Education Fund

Annual Report, June 2024

The League of Women Voters of Needham Education Fund (LWVN-EF), incorporated in March 2015, continues to focus on its mission to:

- Educate people on the importance of their participation in government, in the political process, and in their home community.
- Create awareness of the issues at the local, state, and national levels and what average citizens can do to have an impact on their government.
- Instill in citizenry the knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in managing their own government.

Fiscal Year 2024 was an active year for our Education Fund, with several different activities geared toward education. Our Fourth of July Parade float reminded the town of the need to be informed voters and use our voter guides and candidate information. The program year began with an opening forum featuring representatives from Needham's various news sources, including some new ones. Meanwhile, our study committee began learning how Needham's Affordable Housing Trust fund operates and how other towns' similar funds accomplish their goals. We also collaborated with Needham Community Education to host a "government 101" class on basics of how Needham government works.

In the new year, we turned to planning voter service work, including planning our candidate and ballot question forums in preparation for the April local election. With two contested elections for town officers and contested elections in all but one precinct, voters turned out in large numbers for the candidate forum. Our get-out-the-vote efforts included multiple signs around town, public service announcements related to the local election, and a "make your own sign" initiative. Voter turn-out was 20 percent of registered voters, higher than recent years, but reminds us that more can be done to raise awareness of the election as well as to encourage residents to run for office.

Home-made "get-out-the-vote" sign

Once again, we hosted the Warrant Meetings, an opportunity for Town Meeting Members to understand the Town Meeting Warrant articles. We also organized an orientation session with the Town Moderator for new Town Meeting Members. Many expressed their appreciation for these opportunities to prepare for Needham's Annual and Special Town Meetings.

Finally, building on our successful initial Civics Showcases in June of 2022 and 2023, we proceeded to plan our third such event, to be held June 8, 2024, at Powers Hall. We have lined

up volunteers to serve as “community advisors” who will interact with specific students with a common interest in issues for which the students are advocating.

Our Needham High LWV Club’s members continued their work of building voter awareness among potential newly eligible voters. They also participated in our April program to inform Needham voters about the two local ballot questions. Further, the co-presidents gave a presentation in a “Power of the Youth Vote” webinar held by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts. Their activities help Needham’s newest voters become aware of the importance of voting and of being informed voters.

All year, the use of our website and social media helped inform the public about our events and voter information in 30 new, timely posts. In the past year, there were over 20,000 views. The all-time highest number of single day views for the LWVN website—1,467—was recorded this year on April 9, 2024 (Needham election day). We are especially grateful to the Needham Channel for recording and broadcasting our voter service events (and other educational events); those recordings were linked to our website.

Details on these and additional activities and events are listed below.

Part I: Activities – Programs and Projects 2023-2024

Educational Programs

- Presented opening community forum (October 18) on “Sources of Needham News” with representatives from four news sources: *Needham Observer*, *Needham Hometown Weekly*, *Needham Local* (Needham Channel), and *News You Need(ham).*
- Held a LWV-Needham book discussion (march 19) of several articles focused on “Climate Action: Innovative Solutions” and *The World’s Littlest Book on Climate: 10 Facts in 10 Minutes about* CO_2*,* via Zoom.
- Our recording of the 2022 workshop “How to Run for Office and Town Meeting” was available on the LWVN website; the companion guide was updated and available on the LWVN website. Produced a public service announcement encouraging citizens to run for office.
- Collaborated with Needham Community Education on a "How Needham Works: Town Government for the People," a “Government 101” class (March 20).
- Held second annual Civics Showcase June 2023. Planning the 3rd annual Needham High School Civics Showcase (June 8) at Powers Hall, at which students will present their advocacy plan to the public on an issue of interest to them.

A Civics Showcase team

- Participated in Exchange Club’s 2023 July 4th Parade with a float and several marchers. The theme of “VOTE…and Know Before You Go,” reminded parade watchers of the need to be informed voters. Planning to construct a float and march in the 2024 July 4th Parade.

Needham Local Election (April 9)

- Produced two Voter Guides with information about and responses on priorities from town-wide candidates and Town Meeting Member candidates; available on our website.
- Held televised forum on local ballot questions. Streamed live on Needham Channel and available for later viewing on websites.
- Held hybrid Candidates Night (March 25) at Broadmeadow School, with forums for the two contested races (Select Board and Housing Authority). In addition, the forum included "Meet the Candidates," introduction of uncontested candidates, and introduction of Town Meeting Member candidates. Streamed and shown on the Needham Channel; recording posted on LWVN and Needham Channel websites.
- Prepared seven video public service announcements to encourage informed voting.

Town Meeting 2024

- Held New Town Meeting Member Orientation (April 25).
- Organized and led Town Meeting Warrant Meetings (April 25) in person and on Zoom.

Town Meeting Member 25-Year Awards

- Continued The Melick Foundation's tradition of presenting awards to Town Meeting Members for 25 years of service, using funds it provided before it closed. Presented awards to four Town Meeting Members before the May 13 Special Town Meeting.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- Helped plan, hosted table at, and led break-out session at Needham Diversity Initiative Summit (November 5).
- Participated in LWVMA quarterly DEI Peer Discussions.

