



# **Board Members Handbook**

**2019**

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# PRINCIPLES

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) is organized to parallel the three levels of government: local, state and national. Our state League is the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA).

Any citizen over 18, male or female, may become a voting member of the League. Associate membership is available for younger people or non-citizens. Joining at any level automatically confers membership at every level, and with that membership comes the opportunity to work on local, state, regional and national program issues.

Please read [Local League Basics](#). Local League Basics was prepared by LWVMA to guide governance, membership, communications and finance for local Leagues.

## POLITICAL YET NONPARTISAN

The choice was made in 1920 to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office. It continues today to ensure that the League's voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. The nonpartisan policy has added strength to the League's position on issues. It has made possible wide acceptance of League voter services and other educational activities.

At the same time, the League is a political organization and encourages members to participate fully in the party of their choice. It is an advantage to the League to have politically active members. The same is true for members' paid employment, which also might give rise to conflicts of interest.

Each League's board of directors is responsible for drafting and carrying out the League's nonpartisan political policy in its community, keeping in mind that everything the League does should be measured against the yardstick of nonpartisanship. The board also is responsible for seeing that both its members and the public understand the League's nonpartisan policy. The goal, of course, is to ensure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization.

## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FALMOUTH NONPARTISAN POLICY

*(Adopted 11/20/89; revised 9/02; readopted annually through 6/18.)*

In order to assure the credibility of the League of Women Voters' nonpartisan policy, the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth has adopted guidelines which put limits on the partisan political activities of board members.

**The PRESIDENT, two VICE-PRESIDENTS and the VOTER SERVICE** chairman are the board members who deal most directly with the public and the media, projecting the image of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth to the community. Therefore, in

order to prevent any impression that the League is a partisan organization, those individuals holding the above positions must accept certain restrictions on their participation in political activities. These board members may not:

1. Run for any elective office, except town meeting member;
2. Publicly support, endorse or work in the campaign of any candidate or political party;
3. Circulate nomination papers for any candidate.

These board members may:

1. Accept appointive positions to governmental boards or committees provided they do not present conflicts with League policy positions;
2. Give financial support to candidates for elective office provided it is under the reporting limit;
3. Attend, but not host, partisan political events such as candidates' coffees and rallies. An effort should be made to attend public meetings to hear candidates, rather than fund raising events.

All other board members may be active in partisan politics at any level, keeping in mind that they have a special responsibility to see that their activities do not create the impression that they are representing the League when involved in partisan political activities.

Because the League works with many elected town boards and committees to implement its program, there is considerable risk of confusion about the League's nonpartisan policy if a board member were to run for certain local offices. Therefore, any board member must consult the board at a regular Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday) about the advisability of resigning before taking out nomination papers for any local office.

It is important to note that the board's nonpartisan policy is reviewed annually. If these new guidelines appear to cause any public skepticism about the League's organizational commitment to nonpartisan activities, they can be reviewed and tightened. Also any individual problems can be put on the agenda and discussed at any monthly Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday).

Adopted 11/20/89; readopted at subsequent Annual Meetings; revised 9/02; readopted annually through 6/18.

**DIVERSITY POLICY OF THE LWVMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS** *(Approved by LWVMA October 28, 2004, Affirmed and Approved by LWVMA December 12, 2012. Approved by LWVMA November 20, 2015)*

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is committed to reflect in its principles and practices the diversity and pluralism in our state.

In both its principles and practices, the League of Women Voters will promote inclusion in leadership, staffing, membership, and participation in any League activity. There shall be no barrier to participation based on, including but not limited to, race, color, national origin, religious creed, sex, gender identity, disability, or age. The League affirms its commitment to abide by all Federal and State laws related to unlawful discrimination. The League acknowledges that pluralism and diverse perspectives are fundamental to the values the League upholds and are necessary for responsible and representative decision making.

Other LWVMA Policies may be found on the LWVMA website at <https://lwmva.org/about/bylaws-and-policies/>.

## **PROGRAM**

### **PROGRAM PLANNING IN FALMOUTH**

The League Program Planning Meeting Coordinator should have copies of the National, State, and Local programs, including any consensus positions that have been arrived at in the past.

An article is placed in the bulletin soliciting suggestions from members and asking them to attend the program planning meeting. On the local level good ideas for program often come from board members, especially chairmen of current studies who may wish to continue or pursue another facet of the existing study. Observer Corps members may also have suggestions based on situations they have observed. During State and National planning, Leagues elsewhere may send communications soliciting support at convention for their program ideas.

A Local program is adopted annually; State and National programs are two-year programs adopted in alternating years at conventions. The State and National programs are voted on by delegates attending the convention from local Leagues. They go informed, but not instructed. That is, they should be familiar with the wishes of their own League, but will vote according to their own best judgment, based on developments at the convention.

## **PROGRAM ADOPTION**

The board reports (usually in the local bulletin) its proposed or recommended program, which consists of existing statements of positions and any proposed studies, to the members by the deadline specified in the bylaws. Many Leagues also include information on non-recommended issues (issues suggested during the program-planning process but not included in the board's proposed or recommended program). The board should be prepared to explain its proposals and the reasons for its choices.

The wording of a proposed issue may be amended at the annual meeting or convention, provided the intent is not changed. Only program issues submitted by the deadline may be considered. Since each issue on a League program must be adopted by vote at the annual meeting or convention, issues or statements of positions previously on the program must be readopted in the same or amended form to continue to be part of the League's program.

A local League's program is determined by members at its annual meeting; state and national programs are voted on by delegates at state and national League conventions. In the course of the program adoption discussion, members often direct the board on scope of inquiry, timing, emphasis and ways to handle the study and/or action phases. The board takes this into account in planning for the year.

## **EMERGENCY PROGRAM**

Sometimes unforeseen events occur that members think the League should urgently address. League bylaws spell out the circumstances under which issues can be adopted at a time other than regular annual meetings or conventions.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ALL STUDY COMMITTEES**

- Agree on overall goals and be aware of time, money and resources available to accomplish these goals.
- Pinpoint and coordinate sources of information on the issue, such as publications, experts, and other organizations and groups, and carry out plans for additional research on the issue if necessary.
- Devise ways to get information to members and the public and design programs and activities for the League and the community that build and sustain interest in the issue.
- Formulate questions for member agreement or consensus and outline possible decision-making methods.

- Suggest action approaches and take part in action on an issue once a position is reached.
- Evaluate the success and effectiveness of the committee's efforts.

Regardless of the specific assignment, each committee should devise an outline of all projected activities for board approval. Once plans have been approved, the committee continues its work, reporting to the board for guidance and further decisions as needed.

## **STUDY COMMITTEES**

The board member who chairs a study committee and the committee as a whole are responsible for pulling information together and planning its use; examining all sides of an issue so that the information presented to members will be balanced as well as objective; arranging for meetings, TV and radio shows, go-see tours and other activities designed to spark member and community interest in the issue. Once a position is reached, the committee takes part in developing action strategies to implement it.

