

League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties
Annual Report 2020-2021

May 2021



We live in an age in which the fundamental principles to which we subscribe
- liberty, equality and justice for all - are encountering extraordinary
challenges, ... But it is also an age in which we can join hands with others
who hold to those principles and face similar challenges.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg



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LWV/ABC PRESIDENT'S REFLECTIONS 2020-2021

Dear Members,

We have had a jammed packed year! While the pandemic made our work more challenging, our people came up with creative ways to engage voters, protect our natural resources, plan to engage the public in civic events, and fight social inequality. I want to celebrate all the hard work conducted and accolades received while doing our best for making democracy work. While I don't want to steal the thunder from our committees and their report which follow, I do want to share what I think made a difference: Partnerships.

Over the last year, our committees used or formed partnerships to make our work more effective. We worked with local libraries, local governments, The Sierra Club, Common Cause of Wisconsin, our local tribes, Midwest Environmental Advocates, the UW Extension offices and the Ashland-Bayfield Counties Bar Association, just to name a few. Our members provided written comments, oral testimonies and encouraged local governments to host listening sessions on a variety of topics germane to our cause in support of the people of northern Wisconsin. Our Voter Services committee and members were instrumental in getting the Fair Maps referendums to the Bayfield and Ashland County Boards and testifying at the board meetings where it was decided that the Fair Maps referendums were put on the ballot in November and April respectively. Both referendums passed by large margins.

At times, the work seems endless. As we all know, now there is even a greater push to suppress voter rights and access. We've encountered a year where some politicians put their own self interest before the interest of the people and fought hard to keep some people from voting. It is still hard to believe our capitol was attacked with the intent of overturning our election which had a chilling effect on Americans across the country, but sadly, it happened. As I'm writing this, the Wisconsin Supreme Court just dismissed the case that would have led to the purging of approximately 66,000 Wisconsin registered voters. I'm thankful for that, but I also realize there will be an endless onslaught of tactics to suppress voters. And, that is why we do what we do. We will continue to fight for the right of people to vote, we will fight social inequality, we will fight to protect our natural resources, we will engage the public in civics and civility, and we will fight to have a more diverse, equitable and inclusive League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties.

I urge all of you, if you want to step up your level of involvement in the League, please review the reports below and if interested, contact the Committee chair. You can start by just attending a meeting and see if that works for you. The committees are where the work is done. Interested in being a board member? Please contact me! We have openings! Also – please check the membership list at the end of this report to ensure that your contact information is correct.

Wishing you and your family peace and good health. We're approaching the light at the end of the tunnel with this pandemic, so I am hopeful that in our new year, we will be able to gather together in-person at some point and enjoy each other's company.

Warmly,

Sue Niemi
President
League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties

VOTER SERVICES REPORT, Committee Chair Open

During 2020-2021 our Voter Services Committee has had a productive year because of the hard work and valued commitment of members and friends.

In addition to generous contributions designated to Voter Services by donors, costs incurred were also covered by a \$2,000 grant from the LWVWI to help get out the vote.

