



LWV of Marquette County
MONTHLY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

December 6, 2023, 6:43-8:05 p.m.

Peter White Public Library, Studio 1 Lower Level
217 N. Front St., Marquette, MI

Members In attendance: David Allen, Darlene Allen, Robert Anderson, Sandy Breitenbach, Pri Burnham, Diane Chielens, Peter Dohrenwend, Kathy Flagstadt, Jo Foley, Stephanie Gencheff, Susan Holliday, Jane Jamsen, Katelynn Jensen, Janet Joswiak, Judith Kitchen, Madalyn Koval, Alec LaPlante, Laura Miller, Joanna Mitchell, Marie Moisio, Barb Owdziej, Jane Pajot, Laura Petrie, Karlyn Rapport, Laura Sabo, Jeanne Sekely, Karen Schmitt, Susanne Smith, Will Sullivan, Nina Van Den Ende, Christie Wagner, Anna Wild, Justin Wild (33)

Guest: Chuck Blaksmith, Sara Culver, Theresa H.

The meeting was called to order at 6:43 p.m.

1. **Welcome:** Jo Foley, Convener, welcomed everyone especially today's guests and the new members who have joined in October and November bringing the total membership to 120: Peter Dohrenwend, Katie Klahn, Joel Klahn, Alec LaPlante, Grace Leslie and Robert Van Howe.
2. **Land Acknowledgement:** Sandy Breitenbach offered the land acknowledgement, "The public library and city of Marquette are located on the ancestral and contemporary homelands of the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Ojibwe and Potawatomi." She also read [The Story of Our People](#) from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians website.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Motion made by Barb Owdziej and seconded by Madalyn Koval to approve the agenda as amended to add Committee Reports. Motion carried.
4. **Approval of minutes:** Motion made by Pri Burnham and seconded by Jeanne Sekely to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 1, 2023 as amended to correct the regular meeting time of the Voter Services Committee (8.b.) to 10-noon the 2nd Tuesday of each month at The Crib. Motion carried.
5. **Financial Peer Review Report—Madalyn:** Laura Petrie conducted the annual review of our League's financial records of revenue and expenditures reporting that the books are accurate and the League's financial condition is sound. Madalyn thanked Laura for her diligent review.
6. **State and National League Report—David Allen:**
 - a. Each year, LWVUS surveys local leagues about what they have done throughout the year. David completed and submitted the survey on behalf of LWVMC.
 - b. The national 2024 LWV Convention will be held in Washington, D.C. June 27-30. Members are welcome to attend or serve as delegates for our local league.
 - c. LWVMI is awarding around \$2,000 to reimburse LWVMC expenditures for many of our election-related activities leading up to the November election. [Rental of the

Kaufman Auditorium for the Oct. 12 Candidate Forum was funded by a \$500 grant from the Marquette West Rotary Club.]

- d. One major law suit against the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) remains pending. It asserts that new maps violate Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by diluting Black voting power in Detroit-area legislative districts. The resolution is expected in early in 2024. All other cases challenging the MICRC have been dismissed or settled.

7. Committee Reports:

- a. **Nominating Committee—Darlene Allen:** The Nominating Committee is recruiting candidates for the positions of Secretary and League Liaison. To learn more about these opportunities, contact a member of the committee (Darlene, Barb O. or Sandy Meyskens) and check out the Board Job Descriptions posted on the lwvmqt.org website under the For LWV Members menu. The committee is reviewing names of members to approach and encourages nominations. They've been discussing their natural biases in selection with an eye to overcoming them, such as thinking someone is too busy, travels a lot, or may be in a big life transition. There's the tendency to focus on those who have volunteered in some way or members like oneself. Don't let the Committee overlook you; contact the Committee to volunteer. Committee chairs are urged to help, identify good candidates and nurture them.
- b. **Environmental Committee—Pri:** Maura Davenport will speak at the next meeting (5:15 p.m., December 7, at The Crib) on the household battery recycling program.
- c. **Voter Services Committee—Pri:** The next meeting is 10-noon, Tuesday, Dec. 12 at the Crib. Those who interested in working with college students are especially encouraged to come. In 2024, helping the public learn about the massive changes in voting rules will be challenging. Members are invited to plan how to reach the widest audience with concise, accurate messaging.
- d. **Membership Recruitment & Retention Committee—Barb O.:** Letters will go out soon to members who have not yet renewed. Throughout the year, as you think someone deserves one of the annual awards, please submit a [Nomination Form](#). The form includes criteria for the Green Thumb, We Can Do It and Making Democracy Work awards. Nomination forms are available at each meeting and on the lwvmqt.org website (click For LWV Members, then Forms & Brochures.)
- e. **Newsletter Team—Laura Petrie:** If you have not received the December/Winter issue of [The Voter](#), please contact Laura so that we can correct any email address problems.
- f. **Fundraising Committee—Laura P.:** Recently the Committee sent a fundraising newsletter to 200 community members. Extra copies are available that can be easily folded and taped for mailing. If friends or family have asked you about the LWV, consider sending a copy to them. The newsletter includes photos with captions showing what the League does. Funds raised will support the League's 2024 election year voter registration and voter education activities.
- g. **Announcements—Jo:** There will be no general membership meeting in January.

Board members, committee chairs and other committee representatives met Nov. 15 to consider the recent member survey results compiled by Sandy B. The results guided selection of program topics for 2024 general membership meetings. The [meeting minutes](#) outlines the schedule of topics on p.2, though the dates are likely to shuffle with availability and needs of speakers, committees, partners.

8. Report on Program Planning: Postponed.
9. **LWVMC Website Orientation—David:** As an organization that advocates for transparency, we wanted to implement transparency practices for the local league as well. Since 2017, we have used the Dropbox program to share documents more widely, but Dropbox requires permissions, and is unfamiliar to most. David, as our webmaster, has transferred most of the documents created for the League over the years to the LWVMC website so they are now accessible to members and to the public using any device or web browser. Some documents remain in Dropbox because they are outdated, contain sensitive financial or personal contact information, or are too frequently updated to be managed on the website. On the lwvmqt.org website, click the “For LWV Members” link to display an outline of topics. David’s presentation will be posted on YouTube. Members will be notified.
10. **Presentation: Why the US has an Electoral System No One on Earth has Copied.** Jo Foley deftly presented the history, both idealistic and deeply flawed, that has shaped our peculiar Electoral College process. The national League of Women Voters has set a 10-year goal of abolishing the Electoral College and supports the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. Jo’s presentation will be posted on YouTube. Members will be notified.
11. **Comments:** Marie Moisio asked about the LWV initiative regarding disinformation and misinformation that may be released during the 2024 election season. League Liaison David Allen answered that there is a state League initiative regarding this issue and we will be hearing more about this from LWVMI.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m. to post-meeting festivities at Cognition Brewery.

Next General Membership Meeting: Wed., Feb. 7, 2024, 6:45-8:15 p.m. (6:30 social time)
Peter White Public Library, Studio 1 Lower Level, 217 N. Front St., Marquette, MI

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, December 20, 2023, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Community Meeting Room at Baraga Place, 129 W. Baraga Ave., Marquette, MI
All members welcome. To request an invite and agenda, email jfoley1950@gmail.com

Submitted by Joanna Mitchell, Secretary

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influence public policy through education and advocacy.