No program study committee ever needs to start from scratch. On any issue important enough to be chosen for League program, information already exists. Build on what has already been done, supplementing existing material as needed. Adapt material developed by other Leagues. Clearly, more in-depth research and writing will be done by a local League on a local issue, whereas with state or national issues its task is more one of choosing and coordinating information prepared at the state or national level.

While the members of study committees often become expert on issues, they should remember that materials prepared for League members should focus on the information they need to make decisions as informed citizens, not as experts or specialists in the field. Sometimes a bibliography accompanied by a fact sheet with provocative questions may be all that's needed.

The committee also should be alert to ways to involve the community. Consult with community leaders, exchange views with elected and appointed public officials, hold forums and roundtables of experts, debate the issue on radio and television. Videos, cable television and debates are all ways to present information and to offer members and the community opportunities to take part in activities, not just to be passive recipients of information. Some creative techniques used by Leagues are case histories to present information, alternating opposing views to illustrate differences, and games designed to bring issues to life.

## **REACHING MEMBER AGREEMENT**

Before the League can take action, members must agree in broad terms on what they think about various aspects of a program issue. The board chooses from methods such as group discussion, concurrence, questionnaires and telephone polls to reach a League decision about a program issue. Regardless of the process used, it is essential

that members have an opportunity to become informed before being asked to make decisions. The board chooses the approach to be used, recognizing that the nature of an issue will affect how it is studied and how decisions are reached.

Study is a prerequisite to League action. Informed, participating members make League action uniquely credible and respected. During the study phase, members have an opportunity to examine the facts and key pro and con points. They are encouraged to discuss the political realities of action and to contribute ideas for the board to consider when it formulates an action strategy after a position is reached.

Whatever study and member agreement procedures are used, the board sets ground rules at the beginning so that members will understand the process and the board will collect the information needed to formulate the position based on member input and agreement. For example, if the discussion group method (see below) is combined with a member questionnaire (e.g. a bulletin tear-off), how will the replies of one or the other be weighted? If a questionnaire alone is used, must a minimum number of members reply for the results to be valid?

Consensus/group discussion is the technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement. It is a process whereby members participate in a group discussion of an issue. The consensus reached by members through group discussion is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall 'sense of the group' as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions, whether in a single membership meeting or in several sessions.

## **A FEW WORDS ABOUT CONSENSUS**

The American Heritage Dictionary defines consensus as "collective opinion or concord; general agreement or accord." In the League "consensus" is used:

- Interchangeably with "member agreement" to refer to the overall decision-making process (including various methods such as questionnaires and polls) by which a League board determines that there is substantial agreement among members on an issue.
- To refer to a specific technique used traditionally in the League to discuss and arrive at conclusions on issues.

The study committee frames consensus questions for the board to review and approve. During the study these questions form the framework for member discussions; they help guide the study and focus members on the points that will ultimately be a part of the League's position. Member agreement emerges from the give-and-take of group interaction and exchange of views.



Questionnaires and other direct member agreement techniques are another option. The board may decide to send a questionnaire to the entire membership to solicit the views of each member directly.

Concurrence is the act of agreeing, or concurring, with a statement or position. A decision-making technique used by the League for some time, concurrence can work in several ways. Groups of League members or League boards can concur with (1) recommendations of a study committee or a membership meeting; (2) decision statements formulated by League boards; or (3) positions reached by another League or Leagues.

As a general rule, background materials presenting the pros and cons on the issue being considered are provided to Leagues and members in the concurrence process. In area Leagues, an issue relating to one jurisdiction is often studied by members living in that jurisdiction, and after member agreement has been reached by those members, the other area league members are asked to concur with the results.

## **FORMULATING LEAGUE POSITIONS**

Determining member agreement/consensus of members within a local League is the responsibility of the local board. It is an interpretive process whereby the board evaluates the reports of member thinking in discussion meetings or in general membership meetings where discussion has taken place, or evaluates the results of a questionnaire or poll. Then the board determines the broad areas of agreement and disagreement that emerge among its members. In the case of a local issue, the board then formulates a position that expresses the League's views on that issue and that becomes the basis for League action. State and National boards perform the same function for regional, state and national issues. In formulating positions, all boards keep in mind the importance of wording positions in terms broad enough to enable the League to initiate, support or oppose a variety of legislative and executive proposals over a period of time.

Once the local League board has formulated the position on a local issue, it is announced to members and the community. This statement of position then becomes part of the local League's program and the board can begin taking action on it immediately. Like all statements of position, it must be readopted by League members at the annual meeting in order to remain on the program.

A local League's consensus or member agreement on a regional, state or national issue does not constitute a final LWV position and should not be publicized. In these cases each local board's responsibility is to report the consensus to the regional, state or national board. The report should include areas of agreement, areas where no agreement emerged, and level of member participation. In turn, the appropriate board analyzes the consensus/member agreement reports from local Leagues, develops a position statement that reflects member thinking and announces the position to members and the public.

## **MEETINGS/CONVENTIONS**

During any given year a local League plans and conducts many kinds of meetings for many different purposes. Meetings play a special role in the League. They serve as a forum for exchanging ideas, providing information, making decisions and developing a sense of belonging to the League. They are a tangible expression of the League's commitment to democratic procedures and to the participation of members in all of the League's work. Meetings and public forums also are primary vehicles for much of the League's citizen education efforts.

### **MEMBER MEETINGS**

A League member meeting is held monthly on the third Thursday, except in July, August, December and May. The purpose is to provide programs for members and the community.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEETINGS**

League Board meetings are held monthly on the fourth Tuesday, except in July, December and May.

### **ANNUAL MEETING**

This is the meeting that gives LWV members a chance, either in person or through delegate representation, to:

- Elect officers, directors and nominating committee members;
- Adopt program;
- Adopt a budget;
- Consider and vote on proposed bylaw amendments

It is also a time to have fun, celebrate accomplishments, recognize outstanding individual and group efforts, and learn from each other. Member participation is the key to a successful annual meeting or convention.

### **Tips for Planning Annual Meeting**

The following timetable and checklist are designed to help League boards plan for this important event.

Early in the League year, four to six months before the meeting date:

- Check bylaws for annual meeting date and notification requirements.
- Encourage member suggestions for local program.
- Review board positions to be filled with nominating committee chair.

- Appoint bylaws committee chair.
- Appoint budget committee chair.
- Select a chair to coordinate meeting arrangements and activities.

Give chairs and committees directions and materials for their work. Share with the annual meeting chair any suggestions for a site so that selection can get underway.