- Due to COVID-19 the vast majority of activities were held outside or with virtual platforms. Appreciation goes out to our LWV/ABC president for scheduling most of the meetings!
- The August 26 ratification of the 19th Amendment Centennial was celebrated throughout our region with library books, historical displays, period costumes, signs, bell ringing, bike rides and car parades.
- In spite of the pandemic we did in-person voter registration using myvote.wi.gov in both Sawyer and Bayfield Counties. Several comprehensive articles on voting by one of our Leaguers were published in the Ashland Daily Press.
- The Statewide Nonpartisan Voter Helpline (608-285-2141) accepting calls and texts, had local publicity and volunteers, including radio public service announcements (PSAs) aired by WPR.
- Voter information flyers with deadlines, websites and phone numbers were distributed through Meals on Wheels; the Hayward Community Food Shelf, Sawyer County; The Red Cliff Food Shelf and CORE in Bayfield County; and The Brick in Ashland County.
- Successful candidate Forums were organized via Zoom in the fall for Bad River Tribal Council candidates, and in the spring for the Bayfield County District Judge race and contested seats for Ashland City Council.
- Free Rides to the polls from Namekagon Transit and Bay Area Rural Transit (BART) were publicized via print and social media.
- Officials were contacted regarding voting information for eligible incarcerated persons
- Post election audits were observed in November by members in the townships of Bass Lake and Hayward in Sawyer County; Bayview and Russell, in Bayfield County; and the City of Ashland.
- PSAs, articles, letters to the editor (LTEs) and ads were submitted to the Sawyer County Record and Sawyer County Gazette and radio stations WRLS, WHMS and WOJB regarding voter registration sessions at the Weiss Community Library in Hayward, the grocery store, Hayward Community Food Shelf, and LCO store; and information about absentee voting, early voting, myvote.wi.gov and vote411.org.
- Two WRLS radio appearances took place on Lifestyles North: one regarding the Centennial Celebration and the other with the Hayward Town Clerk sharing voting information.
- Voter Information was posted throughout the year on the LWV/ABC website, Facebook page and Twitter account by our webmaster. The vote411.org website was implemented to invite local candidates to upload answers to questions in Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer counties. Members worked diligently to secure the contact information from municipal clerks.
- In League articles about Fair Maps and Voter Information appeared in the Bottom Line in October, February and March. An LTE was submitted to the Ashland Daily Press regarding Fair Maps.
- Both oral and written comments were submitted to the Governor's People's Maps Commission.
- End Gerrymandering yard signs were secured and distributed throughout the region.
- Hundreds of League of Women Voters (LWVWI) Fair Maps brochures were placed on doorknobs within Ashland city limits and mailed to top voters in the rest of Ashland County.
- LWV/ABC collaboration with Administrators and Supervisors made it possible for voters to pass Fair Maps referendums in Bayfield and Ashland Counties in November and April respectively.
- Flyers were posted numerous times in various public locations throughout the three counties.
- A municipal clerk presentation was arranged for the Washburn senior class on voter registration and voting procedures.
- Voting information was sent to students and families of the Ashland High School community.
- An Ashland High School teacher volunteered to teach lessons on Fair Maps in their History classes.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Over the past year, we have operated without a Communications Chair. Despite that, Anne Chartier worked with our new graphic designer, Jack Ring, to produce three newsletters. Most of our communication expenses were in the area of Voter Services, and we received \$2000 from the state League to help cover the costs of advertising in the Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer counties. Through energized Voter Services members, we were able to submit public service announcements on WPR. The state League also provided us with yard signs, bumper stickers, stickers and other materials to ensure our messages were spread across the area. We really need a communications chair, or co-chairs. If this is of interest to you, please let us know!

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT REPORT, Committee Chair Bev Lindell

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. Definition of civic engagement New York Times.

The past few decades we have witnessed increased polarization in social and political groups. Recently, we have heard alerts from historians, philosophers, political strategists etc. that this division or “tribalism” is now a serious threat to our democracy. Politicians cannot agree and policy development is stalled. International relations are damaged by inconsistent diplomacy. And, on an individual basis, we find our own interaction with family and friends, challenged by strong emotions around competing social/political views.

The capitol riots of January 6, 2021 demonstrated the explosive nature of polarization with factions claiming stolen election vs. election interference; voter fraud vs. voter suppression. cursory reviews of what has led to this chasm include distrust of government, changing demographics, social media, and recent steep decline in civic group participation.

On a positive note, community groups and organizations have recognized these threats and are mobilizing to understand and start to make changes that will lead to increased civility within communities and progress in positive reform.

Our civic engagement committee has been involved in the same process. The isolation caused by the virus has interrupted in person gatherings but it has given us time to step back and thoughtfully study the dilemma. In the past several months, our committee has been in touch with other organizations with similar interests in CE. In November we joined with the Ashland/Bayfield Bar association, UW extension, and Northland College representative to discuss ways we could work together. Because of the scope of topic, two subcommittees were formed; civic education and civic engagement (or how to encourage involvement in community groups.)

Civic education subcommittee reports they are reviewing civics based curriculum; encouraging school districts to adopt a mandatory civics course as a graduation requirement; and developing a list of guest speakers available for schools.

The civics engagement subcommittee had two zoom conversations with community leaders about ideas to improve civic involvement and action. Our committee members have participated webinars and skills training programs related to civility and civil engagement. We are working hard to have a schedule of programs and projects ready for the time when we can be together in person.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY REPORT, Committee Chair Jan Penn

For a Committee already focused on the economic challenges for low and moderate income citizens of our two counties, living through the pandemic year and watching the impact on families and individuals as businesses shuttered and the recreation industry constricted was alarming. The ongoing challenges of public school budget cuts, high health care costs, shortage of affordable housing, low wages, long time decline in investment in mental health AoDa and aging services were only made more apparent with the pandemic. The Committee applauded all the wonderful ways our communities mobilized mutual support activities. Clearly, however, the 40 years of stagnating wages and Wisconsin austerity budgets needed to be revisited. The Committee discussed options for action. There was agreement that current fiscal problems resulted from years of purposeful revenue constraints, from decline in State Aids to local communities, levy limits, unfair tax policy, and an ideology that if you just cut government funding then private sector investment would move in to fill the demand. For counties with populations the size of Ashland (16,000) and Bayfield (13,000), that never made sense. If it had been profitable to install broadband, fix our aging infrastructure, deliver long term care services to people with mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction or disabilities, offer affordable health insurance, build moderate income housing, companies would have flocked into the market.

