springfield LWV)
- Peoria Grown
- Pekin Pride Picnic

Remaining locations in August and September include:

- Illinois Central College Activities Day
- JOLT Medical Clinic
- EP!C (twice)
- Neighborhood House Food Pantry (twice)
- National Voter Registration Day Activities
 - Illinois Central College
 - Lincoln Branch Library
- Phoenix House
- Naturalization Ceremony

We now have people calling us to schedule voter registration drives! This is far in excess of what we have done in the past few years. But it takes a lot of person power to do this. If you are a deputy registrar in any county in Illinois and you want to help with effort (even the places we have scheduled after the VOTER comes out in early September, please reach out to Piper Petrocelli at 309-512-3808.

Successful Grant Application

The LWVGP is a National Voter Registration Day Partner and as such, we were eligible to apply for a grant for NVRD activities. We applied for up to \$500 to purchase a canopy tent, a portable table, a tablecloth with the LWVGP logo on it, a wagon to transport this all in, and the other supplies needed to set up outside to register people to vote. We received \$250 towards these purchases and the LWVGP covered the balance (total spent \$470). This equipment can be used for many League activities as we move forward.

Mock Elections

It has been a while since this League has done mock elections for high school students, but we are doing one this fall thanks, in large part, to new Voter Services Committee member Datikka Peebles. She has established a relationship with Richwoods High School, and they will be hosting a mock election for the Junior and Senior students on Oct. 3. LWVGP volunteers will be staffing the election before, after and during the lunch periods. Thanks to Elizabeth Gannon and the Peoria County Election Commission, we will have printed ballots with all races that a person “living” at Richwoods High School would be eligible to vote for. Additionally, they are lending LWVGP actual scanners and voting booths to make this experience as real as it possibly can be for the students. The Election Commission will

tally the votes the next day and we will report the results to the students at Richwoods. We will also be registering any students who will turn 18 by Nov. 5 so they can vote in the actual election.

This effort will take many volunteers. If you are an election judge in Peoria County, we would love to have you join us. If you are a deputy registrar in any county in Illinois, we would also love to have you join us. And if you are neither, we will still need people to direct traffic and be runners, so we would love to have you join us! Please contact Datikka Peebles at 314-482-2537 or datikka_wright@yahoo.com or Roberta Parks at 309-231-1724 or robertamparks7513@gmail.com.

The **Get Out The Vote** post cards and yard sign designs are complete and funded and will be going to the printer this week. Thank you to all who helped with the content, design and funding. Our goal with the postcards is to encourage registered voters in low-turnout precincts to vote by highlighting issues that are relevant in this this upcoming election. The yard signs will have a broader reach into the community and feature the same message: Democracy is NOT a Spectator Sport.

———— Eileen Steed, Voter Services Chair

Democracy is **NOT** a Spectator Sport



LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF GREATER PEORIA



NAACP
Peoria Branch

GOTV postcard and sign update

A big THANK YOU to all those members who contributed to the GOTV postcard and yard sign initiative at the Membership Reception. You helped raise \$511. The first 10 who call Voter Services chair Eileen Steed at 630-699-7215 will receive a free yard sign delivered to your house.

Keep the momentum going and donate to the GOTV campaign.

MEMBERSHIP

About half our members have renewed, and we have 10 new members (counting those that joined during early 2024 and carry over to this year).

The committee plans to begin making phone calls this month to people who have not yet renewed. In October, any member who has not renewed is officially dropped from our membership rolls.

If you didn't get a chance to renew your membership, you can renew online at www.lwvgp.org or print a form there and mail it to the post office box listed.

———— Theresa Koehler, Chairperson

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OBSERVERS (LOGO)

The next required state League training for new observers is Thursday, Sept. 12th at 1pm. Anyone interested in becoming an observer can [Register](#) here, or contact Jim Runyon, LOGO Chair, at jimrunyon54@gmail.com.

Our League now has eleven trained observers and ten are assigned. We are currently observing the following governmental bodies:

- Peoria City Council
- Peoria County Board
- Tazewell County Board
- Peoria County Election Commission
- Dunlap School Board
- ICC Board of Trustees
- Peoria Landfill Committee
- Greater Peoria Sanitary District
- Springdale Cemetery Board
- Peoria Public School Board

Minimally, we still have a need to cover the following:

- East Peoria City Council
- Peoria Park District
- Peoria Housing Authority
- Woodford County Board
- Peoria City-County Health Dept. Board
- Peoria Regional Airport Authority

Please consider helping to keep our local officials accountable and transparent — we need you as a LOGO observer!

