

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING

### Of the league of Women Voters of Manatee County

April 26, 2025

**Call to Order:** Ruth Harenchar called the meeting to order at 11:03 am. The quorum of fifteen was exceeded by the attendance of fifty-nine. Ruth thanked everyone present for their contributions to the League during the year. She asked all the officers, committee members, action team leaders, and the New College liaison to stand and be recognized. Ruth said that the League was doing a raffle for the first time and encouraged everyone to purchase tickets. Finally, she thanked all the sponsors who helped defray the cost of printing the program book.

Ruth called Terri Kondos and Chey Heath up to present an award to outgoing co-President Alice Newlon for “outstanding service.” They presented Alice with a framed enlargement of the back page of the program book, which highlights tributes to Alice from the Board and others, as well as recognizes her many accomplishments.

Ruth gave a power point presentation of the League’s accomplishments in the past year. She briefly highlighted each of the action teams. Ruth thanked Terri Kondos, chair, and her four sub chairs for the many activities of the Voter Services action team, such as Vote411, distribution of thousands of voter guides, candidate forums , tabling at 19 different community events, and monitoring canvassing boards for which the League received \$2,000 grant from All Voting is Local. The Social Issues action team had a transition in leadership to new co-chairs Nina Tortelli and Tina Juillerat. They have hosted Hot Topics on Immigration and Homelessness, including an interview with radio host Tom Walker. The Education Action team has a strong relationship with the superintendent of schools and staff. They monitor school board meetings and publish the observations. They are noted for their nonpartisanship. They have continued to monitor the Horizon Academy charter school for more than a year. The Natural Resources action team also had a leadership transition to Randy Miller. They have had speakers from Habitat for Humanity, Gulf Coast Trails, and the Trust for Public Lands to better understand the issues. Ruth noted that Merrie Lynn Parker has recently been selected to ELMAC. The Government action team also had a leadership transition to Holly Kennedy. The team continues to monitor the Board of County Commissioners, sends out Action Alerts and did two Hot Topics on the Election Recap, and a Conversation with Supervisor of Elections Scott Farrington. The Safety and Gun Violence Protection letter writing efforts last year resulted in a key success in having the school board table a proposal to allow firearms in schools. Due to time constraints Ruth couldn’t highlight all the many activities of the Reproductive Rights team. She did note that Manatee County LWV membership increased 24% in the past year! For the first time, our league is hosting Leadership Training. (Four of the participants in attendance stood for recognition. Finally, Ruth recognized the New College liaison, Alex B who was in attendance with Deb Mazzaferro, who has been working to reestablish a chapter at the college.

Ruth noted three guidelines for the meeting:

- Members present count as official voters
- Any comments are limited to three minutes.

- Any member can ask a question.

As noted, the quorum of fifteen was established.

**Adoption of the Agenda:** The motion to accept the agenda was made by Lesley Jacobs and seconded by Susan Michelson Brown. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of the Minutes of April 25, 2024, Annual Meeting:** The minutes were reviewed, and no changes were proposed. The motion to accept the minutes was made by Merrie Lynn Parker and seconded by Alice Newlon. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer Report 2024-25 and Consideration of Budget 2025-26:**

(Budget details were shown on the screen, and several copies were available at each table.)

Ruth explained that the budget reflects the national change in the dues payment process. Previously Manatee County received the dues and then wrote a check to LWWUS. Effective February 1 members join through the LWWUS level and are enrolled in their state. The local chapter only sees the county portion of the dues so less income is reflected. The 25-26 budget reflects that the chapter still must pay for the 24-25 dues owed to LWWUS under the previous system. However, going forward that won't be the case, and to reassure members, Ruth noted that the League does have \$31,000 in the bank.

The budget was reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee and the Board, thus there is no requirement for a motion and second from members. Ruth asked for approval of the budget, and it was approved unanimously.

**Consideration of Proposed Bylaws:** Dawn Hallsten reviewed all the proposed changes as detailed on the redlined copy that was posted on the LWVMC website prior to the meeting. Dawn noted the two changes proposed by the committee:

- Article IV, Board of Directors, Section 1 increases the number of LWVMC members elected from 3 to 4 directors elected in even-numbered years and from 3 to 4 elected in odd-numbered years; and not more than eight directors appointed by elected members of the board.
- Article VI, Financial Administration, Section 2 reflects the changes in the dues process that went into effect in February 2025.

Dawn thanked Ruth and Mary Collins for their work on the bylaws. The proposed Bylaws were approved by the Board of the LWVMC.

Ruth asked for a vote by the membership to approve the proposed Bylaws and it carried unanimously.

**Consideration of Proposed Local Program:** Ruth noted that the Local Program was posted prior to the meeting. There were no questions. The motion to approve was made by Lyle Landon and seconded by Randy Miller. The vote to continue the Local Program was unanimous.

**Presentation of Nominating Committee Report:** Dawn Hallsten presented the slate of candidates on behalf of Elaine Graham. The slate of new 2025 nominees for Officers, Board Members, and Nominating Committee members.

Officers (Two Year term)

President- Ruth Harenchar

Co-Vice President – Terri Kondos

Co-Vice President – Dawn Hallsten

Board Members Class of 2025-2027 (Two-year term)

Lucia Callaway

Holly Kennedy

Merrie Lynn Parker

Nominating Committee - Two non-board members elected including Chair (one year term)

Chair – Position to be filled.

Member – Ruth Lawler

There were no nominations on the floor. The motion to approve the slate was made by Lesley Jacobs and seconded by Nina Tortelli. The candidates were elected by a unanimous vote.

**Presentation of New Board:**

In addition to the newly elected members, the following are continuing Board members:

Continuing in second of two-year terms on the Board:

Secretary – Coleen Friedman

Treasurer – Mary Collins

Board member(e)-Felecia Jett

Board member(e) – Lyle Landon

Board member (e)- Jacquie McNeil

Board member (a) -Barbara Ehren

Board member (a) – Tina Juillerat

To be appointed in May Board meeting (One Year Term from 2025-2026) – Alice Newlon

To be appointed in May Board Meeting (Two Year Term from 2025-2027)

Board member – Randy Miller

Board members – Nina Tortelli

Nominating Committee (one year term) appointed in May Board meeting – Lyle Landon

**Recognition of Outgoing Board:** Ruth recognized outgoing members Ginger McCallum and Alice Newlon for their contributions.

**Presidential Recognition Award:** Last year Ruth and Alice wanted to create an award for an outgoing Board member who had served with exceptional distinction. This year’s recipient is Ginger McCallum, past Chair of the Government action team. Ginger recently moved back to her home state.

**Special Recognition for Alice Newlon:**

Ruth called Randy Miller and Merrie Lynn Parker to present an addition recognition to outgoing co-president Alice Newlon. Randy highlighted Alice’s enthusiastic imprint on every aspect of the LWVMC and noted that she is remarkable for bringing in new people, including himself. Merrie Lynn said it was an honor to present a special plaque to Alice. In her acceptance remarks, Alice said that when she joined the League, she said to herself, “I found my people.”

**Questions and discussion** were waived due to time constraints.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Alice Newlon and seconded by Dawn Hallsten at Ruth adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Coleen Friedman, Secretary