An important role for our LWV/ABC became how to get some of this analysis out. How to more assertively raise our rural voices with the Wisconsin Legislature in a new biennial budget year became the Committee's primary advocacy goal. On February 26 the Committee met via zoom with Rep. Beth Meyers and her aide Christian Plata and a staff person from the Legislative Reference Bureau, Ryan Knocke, to seek their advice on how to be effective advocates. Their advice to get as much advocacy going in our own back yard through organizations or local print and social media was embraced by the Committee. The Committee decided to focus on getting our local County elected officials, given their clout, to use speak up more loudly with not just the Legislature, but also the WI Counties Association. The Ashland County 2021 revenue crisis also presented some urgency to enlist more local bi-partisan advocacy with the WI Legislature. Impressed with the recommendations of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission Report on Rural Prosperity released in December 2020, the Committee wrote a transmittal cover letter from the LWV/ABC and sent the report to each Ashland County Board member, also requesting to present at their March 9 meeting. The response and energy expressed by the Ashland Board was encouraging. The Committee made a similar approach to the Bayfield County Board at their March 30 meeting and was met by a correspondingly positive response. The Committee then shifted attention to organizing written testimony for the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee at their April public hearings. The decision was made to make a bi-partisan appeal by sending copies of all LWV/ABC letters not just to Beth Meyers and Janet Bewley, our representatives, but to all members of Joint Finance. Committee members divided up the key issues (fair taxes, Badger Care expansion, affordable housing, improved unemployment system, fully funding public education and criminal justice reform) and wrote letters sent under the signature of our President Sue Niemi. They also worked to get friends and family to submit their own personal testimony. They also wrote opinion pieces for both the Ashland Daily Press and the Bottomline newspapers urging Chequamegon Bay area citizens to raise their voices through letters to Joint Finance.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, Committee Chair Gail Syverud

I am happy to report that our local League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties is growing. As of March 31, we have a total of 105 members who are local, state and national members.

I was interested in where these members lived so I sorted the membership list by mailing address. What I found is somewhat surprising. The 3 cities that had the most members included Ashland, Washburn and Hayward. Please look below to see results for all the towns and cities.

Ashland	28
Bayfield	10
Cable	5
Hayward	15
Highbridge	3
Iron River	3
Mason	3
Saxon	2
Washburn	23
No WI	7
Beyond No WI	3
MN	3

So as you can see the City of Hayward is showing that there are 15 League members living in that geographic location. I believe the growth of membership can be attributed to the dedication of Margie Braun and a group of individuals who wanted to make sure democracy was working in Sawyer County. They went to work and formed a Voter Services Committee and did an amazing job of helping people get registered to vote. In addition, they assisted some who had new addresses to verify that information with the Department of Motor Vehicles. When Covid 19 hit the area, they moved from the grocery stores and set up a drive up - stay in your car registration process.

All of this work was accomplished under the administrative support of the LWV of ABC and LWV of WI. Margie Braun coordinated voter education in her neighborhood and moved on to serve on our League Board and act as Voter Services Chair for Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer County. Our League is always open to partnerships and this was a win win for all involved including the voters of Sawyer County!

NATURAL RESOURCES ADVOCACY REPORT, Committee Chair Joan Elias

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has strong positions supporting Tribal Sovereignty, renewable energy, and protection of natural resources, especially waterways and drinking water. With these state positions as backing, the LWV-ABC Natural Resources Advocacy Committee worked on a number of issues affecting our region. This report describes our activities from March 2020 through March 2021.