———— Jim Runyon, Chairperson

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: Aug. 8

The Peoria County Board held its Aug. 8 meeting with all members present.

Linda Daley was honored on her 5th anniversary as a board member.

In regular business, the board unanimously approved a resolution to join the Inter-governmental Personnel Benefits Cooperative as it continues to transition from an employee self-funded health care plan to a pool-based insurance plan. The board acknowledged the employee/board committee that has managed the transition. Enrollment in the new plan is expected later in 2024. From the consent agenda, \$7.6M was approved to provide employee health benefits and \$150K for employee wellness services.

The board also unanimously approved lifting the previously set spending limits for the county's bicentennial celebration that will begin in January 2025. The 2024 budget has \$100K allocated for the bicentennial celebrations and the anticipated 2025 budget will add another \$100 to \$200K. Also, an additional \$85K was approved to address unexpected issues in the jail ring road replacement project.

Following discussion, the board approved on a 16-2 vote, a pilot program to assist 400 households obtain home internet. While the grant is only a year in length, it is hoped that metrics from the pilot year will lead to more grant dollars and further expansion of the program.

Following a citizen's remark and significant discussion, the board approved on 17-1 votes, three related zoning requests in Limestone Township. A motion to defer those requests and send them back back to zoning for a new hearing was defeated on a 2-16 vote. Additional zoning requests were approved in Brimfield and Hollis Townships along with a solar farm in Medina Township.

From the unanimously approved consent agenda, the board accepted the recommendation to write-off \$1.45M in uncollectable debts at Heddington Oaks.

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

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION: Aug. 20

The Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners held its annual meeting on August 20, 2024. Rosa Kemper was sworn in, replacing Val Timmes on the Board. All officers were reelected except for Ryan Brady replacing Ms. Timmes as Treasurer.

The Board approved the 2025 budget which will be presented to the County Board with several expenses having to do with the empty part of the building being removed after discussions with representatives of the County.

In other business, the early voting schedule was approved. Ballots were to be approved on August 23, allowing them to be printed and mailed to overseas voters. Petitions have been circulating for the 2025 elections. The city of Peoria will have a primary with three candidates already announcing that they will run for mayor.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: July 23

The Council meeting started on time with three councilors absent (Chuck Grayeb, John Kelly and Mike Vespa. Peoria County Board Chair, James Dillon, presented 2025 tricentennial anniversary flag to the council; flag design was selected by public competition and recognizes Peoria as the oldest community in Illinois.

Consent agenda approved without any items pulled for discussion. A first reading on an ordinance regarding collection of debts for unpaid property tax and retail sales tax would allow city to place a lien on business properties that are 60 days or more delinquent in payment as appropriate. Corporation Counsel Patrick Hayes discussed process to notify business owners, as well as steps if business space is rented vs owned. This will be more efficient and timelier for collection of taxes and to avoid collection citations.

Council members heard presentation by Empire Lounge owner John Sims regarding application for liquor license. Several community members and residents of neighborhood spoke to this subject as well, both pro and con. Councilor Denise Jackson made motion to deny, with no second. Councilor Bernice Gordon-Young made motion to approve class B liquor license with second by Councilor Andre Allen. Vote failed 3 to 5, with Gordon-Young, Allen and Ali voting for motion.

Deferred discussion of backyard chickens to Aug. 13 meeting.

Under new business, Councilor Zach Oyler asked city staff to address camping on public property and present to Council on Aug. 13.

Peoria City Council meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 6 P.M. at Peoria City Hall and can be heard on WCBU 89.9 or watched on cable access channel 22. Agenda, meeting packet and prior minutes are available at: <https://peoriagov.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation>

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: Aug. 13

The meeting of the Town of the City of Peoria was held prior to the City Council meeting. Town officials approved the July 2024 actual expenditures as well as the anticipated expenditures for August 2024. The annual audit for year ending March 31, 2024 was received and filed.