LWVN co-sponsors Needham Diversity Initiative Summit

Grants, Donations, and other income

- Received donations of $450 to the Education Fund (unsolicited, from 2 donors).
- Income from the endowment fund in FY 2023 has been reinvested.

Civics Education for NHS 11th Graders and NHS Scholarship

- Shared Student Advocacy Guide and eight companion videos on advocacy at state and local level; all available on the website.
- Planned Civics Showcase (June 10) as venue for students to present their advocacy projects at Powers Hall for government officials and the public. About 100 students participated, and over 100 members of the public, including elected officials, attended.
- Awarded Needham High School Scholarship to a graduating senior in June 2023, and will be awarding a scholarship again to a June 2024 Needham High graduate.

Special Expenses

- Costs of framed certificates for 25-year TMM awards ($63.04); offset by funds from Melick Foundation.
- Zoom add-on for one month of webinar capacity of 500 ($83.94) to hold hybrid Candidates Night.
- Civics Showcase – estimated expenses of $250 will be offset by earlier Roche Bros. grant.

Part 2: Finances

League of Women Voters - Needham -
Educational Fund Balance Sheet
As of April 30, 2024

	Year to Date
ASSETS	
Checking/Savings	
Vanguard Account	30,127.54
Needham Bank	11,709.87
Paypal Account	105.34
	41,942.75
Accounts Receivable	11.59
TOTAL ASSETS	**41,954.34**
LIABILITY & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable to LV-N	383.58
Prepaid Grant	227.24
Grant - Melick for 25 yr TMM	7,481.52
Total Liabilites	**8,092.34**
EQUITY	
Restricted Assets & Investment Dividends -	
Permanent Restricted Net Assets (endowment)	26,602.89
Restricted endowment earnings (Vanguard)	3,524.65
Retained Earnings	2,836.72
Net Income	897.74
Total Equity	**33,862.00**
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	**41,954.34**

Assets

The endowment, the "Needham LWV Endowment for Civic Awareness, Education, and Engagement" is currently invested in three Vanguard funds. The endowment has increased significantly in value from its original $12,644 in September 2016, but gained significantly in the last 12 months as shown in the table below.

Vanguard Investment Value – Original & Recent Years

As of	Value	Annual Increase	Annual Increase (%)
Original (Sept. 2016)	$12,644		
May 2022	24,909	$408	1.66%
May 2023	24,838	-71	-0.28%
April 2024	30,127	$5,289	21.3%

Earnings on the endowment have been reinvested each year except fiscal year 2020, when they made available for special celebrations of the 100th year of Women's Suffrage. The Board has decided to reinvest earnings from fiscal year 2024, and will continue to decide yearly whether to reinvest dividends.

There is $11,710 in the checking account as of April 30, 2024, which includes $7,482 from the Melick Foundation to cover future Town Meeting Member 25-year awards. The checking account also includes revenues from individual and business donations, income from sales and events, and grants.

Equity

Restricted equity includes the endowment and its dividends. Retained earnings and net income represent funds raised in the prior and current fiscal years that can be spent at the discretion of the Board for LWVN-EF programs.

FY2025 Budget

The Board-approved LWVN-EF budget for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025) is below.

FY 2025 LEAGUE OF WOMENS VOTERS OF NEEDHAM - EDUCATION FUND BUDGET

EDUCATION FUND BUDGET	FY25 Bud	*FY24 Actual thru 3/31/24*	FY24 BUD	*FY23 Actual*	FY23 BUD
INCOME					
INVESTMENT INCOME	**$0**	*$0*	$0	***$0***	$0
CONTRIBUTIONS	**$1,200**	*$1,360*	$1,200	***$450***	$1,200
GRANTS	**$1,050**	*$0*	$975	***$17***	$900
TOTAL INCOME	**$2,250**	***$1,360***	**$2,175**	***$467***	**$2,100**
EXPENSE					
ADMINISTRATIVE*	**$628**	*$453*	$608	***$521***	$643
FUNDRAISING	**$30**		$30		$50
STUDIES	**$25**		$25		$25
SCHOLARSHIPS	**$500**		$500	***$500***	$500
PUBLIC FORUMS	**$770**	*$75*	$920	***$541***	$940
VOTERS' SERVICE	**$802**	*$84*	$344	***$0***	$450
TOTAL EXPENSE	**$2,754**	***$612***	**$2,427**	***$1,562***	**$2,608**
NET INCOME	**($504)**	***$748***	**($252)**	***($1,095)***	**($508)**
** Expenses shared 50/50 with LWVN Budget*					

FY 2025 LWVN-EF Board

Carol Patey, President
Erica Bond, Clerk
Karen Zarrow, Treasurer
Harriet Goldin, Director
Kara Holmquist, Director

The LWV-Needham Board of Directors appoints the Ed Fund Board Directors. The President and Treasurer are members by virtue of their LWV-Needham offices.