Opposition to the re-routing and expansion of Enbridge Line 5

- We brought the travelling Tar Sands Storytelling project to Salmagundi. Unfortunately the gallery had to close because of Covid restrictions before many people had a chance to view the display.
- In early summer 2020 we provided comments on behalf of LWVWI for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) public hearing regarding the drafting of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and decisions on permitting wetland and waterway crossings. We requested specific information be included in the EIS and urged careful scrutiny of existing scientific literature when reviewing wetland/waterway crossing permits. Our thorough, lengthy comments can be found on the LWVABC website (lwwabcwi.org).
- The US Army Corps of Engineers held two public comment periods regarding the potential of Enbridge constructing a tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac in Michigan. We provided comments both times opposing the construction of such a dangerous project that would threaten our Great Lakes.
- In September 2020, members of the committee stood along Highway 2 holding signs in opposition to Enbridge Line 5 across from the outdoor gathering Communities United by Water, hosted by the Penokee Hills Education Project. We received many positive responses from passing cars, as judged by horns beeping and people waving or giving us a thumbs-up. We also distributed pipeline related information on the state and federal water permitting processes, tribal rights and resources, and local government regulations.
- We submitted comments to the Mashkiziibii (Bad River) Natural Resource Department regarding two anti-degradation decisions on projects proposed by Enbridge: 1) to conduct horizontal direction drilling under the Bad River where Line 5 is threatened with exposure as the river meanders intensify due in part to recent extreme rain events; and 2) to place riprap along a section of the river to prevent the natural meander of the river.
- Committee member Shari Eggleston spoke at the virtual LWVWI Issues Briefing in November, providing a summary of Enbridge Line 5 and our history of involvement in opposing the pipeline.
- Our committee formed a subcommittee to initiate the Superior Waters Story Corps project. Together with partners we submitted a grant proposal to the Wirtanen Foundation to help fund the continuation and expansion of the project. The first public storytelling event took place in March 2021 as the culmination of the Lake Superior session of Water Week.
- Committee member Sheila Mitchell prepared material on the Enbridge Line 5 issues facing Wisconsin for the Retire Line 5 organization's website (<https://retireline5.org/>).
- We drafted a letter on behalf of LWVWI requesting that the WDNR extend the comment period for the draft Environmental Impact Statement beyond the standard 30 days. Several other organizations signed on to the letter.

Storm Water Study Group

The Director of Ashland's Public Works Department (John Butler) requested our assistance on outreach to inform the public of progress the City of Ashland has made on their waste-water treatment facilities and I&I (inflow and infiltration) issues. Together with partners we are planning a virtual public meeting to be held this spring.

Other Miscellaneous Activities

- In August we provided comments on the Nemadji Trail Energy Center's (in Superior, WI) Air Pollution Control Construction Permits on behalf of our local chapter. Both the expansion of the Line 5 pipeline and the Nemadji Trail frac gas plant would be major investments in fossil fuel infrastructure at a time when we, as a society, should be moving away from fossil fuels and investing in alternative sources of energy.
- We sent a letter to Governor Evers, Representative Meyers, and Senator Bewley related to the appointment of a Commissioner to the vacant Public Service Commission seat.

- In October, we submitted comments to WDNR on proposed rule changes to nonferrous mining legislation. We included specifics about bulk sampling, as well as urging WDNR to hold public hearings on prospecting and mining pre-applications, and designating Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest as unsuitable for mining.
- We submitted suggested changes to the LWVWI position on climate change. Our suggestions focused on fossil fuel infrastructure, based on what we have learned from our work on pipelines. We also suggested that the state position be completely revised and that Climate Change be extracted from within Energy, which in turn is within Natural Resources, and be given its own full position.

Award

On November 18th, the committee was presented with the “good citizen” award by the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club for our work in opposition to Enbridge Line 5.

PROGRAM AND EVENTS and REPORTS, Committee Chair Sheila Mitchell

The year of Covid-19 obviously was a game-changer for the Program and Events Committee, which has recently been arranging the Holiday Party and Annual Meeting, and a facilitator for other committees if requested. By the fall of 2020, anything that was deemed “non essential” was closed for safety reasons, and the League responded by moving everything on line. The Holiday Party did not occur, of course. And, as this is being typed, the Annual Meeting has been arranged for on line with our anticipated guest speaker, Kent Shifferd.

No in person events were scheduled for the fall, which included the peak time for the virus in our area (November). Winter and spring continued the same pattern.

Hopefully, the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccines should also play the role of game-changer in the next few months. However, the discussion of how to handle public events will continue to be in the middle of things, as more lethal and transmissible variants are starting to surge while vaccinations are rapidly being done. So far, there is good news on the vaccine coverage of the presently surging variant, but time will tell with the other variants as things “open up” and vaccinated people start to move around the country for the summer.

We hope that the pandemic will soon be behind us, and we can again meet in person to enjoy each others company and hash through our many issues face to face (instead of “Hollywood Square style” on line). Until then, the Program and Events Committee will probably continue to sit in the back seat!

CENTENNIAL EVENTS and REPORTS, Committee Members Linda Jorgenson and Ginger Quay

On August 26, 2020, bells rang across Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer counties to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment. In addition, car parades were held in Ashland, Washburn and Bayfield. In Hayward, people marched in white and biked. In Cable, a similar celebration was held. In addition, we had displays in our local libraries.