The City Council members approved consent agenda with exception of three items pulled for discussion, 24-231, 24-233 and 24-235. 24-235 was deferred to next meeting regarding liquor license for Hacienda El Mirador, 5805 N. Humbolt Ave. Remaining items were discussed briefly and passed by council.

First reading of Ordinance Prohibiting Unauthorized Camping on Public Property within City of Peoria was presented. Corporation Counsel Patrick Hayes outlined the efforts City has made to combat homelessness and have city staff work with local nonprofits to find housing assistance, as well as risks to unhoused, and city staff and first responders who engage with homeless persons. Much discussion took place emphasizing use of humane actions toward how cases would be prosecuted. Mayor Ali referenced information from U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, April 2024 relating to effective and humane strategies to address this issue. Note: approximately 25 people addressed the council at the end of meeting on this issue.

Other actions:

- Received and filed 2023 annual comprehensive finance report audited by CliftonLarsonAllenLLP.
- Received and filed corrected Affirmative Action Plan for City of 2022 data. Report presented by Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Melodi Green and

noted one area need improvement and focus, which is hiring women in protective services of Police and Fire departments.

- Accepted Greater Peoria Auto Crimes Taskforce (GPACT) Grant from IL Secretary of State for \$1,501,100. Secretary of State Police Sergeant and Deputy Director GPACT Chris Fulcher gave overview of program to improve crime related vehicle hijacking and theft and success in recovery of 129 stolen vehicles in past year.
- Motion to table communication on allowing backyard chickens in City of Peoria. Hayes reminded Council a majority vote would be required to bring item back for discussion.
- City Manager Patrick Urich reported he had met with GFL Waste Management earlier in the day and that they were closer to resolution to landfill 2. Deferred issue for two weeks.
- Counsel Hayes gave overview of Downtown Stadium Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Redevelopment, which was established in 2000. TIF was extended for another 12 years by the Illinois General Assembly in 2023. This will allow for needed repairs to bring stadium up to minor league baseball association standards. Second ordinance outlines provisions for reporting eligible TIF expenses to be reimbursed.
- Council recessed for closed meeting, then resumed regular council meeting. Meeting adjourned at 11:55 P.M.

Agenda and minutes of meeting are available at:

<https://peoriagov.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?>

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

DUNLAP DISTRICT 323 SCHOOL BOARD: Aug. 15

The regular school board meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. on Aug. 15 with six members present. Previously the board met at 4:00 p.m. in closed session to select a new member to fill the vacancy of Linda Smith who resigned July 17.

Superintendent Dearman's report included:

- 4,715 student enrollment for school year 2024-25
- Opening institute program will be available online for area schools not in the Dunlap district
- New parking lot is open and has helped with morning traffic flow
- Six bus drivers are needed
- Planning for new Wilder Waite school is in process, especially search for architect

District CFO Mike McKenzie explained the tentative budget proposal, a total of \$63,443,028 for 2024-2025 school year. This proposal will be on public display for 30 days beginning August 16.

On Sept. 25 there will be a public hearing for official board approval of the budget. During discussion McKenzie emphasized there might be some fluctuation in the numbers before the final proposal. There was concern about a deficit in the education fund that has been going on for a couple of years.

Meeting was adjourned for closed session at 6:44 p.m. and began open session again at 7:24 p.m. Steve Hodel was approved to fill the board vacancy of Linda Smith. He took the oath of office, and will fill the seat until April 1, 2025, when board elections are to be held.

———— Dottie Strickler, Observer

PEORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD: July 22

The Peoria Public School Board held its July 22 regular meeting with all members present, including Superintendent Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat and other senior administrators.

Newly appointed board members Chanel Hargrave and Larry Ivory introduced themselves with speeches to the board and public, then joined the meeting officially.

The board announced July 31 as the first day of the new school year, then reported on two completed summer activities, a Free T-Shirts Day, and a Free Backpacks Day.

A City Camp Update presentation was led by Mrs. Valerie Blake, Grant Coordinator. More than 100 children participated in this interactive and educational camp. The Remarkable Spirit award was then awarded to Mr. Roosevelt Miles in recognition of his generous donation to the camp.

Superintendent Desmoulin-Kherat gave updates on significant programs:

- a. Closing of Quest Academy: The collaborative work is going well. All students have been placed into new schools.
- b. New cell phone policy and pouches: Each building has its own customized cell phone committee.
- c. 106 new teachers were oriented. Of this group, 47 are international teachers. All new teachers went through mentoring and training.