Three to four months before the meeting:

- Select meeting site.
- Allot board time for discussion of meeting plans. Board members by now will have made some concrete suggestions regarding the next year's budget, possible program developments and bylaw amendments needing consideration.
- An independently audited treasurer's report should be presented to members.
- To boost attendance, include reminders in the bulletin about the meeting date, time and location, even though all arrangements may not be complete.
- Coordinate plans for the publication of needed member materials. Check your bylaws for notification date and deadlines, both for receiving suggestions from members and for sending information on budget, bylaws, nominations and program suggestions.
- Arrange for a parliamentarian to assist at the meeting.
- Local Leagues may want to discuss local bylaw proposals with the state League. It is helpful to send a copy of the present bylaws plus an explanation of proposed bylaw amendments to speed up the review.

One to two months before the meeting:

- Discuss the final meeting agenda in full board session before sending it to members. If possible; include the parliamentarian in the discussion.
- Print and distribute to members information on proposed slate of officers, directors and nominating committee, proposed program, proposed budget and proposed amendments to bylaws.

Immediately after the meeting:

- Local Leagues send the LWVUS a complete list of the names and addresses of the president and all board members; adopted budget; adopted program; bylaw changes. The LWVUS sends forms to Leagues in the spring requesting mailing information. Local Leagues send similar information to the state League.
- Board assigns a board member or committee to review minutes of the meeting while events are still fresh. The members give final approval of the minutes at the next annual meeting or convention.
- Board evaluates the meeting to review what went well and what could be improved next time.

## **DELEGATE PREPARATION FOR STATE AND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

Delegates to state and national conventions take part in major decisions affecting the League's goals and operations, and so budgeting to send delegates from your League to convention is a valuable investment in the future.

Each delegate should take seriously the obligation to come to convention "informed but not instructed." The "informed but not instructed" delegate is aware of how members in her/his state and local League feel about issues to be decided at convention but is not committed to vote either for or against a specific issue.

Being a delegate involves listening to the views expressed by other delegates during debate before deciding how to vote. Preparation should include the following:

- Becoming familiar with convention materials sent from state or national which contain important background information on decisions to be made. Delegates need to read these materials carefully so that they will be prepared to participate effectively in the meeting.
- Learning elementary parliamentary procedures, which will enable the delegate to participate to the fullest extent in discussions and floor debate and to make motions for convention consideration.
- Participating in orientation sessions held to brief delegates.
- Orientation for "first timers" as well as parliamentary briefings are regularly scheduled at national conventions, but delegates should arrive early to participate since they take place before the opening session of convention.
- Reporting to your local League the results of the convention. Be sure to include your own personal impressions and experiences as well as major organizational decisions.

## **THE LEAGUE BUDGET**

A well-conceived, realistic gross budget reflects all anticipated income and expenses for a fiscal year. It shows planned growth in members, dues, contributions and League activities. Income and expenditures balance. Along with direct costs, the budget includes volunteer out-of-pocket expenses that will be reimbursed by the League (parking, child care, mileage allowances, etc.).

The League budget also reflects each League's obligation to support the League as a whole. A local League budget shows League support for the state League in an expense item for Per Member Payment (PMP) to the state (plus any Pledge voted for); and it provides for direct support to the LWVUS through the PMP.

The amount of the LWVUS PMP is determined by delegates to national convention. The LWVUS Presidents' Packet, published each year, discusses in detail how the national per member payment assessment and billing system works. Funds for the local League's PMP to the LWVUS and payment to the state League can be raised any way the League chooses - through dues, member and nonmember contributions, fund raising activities, sale of publications or League services. Leagues may pay up to 25% of their national PMP assessment to the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in tax-deductible money.

## **DEVELOPING THE BUDGET**

The League budget is developed by a committee that seeks out the goals of members and the board of directors. Appointed well before the annual meeting, the budget committee, chaired by an off-board member, often includes the president, treasurer (who, as stated in the bylaws, may not serve as chair), finance and public relations chairs, as well as off-board members.

Budget development starts with ideas from members and direction from the board on priorities for the coming year, as well as long-term objectives for the League over a period of several years. Remember, for example, that it is important to budget for the expenses of sending delegates to state and national conventions - an investment in your local League's future.

Board members and committees plan what they hope to do and put estimated price tags on their proposed activities. They are guided, but not limited, by actual current expenditures, for this is the point at which chairs and committees can dream a little about the kinds of things they would like to do beyond what they are currently doing. Budgets that stay the same year after year do not reflect a creative, growing League. Priorities and activities change as community issues and needs change; and as the League becomes more effective, its budget reflects those changes.

The budget committee prepares and recommends a budget to the board. The board reviews and evaluates the proposed budget, making such changes as it thinks necessary or directs the budget committee to add, delete or change emphasis. The board then approves the budget to be submitted to members for a vote at annual meeting.

Once LWV members adopt the budget, the board sees that it is carried out. The board can revise the budget to respond to changed circumstances such as an unexpected windfall or a shortfall in income, but it does not usually make major changes in the overall level of expenditures authorized or the general direction of League emphasis approved at the annual meeting.

## **DUES**

Each League decides the level of its dues and the method of collecting them. In setting dues, Leagues should consider all the costs related to maintaining an effective organization. For example, it is helpful to break down the expenses involved in properly servicing each member - what it costs to produce and distribute the bulletin, to buy publications, remit PMPs to state and national - and set the dues accordingly. Most Leagues also establish a lower level of dues for additional household members.

Leagues sometimes set up categories of dues to help members whose ability to pay may vary, such as individuals on fixed incomes and students. Regardless of the dues category in which a member is grouped, local League PMP to the LWVUS and PMP or pledge payments to the state are figured on the basis of each individual member, except in the case of additional members in a household. Those who have been members for 50 years are excused from the payment of dues and no PMP is charged for them.

All members pay dues at the beginning of the fiscal year or in a specific month; new members joining during the remainder of the year sometimes are charged a prorated amount for the rest of the League year.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Tell the community that the League is where people can:

- Be heard and make their voices and their votes count.
- Get to know the power structure and the people who are part of it.
- Do something about current issues.
- Learn how the political process works and how decisions are made.
- Sharpen communications skills through discussions, writing, speech-writing.
- Work with a diverse group of "doers."

Demonstrate League commitment to a diverse membership. Make it easy to contact the League in your community. Is there a website? Is information on the League and how

to join available in public places such as Town Hall, the library, community bulletin boards, government buildings?

Make an effort to reach out to the whole community rather than continuing to work with the same groups.

**For potential members:**

- Personal contact – bring guests to meetings and activities
- Provide membership information with all League publications
- Be active and involved; be prepared to clearly state how the League is making a difference in your community; wear a League button and carry membership applications

It should be easy to join the League. Sign up people when they want to join. Don't refer them to the membership chair or treasurer; don't make them take extra steps. Ask for a check on the spot. Any member can enroll a new member and pass the dues check and information to the treasurer or membership chair. Follow up on all prospects. See that membership is a part of every League activity. Capitalize on the fact that all levels of the League – local, state and national – can and do recruit new members and that joining the League means becoming a member at all levels.