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES – June 29, 2020 4 pm via Zoom

Annual Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 29, 2020 4 pm

Venue: Zoom

At 4:03 pm, President Anne Chartier called the meeting to order. 27 members attended the virtual meeting. By unanimous consent the following items were passed:

- Approval of 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Consent Agenda
- Nomination Slate of Candidates
- Financial Report 2018-2019
- Financial Report 2019-2020, Year-to-Date
- Proposed Budget 2020-2021
- Proposed Programs 2020-2021

Newly elected President Sue Niemi made brief comments about the coming year. The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm.

TREASURER’S REPORT FY 2019-2020

See Treasurer’s Report – Separate Document

TREASURER’S FY’20-21 YTD & PROPOSED BUDGET 2021-2022

See Treasurer’s Report – Separate Document

LWV/ABC PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR 2021-2022

Voter Services: During 2021-2022 the Voter Services Committee would like to continue to work toward Making Democracy Work® in the following ways:

- Register Voters
- Get out the Vote
- Eliminate Voter Suppression
- Defend Voting Rights
- Inform Voters
- Enhance use of vote411.org
- End Gerrymandering
- Organize Candidate Forums
- Collaborate to inform the incarcerated about Voting Rights
- Learn about Ranked Choice Voting
- Pursue the National Popular Vote
- Encourage Running for Office
- Join efforts with non-partisan organizations
- Collaborate with all LWV/ABC Committees to encourage Civic Engagement, eliminate Inequality, protect Natural Resources, engage Membership, and infuse all endeavors with antiracist and social justice principles to achieve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

Economic Inequality: Given the robust global debate at all levels over the need to transition from fossil fuel/resource extraction/ consumption economies, the Inequality Action Committee will partner with other community organizations, engaging statewide partners as appropriate, to bring more information and discussion to our local level of what that transition to a just and sustainable economy would look like. This would mean:

- Continued League support for the “care infrastructure” essential to creating resiliency to impending climate change challenges.
 - advocacy to end child poverty with quality, affordable childcare and paid family leave
 - affordable health care/ push for a more affordable public option for health insurance to lower costs for small farms, businesses and our arts community.
 - affordable housing
 - quality public education
 - secure unemployment insurance and raising the minimum wage (which especially disadvantages our caregivers ,the majority of whom are women)
- With an eye to “living wage jobs”, join ongoing local efforts for policy initiatives around regional food security, local production and sustainable energy. Promote community education/conversation related to “circular economies of recycle, repair and resale” as a means of boosting local small business development.

The Committee would build on the relationships we have rekindled with county officials/agencies to foster public engagement in these policymaking arenas. It would work within the safe limits of science based COVID precautions to offer community educational programming and advocacy.

Natural Resources: We have taken strong stands in recent years to protect the water resources of our area and expect our focus to remain on water-related issues.

The Natural Resources Advocacy Committee plans to continue to oppose the Enbridge Line 5 re-route and expansion. The Canadian company is pushing to reroute Line 5 around the Bad River Reservation, crossing all major and many minor tributaries of the Bad River in the process. The proposed reroute raises many concerns, especially regarding environmental issues. We plan to continue gathering and disseminating information to inform the public of the dangers posed by this

unnecessary pipeline. We also plan to provide input to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to ensure a thorough environmental impact review is conducted. We will continue our collaboration with other regional, state, and out-of-state partners.

Beyond Enbridge Line 5 issues, the NR Advocacy Committee plans to continue working with the city of Ashland to inform the public on sewage overflow issues as the city takes steps to resolve the problem. Our focus remains local, but we will provide input on state issues as our time and expertise allow.

Civic Engagement: Continue to work with other community organizations to expand information on and experience in civic involvement. The following are programs that are in planning process for upcoming year:

- Community Reads project offered in all interested regional libraries.
- A series of social and informational meetings on issues like economic inequality, diversity and inclusiveness teaming with LWVABC committees on related topics.
- Finding ways to encourage active involvement of our younger generations
- Voting as a celebration of civic responsibility.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: A new committee will be forming this year addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Dee Sweet has agreed to chair this committee. More to come as this committee comes together.

