

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ALAMEDA
BOARD MEETING MINUTES, September 21, 2023
Virtual Meeting Online via Zoom

Board members present: Anna Crane, presiding; Ashley Lorden, Susan Hauser, Anne McKereghan. **Other members present:** Irene Dieter, Neil Rubenstein, Mari Clark, Allan Mann. **Others present:** Fiona Jackson.

Call to Order: Anna Crane called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM. Anne moved, Susan H seconded, and we approved to accept the consent agenda and previous meeting minutes.

President's Report: The National League has created a new membership system "Chapter Spot" we'll be affected by. Prospective members will pay to join on a sliding scale, from \$20 to our standard rate of \$75 or more. We as a local league will receive 20% of membership dues, and the National League will make us whole for the first 2 years of this transition if our dues payments decrease under the new system. We should look to encourage new members to join, and still seek direct donations (which we keep 100% of). A downside is that we may not be able to survey interests at the moment people join, which means Membership will need to follow up to engage new members.

Campaign Finance Report: Our focus for the last several years has been on voter information, inspired by concern that large donations from outside Alameda are influencing elections without much awareness. One related problem we've thought about is reducing the cost to run for local office. We're planning to examine several methods to publicly finance campaigns, with a program on the topic likely next April. An important opportunity we might work on in the near term is the candidate burden to file papers and publish a candidate statement; for Alameda local candidates, this cost is around \$5,000 (note, AUSD covers this cost for candidates). Over the past 4 years, Alameda has billed ~\$42,000 to candidates, which it seems would be much easier for the city to cover directly rather than passing costs on. We plan to communicate with the Mayor about this issue. Susan moves, Anne seconds, and we approve support for this exploration on funding candidates' expenditures in an effort to encourage more diverse candidate pools.

Advocacy Report: Community members have expressed strong appreciation for LWVA and our RCV efforts as we're out talking to people. They feel we're one of the few groups taking action to improve Alameda. We have a website maintainer, volunteer manager who sends weekly newsletters, and a team of signature gatherers. We do have a number of people who volunteered but haven't been able to follow through, setting us behind our target to gather 2000 signatures per month. We are looking to recruit more volunteers where possible and continue frequent communications to our existing volunteers to gather the required number of signatures in 6 months. An idea for a program on how a petition campaign is run is discussed.

Membership Report: We have 81 members currently. We discussed the RCV work and the upcoming school bond measure for the March ballot as good opportunities to connect with community members who may convert to members. We do need to decide how to connect with the school bonds campaign. In addition, membership will distribute brochures to local gathering spots and represent us at 2 events in the next few weeks.

Programs Report: We're planning an educational program on public campaign finance for the spring; we plan to present several alternative approaches. We will support Alameda County Council on forums for the March primary as it gets closer. We considered a forum about how Alameda city government works and connected with Sarah Henry, but it doesn't look like it's moving forward.

Board Meeting Schedule: Anna proposes meeting on odd numbered months. We will also look to plan a holiday party in December (possibly 12/2-3 or 9-10). We'll gauge interest in the newsletter and check on locations.

Nominating Report: We need a nominating committee, ideally made up of 2 board members and 3 non-board members, that can get started reaching out before the last minute. It will be a smaller task this year with only 3 board positions to fill. Anne volunteers and we'll ask Jeff Cambra to join, and are looking for non-board members.

Nonpartisan Policy: Our last policy update was in September 2017 and our league coach has encouraged us to review our policy to ensure it is strong. Ashley moves, Anne seconds, and we add serving in political party organization leadership as something League board members may not do. We will be cautious about perceptions beyond the rules of the document, and re-review the policy once the State League completes its review, and hopefully recommends a standard policy.

Open Floor: A reminder that next August, we should work with the City to get official recognition around National Voter Registration Day.

Anna adjourned the meeting at 8:52pm.