You can give potential members information about the League in a variety of ways: on the internet, in print (a brief history, bylaws, etc.) or in special meetings that provide a chance to meet and talk informally with "movers and shakers" of the League. New member kits are an especially effective tool for recruiting and orienting new members. They provide basic information about the League, help new members feel a part of the overall organization and give them something to take home. A kit should contain:

- A brief history of the organization and its purpose
- A membership application form
- A fact sheet on national, state, regional and local programs
- A copy of the local League bulletin

Serving on a committee or attending meetings are only two ways members can participate. Look at things from a fresh perspective. Develop "bite-sized" job descriptions that allow people to accomplish tasks in a short time. Try to match jobs with the skills, interests and time constraints of those you ask to do them. Be available to help, but give them freedom to be creative. Run efficient and productive meetings, so people will feel their time is well spent.

A LWVUS membership retention strategy pinpoints three objectives:

1. Recognition – spotlighting individual member achievements in the League and in the community;

2. Camaraderie – adding a social dimension to League activities;
3. Diversity – creating ways for all members to participate. Other objectives might be to provide special training in leadership skills, lobbying techniques or League issues.

## **FINANCES**

Leagues must give members the opportunity to support the League with contributions as well as time. In addition, Leagues need to seek support from the community at large: corporations, local businesses, individuals and foundations. Fund raising is a year-round effort, not just a once-a-year finance drive. Leagues should seek and accept money whenever a donor wants to give!

As with all nonprofit organizations, the role of the board is central in making certain the League is adequately financed. A member of the board heads a finance committee whose job it is to raise the money needed to finance the League budget. The chair and committee also act as finance advisors to the board. The committee may wish to include people outside the League as finance advisers and consultants.

Early in the League year, the finance committee prepares and presents to the board its suggestions for various fund raising activities for the year. The board amends, approves or rejects the suggestions. Every board member helps in the effort, ideally taking the lead by making personal contributions to help finance the League as well as using contacts and making finance calls to seek support of League projects and general operations.

## **MAILINGS**

Fund raising letters should make the case for why your League needs money: a specific project, equipment, a publication, etc. Always enclose a response form that suggests dollar amounts and a reply envelope in your mailing. Stamped reply envelopes should be included in the letters to your most generous donors; tests have shown that this increases the response rate.

Mailing fund raising appeals to individuals who do not know the League will almost certainly result in a net financial loss in the first year. Renew these requests in succeeding years.

Mailings to members and their friends are generally cost effective from the beginning. People give to people, and the more personalized your appeal, the more you will increase the response rate. Ask board members to write personal notes on letters to people they know. Give donors the opportunity to be part of the League's important work. And then give them credit!



## **APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION**

Everyone needs to be thanked. Make recognition awards to board members, League volunteers and contributors part of your League's development program. Be generous in giving credit to League members for their support and assistance in the fund raising effort, whether with personal notes or an informal get-together.

Donors - individuals, corporations, foundations, unions - all need to be thanked, recognized and involved in the program. Reports should be promptly made to donors who have funded or helped to fund a particular project, publication or activity to let them know that you do appreciate their help. Invitations to special League events, recognition plaques and listing the names of contributors in League bulletins or Annual Reports are easy and effective ways to let contributors know they are needed and appreciated.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors, led by the President or Steering Committee Chair, is the administrative and policy-making team for the League. It provides direction and leadership for carrying out member decisions and is ultimately responsible for all the League's plans, activities and follow-through in three broad interdependent areas:

- Organization and management functions (membership growth and participation, adequate financing and realistic budgeting, communications and efficient administrative operations)
- Program (study and action)
- Voter service/citizen education

The board is responsible for the well-being and smooth functioning of the Falmouth League.

The board as a whole:

- Carries out overall planning and decision making
- Supports membership and finance activities
- Represents and interprets the League in the community
- Safeguards the League's reputation for nonpartisanship

As an individual board member:

- Attend and participate in all Board Meetings
- Attend and support all League activities
- Inform yourself on League positions and practices
- Carry out your own assignments

The authority for the whole League operation rests with the board whose members together make the decisions. Board members often assume specific duties, but each also shares in the responsibility of the entire board for the League's operation. Each board member, for example, has a fiduciary responsibility for the organization.

## **FALMOUTH BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

### Role

- Makes the League's decisions and organizes its activities with the entire board

### General

- Attends Board Meetings (notifies if unable to attend)
- Assists in overall planning and decision making
- Supports and attends League activities
- Explains and promotes League in the community
- Understands and maintains League's nonpartisan political activity policy
- Attends state and regional League meetings
- Assists in fundraising activities
- Promotes membership

### Specific

- Carries out assignments
- Keeps a file with reports, publications, memos, etc.
- Brings plans to board for discussion and decision making
- Meets deadlines
- Obtains board approval prior to taking action
- Trains successor and passes on files

### Techniques

- Reviews assignment/portfolio and discusses past and ongoing projects with predecessor
- Forms a committee if appropriate for the assignment
- Provide information for the Bulletin when appropriate
- Involves other members; spreads the workload

The Falmouth League Board is responsible each year for setting priorities and, within those priorities, specific goals; periodically evaluates progress and makes changes in strategy as needed.

## **BOARD CALENDAR**

The June Board Meeting is the first meeting for the newly elected Board of Directors. The June Meeting Agenda should include:

- Review of the LWV mission statement
- Read aloud, revise and readopt the Non-Partisan Policy

- Review of current resources
- What was done in the past twelve months?
- What wasn't done?
- Review of continuing responsibilities
- What has to be done in the next twelve months? Can we get it done?
- Calendar planning for the fiscal year

### **June**

- Member Meeting (Third Thursday) usually Observer Corps reports
- Bulletin published
- Request for payment of dues

### **July**

- No meetings

### **August**

- No member meeting
- Social gathering
- July/August Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)
- Deadline for dues payment

### **September**

- Member meeting (Third Thursday)
- Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)
- Membership Directory Mailed

### **October**

- Member meeting (Third Thursday) and/or Candidates' Night
- Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)

### **November**

- Member Meeting (Third Thursday)
- Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)
- IRS tax form completed

**December**      No Meetings

### **January**

- Member Meeting (Third Thursday) Local and State or National Program Planning
- Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)

- Activate Nominating Committee and Budget Committee

### **February**

- Member Meeting (Third Thursday)
- Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)

### **March**

- Member Meeting (Third Thursday)
- Bulletin published
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)

### **April**

- Member Meeting (Third Thursday)
- Bulletin published including reports of Budget and Nominating Committees
- Board Meeting (Fourth Tuesday)

### **May**

- Annual Meeting
- Annual Report published
- Candidates' Night

## **TAKING ACTION**

You may think of League action as "Action Alerts" from LWVUS or "Calls to Action" from LWVMA, but much League work in the community is a type of action. Leagues also act when they:

- Testify before a local governing body
- Express League opinions on radio or TV or in the press
- Hold a local meeting on a timely political issue
- Take part in a parade
- Talk to a friend about League positions

Leagues act both on current program positions and on Principles. How the League acts - the process used both in making action decisions and in taking action - is what makes the LWV unique. Action that is based on decisions of informed members and that involves these members is what sets the League apart from other organizations. And the fact that we are members not only of a local League but of the Massachusetts' League and of the League of Women Voters of the United States as well makes us a powerful constituency when the League acts in concert.