LWV/ABC PROPOSED SLATE OF CANDIDATES FOR 2021-2022, Committee Chair Jo Bailey

Board of Directors

2021-2022 SLATE OF CANDIDATES		
Nomination Committee Jo Baily Chair, Kay Saari, Gail Syverud Board Liaison		
BOARD of DIRECTORS		
Officers		
Sue Niemi	President	1 year term
Lynn Bigboy	President-Elect	1 year term
Kate Siegler	Secretary	1 year term
Roger Aiken	Treasurer	1 year term
Board Members		
Linda Jorgenson		completing 2 year term
Jan Penn		completing 2 year term
Faith Smith		2 year term
Dee Sweet		2 year term
Diane Koosed		2 year term
Joan Elias		1 year term
Bev Lindell		1 year term
Barb Bell		1 year term
Gail Syverud		1 year term
Anne Chartier		1 year term
Nomination Committee		
Open	Chair	1 year term
Kay Saari		1 year term
To be appointed by the Board	Board Liaison	1 year term

LWV/ABC PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ASHLAND & BAYFIELD COUNTIES WISCONSIN BYLAWS

March, 2021 Revisions

To be voted on by membership at May 17, 2021 Annual Meeting

ARTICLE I - NAME

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of Ashland & Bayfield Counties Wisconsin; hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as the LWV/ABC.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSES AND POLICY

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of the LWV/ABC ~~is shall be~~ to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Section 2. Policies

The policies of the LWV/ABC are:

- 1. Political Policy.** The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.
- 2. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy.** The League is fully committed to ensure compliance-in principle and in practice-with LWV/ABC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy.

Section 3. Local action. The LWV/ABC may take action on local government measures and policies in the public interest in conformity with the principles of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Section 4. Charitable and Educational Purposes. The LWV/ABC shall be operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law (the "Code"). **The LWV/ABC operates under the 501(c)(3) recognition issued to the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Fund.**

Section 5. Limitations. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, directors, officers, or other private persons, except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes of the organization. No substantial part of the activities of the organization shall be carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the organization shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any other provision of this document, the organization shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by (a) an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c) (3) of the Code, or by (b) an organization, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Code.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility. Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the LWV/ABC League shall be eligible for membership.

Section 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; (4) Those who are students are defined as individuals enrolled either as full or part time with an accredited institution.

Persons at least 16 years of age who join LWV/ABC League will also be members of the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network, Inc. (LWVWEN) and the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS). For an additional fee per person, additional voting members from the same household may be added to the membership. Fifty-year members of LWVUS shall be life members retaining all privileges of membership but excused from the payment of dues. For a reduced fee, individuals may join the LWV/ABC chapter only (does not include national or state league membership). These individuals are not eligible to be officers, serve on the Board of Directors, or vote on chapter business. Students registered full or part time at an accredited institution may join at a reduced fee.

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

c. **Dues structure.**

1. For an additional fee per person, additional voting members from the same household may be added to the membership.
2. For a reduced fee, individuals may join the LWV/ABC chapter ~~only as an associate member~~ { which does not include national or state league membership}. These individuals are not eligible to be officers, serve on the Board of Directors, or vote on chapter business.
3. Students registered full or part time at an accredited institution may join at a reduced fee.

Section 3. Membership List

The membership list of the League shall only be used for non-partisan intra- League reasons.

Section 4. Written Ballot

~~Any action that may be taken at an annual, regular or special meeting of the members in special circumstances designated at the discretion of the Board of Directors and not pertaining to the election of officers, directors, or amendment of the bylaws or articles of incorporation, the vote of the members may be taken by written ballot as set forth in section 181.0708 of the Wisconsin Statutes. Consistent with the requirements of section 181.0708, Wis. Stats., any action of members may be taken without a meeting if~~ [Local League] delivers a written ballot to every member entitled to vote on the matter. A written ballot shall set forth each proposed action and provide an opportunity to vote for or against such action. Approval by written ballot shall be valid only when the number of votes cast by ballot equals or exceeds the quorum required to be present at a meeting authorizing the action, and the number of approvals equals or exceeds the number of votes that would be required to approve the matter at a meeting at which the total number of votes cast was the same as the number of votes cast by ballot. **Solicitations for votes by written ballot shall: (1) indicate the number of responses needed to meet the quorum requirements; (2) state the percentage of approvals necessary to approve each matter other than election of directors; and (3) specify the time by which a ballot must be received by the corporation in order to be counted.**

ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Number, Manner of Selection and Term of Office. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the League, five Directors elected for two year terms, and not more than five Directors appointed by the president and ratified by the general membership for one year terms. The membership chair is to be one of the directors. Three of those Directors elected for two year terms shall be elected by the General Membership at the Annual Meeting in the odd numbered years, and two in the even numbered years. The immediate past president shall serve as an ex-officio member to the Board.

Section 2. Qualifications. No person shall be elected or appointed or continue to serve as an officer or director of this organization unless this individual is a voting member of the LWV/ABC.

Section 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 absences from Board meetings, not excused in advance by the president, shall be deemed as a resignation.

Section 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 at the Annual Meeting. The Board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary.