Three main issues were raised by members of the audience during the public-comment section. Unlike many area boards, board members and administrators provide responses to comments after they are made.

- a. One issue concerned a bullying case that had occurred in the last school year and that had resulted in the student leaving the school. The student herself, about 9 years old, participated in the comment session. Following the presentation, Board Vice President Greg Wilson and Desmoulin-Kherat promised the mother they would investigate further and work with the family to secure a suitable school placement.
- b. A second issue criticized the process used by the board to appoint new members following resignations. In a reply, President Paris McConnell explained the two appointed members were selected from a pool of candidates.
- c. A third issue described the wording of an agenda item (#8) as too vague. Ultimately, the agenda item was tabled to allow new board members to become familiar with the topic. The board unanimously approved agenda items #1 through #7, as a package, and tabled the debated #8 item to a future meeting.

The board meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

———— Ramez Abi Akar, Observer

ILLINOIS CENTRAL COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Aug. 15

The Illinois Central College Board of Trustees met at 5 p.m. on Aug. 15 for its regularly scheduled meeting. All members were present except trustee Carl Cannon; trustee Alma Brown attended by phone.

Recognition was made of the new construction management program and certification. New certifications are also offered in AI, database, C++/C+ programming, Java, and web development. There is also a program for cybersecurity analyst requiring 31 semester hours. ICC President Sheila Quirk-Bailey noted that these courses/programs are examples of ICC responding to community needs.

The Consent Agenda including the minutes of the July 18 board meeting, personnel recommendations, purchase recommendations, and approval of monthly bills was approved by the board members. (Available at <https://icc.edu/about/board-trustees/> under “meeting materials.”)

Various reports were given including Leon Belmont’s student trustee report in which he noted various campus activities especially those welcoming incoming students. In the president’s report, Quirk-Bailey noted the brochure of events for “welcome week,” the volleyball team award, the approval of the Pekin Prison Program, the first such program in the country, and the ICC TV commercial which ran during the Olympics. The treasurer’s report noted revenue below expectations. (ICC has a 5% increase in enrollment this year.) All reports were accepted.

A number of informational items contained in trustees’ materials were noted and the IT Risk Assessment was noted as being well done. Trustee Gale Thetford expressed appreciation for the Discrimination and Harassment Policy update.

Under Action Items, the final budget was adopted and Quirk-Bailey thanked all, noting it is a “bottom up budget.” In Unfinished Business, the board members decided that the board evaluation and timeline discussion should be moved to the board retreat in October. In New Business, Thetford noted that she has heard that the medical imaging program is very popular and it is hard to get into it. She wondered what the limitations might be. President Quirk-Bailey indicated that sometimes clinical programs are limited by the places in the community where students can do internships or clinical practice work.

The Regular Board of Trustees Meeting adjourned, followed by a Closed Session.

————— Joyce Rosenberger, Observer

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY BOARD: Aug. 19

The Springdale Cemetery Authority Board met Aug. 19 for its regularly scheduled meeting with all present except members Robert Wilton and Zach Oyler.

General Manager Mark Matuszak reported 66 burials year to date in 2024 and 900 since 2013. 75 burials year to date is the average found over the last 12 years.

A plaque for the Civil War Memorial will be dedicated at an event to be set in October.

Benches were purchased for the Prairie Gardens for \$24,000.

A discussion was held to consider transferring monies from the decoration fund to the endowment fund.

A discussion was also held to consider having the Peoria Park District Police close the cemetery gates at set hours.

The July 15th storm did significant damage to cemetery trees, some over 200 years old, requiring the work crew over 3.5 weeks to clean-up areas. The crew was commended for their hard work.

Adam Pulley of Clifton, Larson, and Allen presented the 2023 Audit which was received and filed, and can be accessed at this [link](#).

A search continues for a replacement for General Manager Matuszak who will leave the position at the end of 2024.

————— Joan Wojcikewych, Observer

GREATER PEORIA SANITARY DISTRICT: July 16

The GPSD Board of Trustees meeting was held Aug 20 at the GPSD office.

The trustees were all in attendance in addition to Executive Director, Brian Johnson; President, Matthew Bender; Vice President, Robert Gates; Treasurer, Heather McCord; and Clerk, Ronald Givens, II.