It works well to assign the coordination of action to a League leader who likes to get things done. At the same time, the whole board must be involved in designing and directing the action strategy. When planning action strategy on a given issue, a board should evaluate supporting and opposing forces, select techniques likely to achieve desired results and create a favorable climate for effective advocacy. It should decide

on the kind, extent and timing of community involvement. Even more important, the board should identify specific areas of the plan that can be carried out by members directly and that utilize "member power" effectively. Members want to be where the action is. Lobbying, writing letters, circulating petitions, taking polls or conducting an interview are tangible ways members can get in on the action.

Prepare to deal with controversy by working closely with allies and know the opposition. Be sure your membership and key leaders in the community are behind you and set your League up for success. If the League wins, members will be ready to tackle the next issue with renewed confidence. If you lose, a noisy loss can call attention to an unsolved problem, and your League can continue efforts to achieve your goal through new approaches. The League will still have the respect of the community because you will have shown toughness and a willingness to back League stands with political action.

Get to know your elected and appointed officials. Congratulate selectmen, state legislators and members of Congress upon election or appointment; explain League positions; give them League publications; know their backers, interests, biases; take advantage of timely opportunities to see them. Don't be apologetic about taking officials' time, it is their job to listen to their constituents. It is especially effective to meet key constituents from their district.

Work through coalitions. Combining forces for joint action toward a limited and well-defined objective can double or triple League impact. However, before League boards decide to join a coalition, they should fully understand the commitment involved (time, money, resources) and should, if possible, plan to play a leadership role in order to influence the activities of the coalition. The goals, if not the motivation, of the League and the coalition should be compatible.

Leagues lobby at every level of government. Effective lobbying builds on these techniques:

- DO know as much as possible about the person you want to influence and establish good rapport.
- DO be aware of the legislator's history on the issue.
- DO argue persuasively. Plan your lobbying message ahead of time.
- DO be brief with your message and follow up periodically.
- DO ask for the legislator's point of view and listen closely to the reasoning.
- DON'T be confrontational or get into protracted arguments.
- DON'T be afraid to admit ignorance on specific points. Say that you will find the answer and report back - a good opportunity for follow-up.
- DON'T neglect the public officials whose views agree with the League's. Solicit their help in persuading others.

Monitoring, which usually focuses on the administrative process, can determine if both the letter and the spirit of the law are being carried out. Often it points up the need for

revisions in the law or in the regulations. Monitoring can happen at any stage - before or after a bill is passed, preceding or at the point of litigation.

## **WORKING TOGETHER TO INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY**

Effective lobbying on national program issues relies on a partnership among all League levels - lobbying in Washington and constituent lobbying at home.

Direct lobbying of members of Congress by their constituents often is the key to persuading them to support the League position. Members of Congress return to their states or districts regularly during congressional recesses. This is a good time to schedule a meeting with them or to catch them at public events.

## **PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DIRECTORS AND CHAIRMEN**

- Obtain available files and get advice on procedure from the preceding chair. Training on a one-to-one basis between the outgoing and incoming chair is vital. While a new chair will want to try new methods and have fresh ideas, it helps to know how things were done in the past, to be given some tips on getting the job done most effectively, and to know the rationale behind past board decisions that affect the portfolio.
- Attend a board training session when it is offered.
- Learn the name of the state director for your portfolio. Use director as needed.
- Develop a committee, both to assist you and to nurture participation and leadership.
- Inform the board of any plans made by your committee. Request board authorization to carry them out.
- Learn what local, state and national reports or board deadlines pertain to you. Plan ahead so you can meet deadlines easily.
- Prepare bulletin, program, or annual report materials as needed.
- Register for on-line communications from state and national leagues ([lwwus.org](http://lwwus.org) and [lwwma.org](http://lwwma.org)).
- Know what funds your portfolio has been budgeted and find out how you are reimbursed for expenses.
- Attend all local League meetings if possible.
- Every local League receives all state and national program materials. Make arrangements to obtain the materials which are pertinent to your portfolio.
- Get help from your president or Steering Committee, board members, committees, state board and staff and the national board and staff when you need it.

## REPORTING TO THE BOARD

- If you have a report, let the Steering Committee know you would like to be put on the agenda for the next Board Meeting.

## WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

- Progress in organizing a job, or in getting it accomplished.
- Reports on consensus meetings and proposed position statements.
- Decisions a committee has made. Problems encountered in getting a job done.
- Information on resources which are significant to the League. For example, mention if there is another organization taking an active role in this area which may be a resource or partner.

## WHEN SHOULD YOU ASK FOR A BOARD DECISION?

- When you are going to spend more money than budgeted.
- When you want to hold a public or membership meeting (not committee meetings).
- When you want to publish something or distribute materials to members or to the public.
- When you want a statement made in the League's name. This should be done by the League spokesperson, based on consultation with you.
- When you want to make any demand on the League's time, money or reputation.
- When you want to establish a policy or solve a problem.
- When you are not sure whether you should ask for a board decision.

## HOW DO YOU REPORT?

If background information is necessary for an informed board decision, consider sending out a summary with the agenda. At the beginning of your report, state what you are going to do. If you want a board decision, state clearly and briefly what has led up to your request. Explain why the League should act. Do we have a position? What is it? Do we need a policy? Do we have one already?

Generally, you know more about possible courses of action than anyone else. **MAKE A MOTION** that your recommendation be adopted so the board discussion will be focused.

## **BOARD JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

(Composition: 1st V.P., 2nd V.P., three Board Members)

Acts in the name of the Board between Board Meetings when necessary

- Plans Board agendas
- May discuss questions brought to it and make recommendations to the Board
- May make routine decisions on items not needing full Board approval.
- Reports actions of Steering Committee meetings to full Board

### **PRESIDENT/STEERING COMMITTEE**

- Administers, coordinates, initiates League business.
- Elects a Chair
- Oversees all League activities
- Officially represents the LWV
- Reviews the LWVF Bulletin, public releases, all League publications and League testimony for compliance with League policy.
- If president is unfilled, the Steering Committee assumes above responsibilities

### **FIRST VICE PRESIDENT**

- Oversees all state, national and local programs
- Oversees Legislative, Observer Corps and Voter Service activities
- Coordinates local, state and national program planning
- Becomes Acting President according to bylaws

### **SECOND VICE PRESIDENT**

- Oversees Membership, meeting organization, Publicity
- Oversees Publications, Hospitality, Development
- Oversees Telephone & Email Trees
- Coordinates calendar planning
- Oversees Annual Meeting arrangements

### **SECRETARY**

- Records, transcribes and sends agenda and minutes of all Board Meetings to Board members and LWVMA ([www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org))
- Records minutes of Annual Meeting, gives them to an appointed three-member Reading Committee, sends copy to LWVMA
- Ensures that annual reports are typed



- Distributes forms and coordinates information received for state and national annual reports

## **TREASURER**

- Responsible for all money and accounts; pays bills
- Responsible for administering the budget, is ex officio on Budget Committee
- Prepares monthly financial report for the Board
- Prepares annual financial report for state and national League
- Prepares and balances books for audit prior to Annual Meeting

## **VOTER SERVICE CHAIR**

- Educates and informs members and public about government and encourages citizen participation
- Holds "How to Run for Office" workshops
- Promotes registration drives
- Organizes Candidates Nights
- Provides Election Day services
- Disseminates Voter Service publications through schools, libraries, community organizations and individuals
- Recruits members to record attendance at Town Meeting

## **BULLETIN EDITOR (may be off-board)**

- Collects and organizes material for the Bulletin
- Prepares for printer, collates and mails each issue
- Emails the bulletin to [www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org) .