Section 5. Executive Committee. The board may appoint an executive committee consisting of the officers and no more than two members of the board. The executive committee shall exercise such power and authority as may be delegated to it by the board and shall report to the board on all actions taken by it between regular meetings of the board.

Section 6. Compensation. Members of the Board of Directors of the LWV/ABC shall not receive compensation for serving as Directors. They may, however, receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with their duties, provided such reimbursement is authorized by the Board.

Section 7. Meetings. There shall be at least five regular meetings of the Board of Directors annually. The president shall notify each member of all regular meetings by mail **or email**, at least one week before such meetings, giving the time and place of the meeting, and including a written agenda of items to come before the Board.

Section 8. Special Meetings. The President may call special meetings of the Board of Directors and shall call a special meeting upon written request of five members of the Board. Board members shall be notified of the time and place of special meetings by telephone, or letter sent sufficiently in advance to advise all members of the meeting.

Section 9. Quorum. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. **Any one or more members of the board may participate in a meeting by means of conference telephone or other similar equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.**

Section 10. ~~Written Consent.~~ Action without Meeting.

In accordance with Section 181.0821, Wis. Stats., any action that ~~would~~ **could** be taken at a meeting of the Board; ~~except for filling vacancies on the Board or on committees,~~ may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing

setting forth the action to be taken, is signed by at least two-thirds (2/3) of all of the Directors, provided all Directors receive notice of the text of the written consent and of its effective date and time. Any such consent signed by two-thirds (2/3) of all of the Directors has the same effect as a two-thirds (2/3) vote taken at a duly convened meeting of the Board at which a quorum is present and may be stated as such in any document filed with the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions. For purposes of this section, pursuant to § 181.0821(1r) of the Wisconsin Statutes, “in writing” includes a communication that is transmitted or received by electronic means, including electronic mail (“email”), and “signed” includes an electronic signature, as defined in §181.0103(10p) of the Wisconsin Statutes, as amended from time to time.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

Section 1. Enumeration, Election and Term of Office. The officers of the LWV/ABC shall be a president, a president-elect, a secretary and a treasurer. Officers shall be elected for one year terms by the General Membership at the Annual Meeting and shall assume office at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected.

Section 2. The President. The president shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Board of Directors. The president may, in the absence or disability of the treasurer, sign or endorse checks, drafts, and notes. The president shall be ex-officio a member of all committees except the Nominating Committee; shall have such usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of president; and shall perform such other duties as may be designated by the Board.

Section 3. The President-Elect. The president-elect shall, in the event of absence, disability, **resignation**, 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 president-elect shall work closely with the president and perform such other duties as the president and the board may designate.

Section 4. The Secretary. The secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the LWV/ABC and of all meetings of the Board of Directors. The secretary shall sign, with the president, all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the Board and shall perform such other functions as may be incident to the office.

Section 5. The Treasurer. The treasurer, **or her or his designee**, shall collect and receive all monies due and shall be the custodian of the monies, shall deposit them in financial institutions designated by the Board, and shall disburse, as necessary. The treasurer shall present statements to the board at their regular meetings and shall give an Annual Financial Report at the Annual Meeting. The books of the treasurer shall be subject to a financial review prior to the Annual Meeting by a committee appointed by the Directors.

ARTICLE VI - FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the LWV/ABC shall commence on the first day of July each year.

Section 2. Dues. Dues are payable annually. Membership is for twelve months following receipt of dues. **Any member who fails to pay dues within six months after they become payable shall be dropped from the membership rolls.**

Section 3. Budget.

a. **Budget Committee.** A Budget Committee 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 **the**

~~Board of Directors for their review. all members one month before the Annual Meeting.~~ The treasurer shall not be eligible to serve as chairperson of the Budget Committee.

b. **Board Review.** The board shall consider the proposed budget and recommend a budget, which shall be sent to the members at least one month before the annual meeting. ~~A budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted by the Board of Directors to the general membership for adoption at the Annual Meeting.~~ The budget shall include support for the work of the League as a whole.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

Section 1. Membership Meetings. There shall be as many meetings of the membership each year as determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting shall be held each year in the spring, the exact date to be determined by the Board of Directors. At the Annual Meeting, the General Membership shall: a) Adopt a local program for the ensuing year b) Elect officers, directors, and members of the Nominating Committee c) Adopt an adequate budget, and d) Transact such other business as may properly come before it. e) **Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.**

ARTICLE VIII - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be a member of the Board of Directors. The chairperson and one member shall be from the membership at large. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the current Nominating Committee. The other member shall be appointed by the Board of Directors immediately following the Annual Meeting. Any vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by the Board. Suggestions for nominations for Officers and Directors may be sent to this committee by any voting member.