The board approved investment committee recommended investments totaling \$4 million due to favorable market conditions.

Chemical expenses, which are core to the operations of GPSD, vary and typically ebb and flow. The details of these expenses were shared in the meeting and are available in the published minutes of the meeting. High rainfall in July resulted in effluents fluctuations that required adjustment of treatments. This change increased the cost of the chemicals.

Operating budget of GPSD was discussed. It is slightly lower than similar period last year and it is typically weather dependent. Liability is down. Accounts receivable increased per expected and planned expenses.

The Board unanimously approved agenda items including the budget (discussed above) and the water shutoff delinquent accounts.

The GPSD is considering various developments and maintenance projects that were reported and discussed during the meeting. These programs are driven by technical needs and require sizable funding from GPSD. Details of the funding amounts are on the GPSD site. The development plans include:

- Replacement for one of the District's main flow meters, M3. Bids were solicited for this replacement and the bid received from Foster-Jacon, Inc., was approved by the Board based on the bid value.
- Aeration Gallery Pipe Repair bids are being prepared. The advertisement for the bids will start on Sept. 5 and the bids will open on Oct. 3.
- GPSD Management requested authorization to solicit proposals for the planned and budgeted replacement of one of the District's collection system vehicles, the TV-Flusher Vehicle.
- Management requested authorization to solicit proposals for Pretreatment Grit Washers Pipe Painting. This is an important maintenance component that protects and extends the life of this critical District asset.
- The district's anaerobic digesters four boilers are in need of replacement. An agreement with Midwest Engineering has been negotiated for the design, construction services, and grant process (namely Ameren energy grants) for this project.
- Construction of a temporary road for Ruyle Mechanical Services to ensure 24/7/365 access to their warehouse was discussed.

- Upgrades in the District's SCADA system from iFix to Ignition were recommended by management. This change involves an increased in cost.
- An external company, EnergyPro will provide safety reviews inspections, and training. The District negotiated one year agreement with this company at a cost for the District.
- The Automation dashboard for the District has been updated as shown in the Engineering Report.
 - The Board discussed and approved the proposals listed above.

Effluent Fecal coliform showed one anomaly on one day in July. GPSD reported the result to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and is looking into the causes.

The Medina Plains Capacity study has been complete. This study focused on documenting available sewer capacity within the City of Peoria's Medina Plains TIF. The outcome of this study supports the potential addition of 1.5 million gallons of additional flow per day into the existing sewer system. The study also located an area within the sewer system that shows excessive inflow and infiltration that will be further investigated as a part of the District's sewer rehabilitation program.

GPSD reports no safety cases reported to OSHA for 2024.

———— Hind Abi Akar, Observer

TAZEWELL COUNTY BOARD: July 31

"We'd just be getting to the end of public comment the last few meetings," Tazewell County Board chairman David Zimmerman joked seconds after adjourning the board's July 31 meeting after just 61 minutes.

While the meeting returned closer to an average run-time, board members still voted on two proposed solar farm cases -- the same subject that has driven extensive public comment and split board members on different proposals in the past two meetings. This month, there was a single public comment on the subject, generally opposing them. On votes of 14-4 and 12-6, members approved, respectively, a 3.5

megawatt project near Green Valley -- described as being on ground so poor it wasn't on farmland so much as it was on "farm sand" -- and a 5 megawatt project east of Mackinaw and just north of Mackinaw Valley Vineyard.

Meanwhile, on a 17-1 vote, the board approved extending County Administrator Mike Delhury's contract through Dec. 1, 2025. He'll be paid \$154,548 annually effective July 31. That'll rise to \$160,729 per year beginning Dec. 1.

As part of the board's consent agenda, members unanimously approved shifting \$100,000 for Habitat for Humanity to demolish an abandoned nursing home in East Peoria to construct a "veterans village" to instead be used on demolishing one home for future construction and refurbishing another on parcels just southwest of Pekin city limits. The "veterans village" concept was put on hold when the property was sold to another party that plans apartments on the Springfield Road site.

Members also unanimously approved the appointment of Eric Stahl of Morton to the District 2 seat vacated by Randi Krehbel in May. Stahl was the top vote-getter in the 2nd District Republican primary and is unopposed for election in the fall.

———— Chris Kaergard, 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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