## **WEBMASTER (may be off-board)**

- Collects and organizes material for the website of [www.lwvf.org](http://www.lwvf.org).
- Keeps website up to date and submits bills for domain name and for webhost

## **STUDY CHAIR**

- Establishes a committee.
- Plans timeline of tasks, divides committee duties, makes budget requests
- Plans and directs necessary research
- Reports to Board on a regular basis
- Prepares Bulletin information
- Coordinates activities with Meeting Coordinator, and Publicity Chair to plan and publicize meetings
- After meetings, writes a final report and maintains files

## **PUBLICITY CHAIR**

- Keeps community aware of goals and activities of LWV through newspapers, photos, posters, speaker's bureau, radio, TV, website.
- Attends meetings of committees planning public events such as local studies, Voters Services, etc. to gather information to prepare press releases and PSAs to various local media
- Clears releases with appropriate Board members in charge of particular events.

## **MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

- Recruits new members by personal contact and media
- Distributes brochures/other media to regular sites (Main Library, Town Hall)
- Refers new members to appropriate committee chairs
- Keeps membership lists current and updates local and national databases
- Prepares and mails the Directory each year
- Prepares and mails dues renewal letters
- Plans recruitment and new member welcome events
- Prepares articles for the Bulletin regarding membership activities\
- May be responsible for sending dues bills, collecting dues and reporting membership to local, state and national Leagues

## **DEVELOPMENT CHAIR**

- Responsible for planning and organizing fundraising activities to help the League achieve its financial goals
- Responsible for obtaining financial support from the community to supplement dues and member contributions
- Keeps up-to-date donor and potential donor lists
- Seeks direct contributions through the Finance Drive
- Seeks alternate sources of income as needed: Bulletin ads, fundraising projects, etc.

## **FOLLOW-UP COORDINATOR**

- The LWVF Follow-up Coordinator role is to provide a mechanism and process to organize the Annual Meeting Table Talk suggestions. The first step here is to inventory and group the suggestions, assigning priority, level of effort and timeframe to these to share with the League.
- Build on the Leagues' institutional knowledge by capturing, memorializing and sharing as much of this vast wealth of knowledge as possible.

## LEGISLATIVE CHAIR

- Receives legislative information from LWVMA, keeps up with the state and national program and the LWVMA Legislative Priorities, informs Board
- Contacts legislators in response to Action Alerts; works with President to organize member response to legislature; knows who is interested in what issues
- Organizes meetings with legislators
- Works with Program specialists and Publicity

## NATURAL RESOURCES CHAIR

- Educates and informs board and membership about Falmouth's Natural Resource management programs, issues, and needs
- May propose action related to Natural Resource conservation
- Informs the public about League environmental positions of local, state, and national priority

## OBSERVER CORPS CHAIR

- Maintains current list of local governmental bodies with duties and meeting times; decides with Board which bodies to observe
- Recruits and trains observers; provides observers with copies of forms and Open Meeting Law
- Collects observer reports, edits for Bulletin; keeps President or Steering Committee and Board informed
- Holds periodic meetings of observers to exchange information, ideas and concerns.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CHAIR

- Maintains the [LWVF Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/LWVofFalmouthMA/) (https://www.facebook.com/LWVofFalmouthMA/)
- In order to spread the word about what LWVF is doing, state and national news as well as updates on local elections, we invite you to visit the League of Women Voters of Falmouth Facebook page. There's a big VOTE at the top of the page. We currently have 92 people 'liking' the page and we need more. Lots more. In the right column side of the page scroll down to the Community link, where you can see who else has 'liked' the page. Below that there is an "Invite Friends" box. If you click on that link, a list of all of your friends will appear and you check each one, go to the bottom of the column and invite them to like the page.

# COMMITTEES

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

**Composition:** Three off-board members one of whom is chairman, elected at Annual Meeting and two board members appointed by the Board. (See bylaws.)

Individuals chosen to serve on the nominating committee should be well acquainted with the membership, have a thorough understanding of the League and how it operates, and be well grounded in the League's nonpartisan policy.

The Nominating Committee selects nominees for officers and directors as well as members of the succeeding Nominating Committee for election at the annual meeting.

Look for people who can grow with the job. Experience in a particular area/portfolio is not necessarily a prerequisite for service on the board. You want people who can assume, and also delegate, responsibility; people who can inspire others to follow, who have a sense of perspective and humor, who are imaginative, creative, and flexible.

Encourage member suggestions of potential leaders through notices in the bulletin, at meetings, by phone. Consult the outgoing president, officers, and board members for suggestions of people who have done outstanding jobs or who show promise. Ask current committee chairs, especially the membership chair, for names.

The first meeting should come early in the League year, no later than February. The nominating committee's goal is to select a slate of individuals who have agreed to be nominated after clear explanations of the purpose and policies of the League, notably:

- An accurate description of an officer's or board member's job, with an estimate of the time needed to do it, as well as the tools, training and help that will be available, including reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses
- The importance of attending Board Meetings (Fourth Tuesday)
- The nature and importance of overall board planning, decisions and evaluation
- The nonpartisan political policy of the League.

In the League the nominating committee presents a single slate of officers and directors to the annual meeting. Candidates for League boards do not run on an individual program or platform. However, in keeping with democratic principles League bylaws do provide for nominations from the floor at the annual meeting.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

- Works to support the LWVUS position on Natural Resources, which is to “Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationship of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources”
- Identifies need for action related to Natural Resource conservation based on local, state and national League environmental position priorities
- Works with others (the Town and local organizations including Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Association to Preserve Cape Cod, The 300 Committee, Falmouth Water Stewards) to protect Falmouth’s critical water resources.

## **OBSERVER CORPS**

Effective local action depends on reliable information about the various boards, commissions, committees and other policy-making bodies in the community. The best way to become knowledgeable about local government is by having well trained observers attend as many meetings as possible.

Awareness of the problems coming before boards and committees will help the League choose local program studies that will be appropriate for action and helpful to the community. Pooling of Observer Corps information may reveal duplication of efforts or lack of necessary action on the part of local boards.