Section 2. Report of the Nominating Committee from the Floor. The report of the Nominating Committee of its nominations for Officers, Directors and the members of the succeeding Nominating Committee shall be sent to all members one month before the date of the Annual Meeting. ~~Immediately following the presentation of this report~~ **At the Annual Meeting,** nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member, provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

Section 3. Elections. The election shall be by ballot. **If there is only one nominee for an office, election may be by voice vote, including by motion for a unanimous ballot.** ~~provided that when there is but one nominee for each office, it shall be in order to move that the secretary may be instructed that a unanimous ballot be cast for each nominee.~~ A majority vote of those present and qualified to vote shall constitute an election. ~~Absentee or proxy voting shall not be allowed.~~

ARTICLE IX - PROGRAM

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

Section 2. Program. The Program of the LWV/ABC shall consist of: a) Action to protect the right to vote of every citizen, and b) Those local governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action.

Section 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 sent in by voting members two months prior to the Annual Meeting and shall formulate a Proposed Program. b) The Proposed Program shall be sent to all members one month prior to 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 by the Board of Directors to the general membership at the Annual Meeting. d) recommendations for Programs submitted by voting members **in writing to the membership at least two weeks before** ~~two months prior to~~ the Annual Meeting, ~~but not recommended by the Board of Directors,~~ may be considered by the general membership at the Annual Meeting, provided that: 1) The general membership at the Annual Meeting shall order consideration by a majority vote; and 2) The general membership shall adopt the item at the Annual Meeting by a two-thirds vote. e) Changes in the Program after the Annual Meeting in the case of altered conditions may be made provided that: 1) 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 2) final action by the membership is taken at a succeeding meeting.

Section 4. Member Action. Members may act in the name of the League of Women Voters only when authorized to do so by the proper Board of Directors. Letters to the editor on behalf of the LWV/ABC may only be signed by the president.

Section 5. Voter Services. These activities make available information on elections and other democratic processes to citizens in the community.

ARTICLE X - NATIONAL CONVENTION, STATE CONVENTION, AND STATE COUNCIL

Section 1. National Convention. The membership or the Board of Directors, at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the National office, shall select delegates to that Convention in the number allotted to LWV/ABC under the provisions of the Bylaws of the LWVUS.

Section 2. State Convention. The Board of Directors, at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the State Office, shall select delegates to that Convention in the number allotted to LWV/ABC under the provisions of the Bylaws of the LWVWEN.

Section 3. State Council. The Board of Directors, at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the State Office, shall select delegates to that Council in the number allotted to the LWV/ABC under the provisions of the Bylaws of the LWVWEN.

ARTICLE XI - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. Parliamentary Authority. The rules contained in the 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** ~~consistent~~ with these bylaws **except as modified by a majority of those attending any meeting by a vote taken at the commencement of the meeting before any business is conducted.**

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Amendments. The bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting, provided that amendments were submitted to the membership in writing at least one month in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE XIII – DISSOLUTION

Section 1. Dissolution. Upon the dissolution of the organization, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all of the liabilities of the corporation, dispose of all of the assets by distributing the assets to the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network, Inc. (LWVWEN) or, if the LWVWEN no longer exists or declines to accept the assets, to the League of Women Voters Education Fund, provided that either organization continues to be recognized as an organization that is exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Code. If neither organization can accept the assets, the distribution shall be made to such organization or organizations that are organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Code, or corresponding provisions of any subsequent federal tax laws, or to a State or a political subdivision of a State as defined in section 170(c)(1) of the Code.

ARTICLE XIV - GROUP EXEMPTION

Section 1. Group Exemption. The LWV/ABC agrees to be included in the group ruling of the LWVWEN (the “central organization”). We also agree that we must accept and adhere to all of the following as a part of being a subordinate/chapter: a) We agree to accept the purpose of and abide by the policies and principles of LWVWEN, including Bylaws, Policies, and Handbook. b) We agree to report our activities to LWVWEN as requested and to provide the requested reports on our activities and financials. c) We agree that we are under the general control and supervision of our central organization, as that term is applied for purposes of a group ruling under section 501(c)(3) of the Code. d) We understand that if we ever leave the group ruling or it ceases to exist, we will need to reapply for individual exemption and pay the user fee should we wish to be exempt.

Adopted: March 22, 1975

Revised: May 6, 1978 April 28, 1984 April 27, 1987

February 1, 1991 May 15, 1996 May 11, 2009 May 9, 2011 May 6, 2013 August 2016

February 2017 April, 2021 (if approved at Annual Meeting)

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League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI)

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