The League Board sets priorities for the local governmental boards and committees to be observed. In all communities the top priority would be the selectmen or city council and the school committee. Also included could be the Planning Board, the Housing Authority, the Conservation Commission, and other agencies responsible for areas where the League has program concerns. If observers are inexperienced, it may be helpful to have two observers go to the same meeting. A list of substitute observers is important.

Send letters to those committees which will be observed, giving the names of the observers. The chairman should accompany a new observer and introduce that person to the committee members before the meeting begins. A list of the observers and their assignments should be given to the League Board and printed in the Bulletin. Each observer should carry a copy of the Open Meeting Law in case there are problems in being admitted to a meeting.

The most effective way to recruit observers is by personal contact. Telephone every League member who might be interested; don't decide for them that they are too busy. Sell the idea at League meetings. New League members and newcomers to the community can learn about their community by being observers for the League.

Have a prospective observers meeting. Review the function of important boards and commissions as well as their schedule of meetings. Describe your League's local program and how beneficial observers are to League action.

The Observer Corps chairman should have a meeting with observers at the beginning of the year. New and experienced observers can go over their duties. New observers who come in later in the year should meet with their predecessors for a briefing on the issues of current interest. Get minutes of the governmental agency's meetings in the recent past so the new observer will be informed.

Observers should understand the legal basis, structure, procedures and responsibilities of the committee they are to observe. They should also be able to identify the committee members.

**Observers only observe**, they do not participate in the action. After observing sessions of a local governmental body, the observer should fill out a report provided by the Observer Corps Chair. Reports should be factual.

## VOTER SERVICE

Directed at all voters in the community, election-related services are varied. The League of Women Voters of Falmouth is involved in the following activities:

- Making available registration and voting information via brochures, newspaper ads, website
- Organizing voter registration campaigns targeting first-time voters, especially the youth of the community.
- Selecting topics to be addressed and organizing questions to be asked at Candidates Nights..
- Collaborating with the local newspaper to publish candidates questionnaires to help voters make informed choices. Questions are confined to local issues. For fairness as well as reasons of space, the League sets and enforces limits on the maximum number of words candidates can use in answering. Questions are sent to all candidates at the same time and the deadline for the return of answers are clearly stated. If a candidate declines to participate, it is made clear to the public that all candidates were invited to respond.
- In providing voter information the LWVF always makes sure that the ground rules are set to ensure that the activity is conducted in a strictly nonpartisan manner. This is a League policy that cannot be waived. The LWVF needs to consider carefully how their participation in all activities affect their nonpartisan status or the public's perception of the League's nonpartisanship.

## **PUBLICITY**

Good public relations take time, planning, decision making, follow through, and knowing our local media and how they function. As a member of the LWVF Board, the Publicity chair has a good sense of the range of activities that the League can undertake.

The LWVF Steering Committee will make most public statements for the League, but the Publicity chair also needs to know who is the best spokesperson on a particular issue, who has the background material needed for a feature story on an LWVF activity, and who has contacts at town hall or the TV and radio stations.

The LWVF's visibility in the community depends on how successful it is in getting its activities covered by the media. The Publicity chair should be familiar with local media personnel, practices and needs, deadlines and editorial policy.

### **Publicity tools include:**

- A press release is the most common means of communicating with the press. Include the name and phone number of the League's Publicity chair. Distribute by hand, mail or electronically to the Falmouth Enterprise, the Falmouth Bulletin, WCAI, FCTV, and the Cape Cod Times.
- Personal contact with all local media personnel. Provide the LWVF website and/or an LWVF fact sheet, if requested.
- Pictures of League activities with captions.

### **BYLAWS COMMITTEE** (Off-Board Chair)

- Review bylaws for conformity with national bylaws
- Submits proposed changes to members at Annual Meeting, first notifying them in the Bulletin or by mail the required length of time before Annual Meeting
- Presents recommended changes to Annual Meeting for a vote.
- Submits proposed bylaw changes to LWVMA.

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE** (Off-Board Chair; Treasurer and President are members ex officio; two from general membership)

- Begins work in January by surveying Board for ideas and projects for coming year; gets list of incurred expenses from Treasurer
- Draws up financial plan incorporating priorities and needs for next year
- Presents proposed budget to Board for approval and, if approved, publishes it for members either in the Bulletin or by mail the required length of time before Annual Meeting
- Presents the budget at Annual Meeting

## LWVF BULLETIN

The League's most basic tool for communicating with your members is the Bulletin. The board will set overall policy for the content and tone of the Bulletin. The President/Steering Committee generally approves final copy. Even if elected officials, contributors or other nonmembers are added to the Bulletin mailing list, its contents should still be directed to the primary audience: League members.

Keep in mind that the Bulletin is the only communication from your League that many members will receive on a regular basis.

**BYLAWS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS**  
(ADOPTED 1954 AS AMENDED 1970, 1973, 1974, 1977, 1988, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2008, 2011, 2016, 2019)

### ARTICLE I

**Sec.1. Name.** The name of this organization shall be League of Women Voters of Falmouth, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWVF or as the League. This local League is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWVUS, and of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts.

### ARTICLE II Purposes and Policy

**Sec. 1. Purposes.** The purposes of the League are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

**Sec. 2. Political Policy.** The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

### ARTICLE III Membership

**Sec. 2. Types of Membership.**

**A) Voting Members.** Persons at least 16 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues, and of the LWVUS; (1) those who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be life members excused from the payment of dues.

**B) Associate Members.** All others who join the League shall be associate members.

### ARTICLE IV Board of Directors

**Sec. 1. Number: Manner of Selection and Term of Office.** The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the League and not more than 16 Directors. At least four Directors shall be elected by the general membership at each Annual Meeting and shall serve for a term of two years, or until their



successors have been elected and qualified. Additional Directors (not to exceed 16 in total) may be appointed by the Board of Directors as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the League. The terms of office of the appointed Directors shall be one year and shall expire at the conclusion of the next Annual Meeting.

**Sec. 2. Qualifications.** No person shall be elected or appointed or shall continue to serve as an officer or director of this organization unless that person is a voting member of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth.

**Sec. 3. Vacancies.** Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors by reason of the resignation, death or disqualification of an officer or elected member may be filled, until the next Annual Meeting, by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Directors. Three consecutive absences from a Board meeting of any member without a valid reason shall be deemed a resignation.

**Sec. 4. Powers and Duties.** The Board of Directors shall have full charge of the property and business of the organization, with full power and authority to manage and conduct same, subject to the instructions of the general membership. It shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the Program as adopted by the National Convention, the State Convention, and the Annual Meeting. The Board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary.

**Sec 5. Meetings.** There shall be at least nine regular meetings of the Board of Directors annually. The President may call special meetings of the Board of Directors and shall call a special meeting upon the written request of five members of the Board.

**Sec. 6. Quorum.** A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

**Sec. 7. Remote Meetings.** If circumstances make it inconvenient or impossible for the board to meet, board members may conduct business by holding a meeting through electronic communications (e.g., e-mail or conference call by telephone). Such meetings shall be referred to as remote meetings. All materials for consideration at a remote meeting must be distributed to all members of the board. Remote meetings may count as any of the nine regular board meetings required each year if minutes are kept.

## ARTICLE V

### Officers

**Sec. 1. Enumeration and Election of Officers.** The officers of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth shall be a President, a first Vice President, a second Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer who shall be elected for terms of two years by the general membership at an Annual Meeting and take office as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Sec. 2. The President or Chair of the Steering Committee:**

- A) shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Board of Directors.
- B) may, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer, sign or endorse checks, drafts and notes.
- C) shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.
- D) shall have such usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of the President and perform such other duties as may be designated by the Board.

**Sec. 3. The Vice Presidents.** The two Vice Presidents, in the order of their rank, shall, in the event of absence, disability, or death of the President, possess all the powers and perform all the duties of that office, until such time as the Board of Directors shall select one of its members to fill the vacancy. The Vice Presidents shall perform such other duties as the President and Board may designate.

**Sec. 4. The Secretary.** The secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings of the membership and of the board. The secretary shall notify all officers and directors of their election and shall sign with the president/steering committee designee all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the

board and shall perform such other duties as the president/steering committee designee and board shall direct.

**Sec. 5. The Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall collect and receive all moneys due. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of these moneys, shall deposit them in a bank designated by the Board of Directors, and shall disburse the same as required. The Treasurer shall present statements to the Board at their regular meetings and an Annual Report to the Annual Meeting.

**Sec. 6. Steering Committee.** When there is no candidate for President, or no sitting President, the Board of Directors ("Board") shall nominate a Steering Committee drawn from the Board to perform the duties of the President. The Steering Committee shall not exceed 5 voting members and shall be elected by the general membership at the Annual Meeting for a term of one year. The Steering Committee shall choose a Chair. The Steering Committee shall meet as necessary prior to each regular Board meeting to make recommendations to the Board on matters of policy, procedure and concern.

## **ARTICLE VI Financial Administration**

**Sec. 1. Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth shall commence on the first day of July each year.

**Sec. 2. Dues.** Dues shall be voted by the membership at the Annual Meeting and shall be payable immediately. Members who fail to pay their dues within three months after the Annual Meeting shall be dropped from the membership rolls.

**Sec. 3. Budget.** A budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted by the Board of Directors to the Annual Meeting for adoption. The budget shall include support for the work of the League as a whole.

**Sec. 4. Budget Committee.** A Budget Committee to consist of a Chairperson, The Treasurer, and no more than two from the general membership, shall be appointed by the Board of Directors at least two months prior to the Annual Meeting to prepare a budget for the ensuing year. The proposed budget shall be sent to all members at least two weeks before the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall not be eligible to serve as a Chairperson of the Budget Committee.

**Sec. 5. Oversight.** Annually a non-Board member will be appointed to review the treasurer's financial statements, records and bank statements. A report of good order shall be presented at Annual Meeting and a vote taken.

### **Sec. 6. Distribution of Funds on Dissolution**

In the event of the dissolution of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth all monies and securities which may at the time be owned by or under the control of the League shall be paid to the LWVMA after the state and national per member payments and other obligations have been met. All other property of whatsoever nature, whether real, personal, or mixed that may at the time be owned or under the control of the LWVMA shall be disposed of to such person, organization, or corporation for such public, charitable or educational use and purposes as the board in its absolute discretion may designate.

## **ARTICLE VII Meetings**

**Sec. 1. Membership Meetings.** There shall be at least four meetings of the membership each year. Time and place shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

**Sec. 2. Annual Meeting.** Annual Meeting shall be held no more than 90 days prior to or 30 days after the end of the Fiscal year, the exact date to be determined by the Board of Directors. The Annual Meeting shall:

- A) Adopt a local Program for the ensuing year,

- B) Elect officers, directors and the chairman and two members of the Nominating Committee,
- C) Adopt an adequate budget, and
- D) Transact such other business as may properly come before it.

**Sec. 3. Quorum.** Twenty percent (20%) of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for conducting business at the Annual Meeting of the LWVF, provided written notice of the meeting has been sent to the membership at least one week in advance of the meeting.

## **ARTICLE VIII Nominations and Elections**

**Sec. 1. Nominating Committee.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be members of the Board of Directors. The Chairman and two members, who shall not be members of the Board, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the current Nominating Committee. The other members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors no later than the subsequent January Board meeting. Any vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors. Suggestions for nominations may be sent to the Committee by any voting member.

**Sec. 2. Report of Nominating Committee and Nominations from the Floor.** The report of the Nominating Committee of its nominations for Officers, Directors, Steering Committee, if necessary, and members of the succeeding Nominating Committee shall be sent to all members at least two weeks before the date of the Annual Meeting. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be presented to the Annual Meeting. Immediately following the presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

**Sec. 3. Elections.** The election shall be by ballot, except when there is only one nominee for each office, the Secretary may be instructed to cast one ballot for the entire slate. A majority vote of those voting members present and voting shall constitute an election. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.

## **ARTICLE IX Program**

**Sec. 1. Authorization.** The governmental principles adopted by the National Convention, and supported by the League as a whole, constitute the authorization for the adoption of the Program.

**Sec. 2. Program.** The Program of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth shall consist of action to protect the right to vote of every citizen and those governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action.

**Sec. 3. Action by the Annual Meeting.** The Annual Meeting shall act upon the Program using the following Procedures:

- A) The Board of Directors shall consider the recommendations from the voting members and shall formulate a Proposed Program.
- B) The Proposed Program shall be sent to all members AT LEAST two weeks before the Annual Meeting.
- C) A majority vote of voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting shall be required for adoption of subjects in the Proposed Program as presented to the Annual Meeting by the Board of Directors.
- D) Recommendations for Program submitted by voting members one month prior to the Annual Meeting but not recommended by the Board of Directors may be considered by the Annual Meeting provided that
  - (1) The Annual Meeting shall order consideration by a majority vote and
  - (2) The Annual Meeting shall adopt the item by a majority vote.

E) Changes in the Program, in the case of altered conditions, may be made provided that Information concerning the proposed changes has been sent to all members at least two weeks prior to a general membership meeting at which the change is to be discussed and voted upon.

**Sec. 4. Member Action.** Members may act in the name of the League of Women Voters only when authorized to do so by the Board of Directors or the President.

**ARTICLE X  
Parliamentary Authority**

**Sec. 1. Parliamentary Authority.** The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE XI  
Amendments**

**Sec. 1. Amendments.** These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting, provided the amendments were submitted to the membership in writing at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

Reviewed by the Board of Directors November 27, 2018  
Approved at the LWV of Falmouth Annual Meeting, May 4, 2019:

Joan Boyer  
Kathy Mortenson