

Report of Activities for 2019 – 2020
League of Women Voters of Needham and LWV-Needham Education Fund

Introduction—A Special Year

The 2019-2020 League year (Jun 2019-May 2020) was to be filled with special activities in honor of the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters and the 19th Amendment. While many League activities and projects were canceled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, the League of Women Voters of Needham was able to accomplish a great deal prior to and during the year, as summarized below. All in-person activities starting on Mar 15, 2020 were canceled or postponed, but the League was able to use Zoom videoconferencing to continue our work throughout the winter and spring.

Membership Meetings

- 79th Annual Meeting Jun 1, 2019 at Hearth Pizzeria, Speakers Gretchen Cook-Anderson and Michelle Kweder.
- Opening Meeting Oct 3 at Needham Library: “The Women’s Suffrage Movement in Needham,” speaker Gloria Greis.
- Program Planning/Winterfest Jan 16 at the home of Amy Goldman. A speaker from the census bureau presented information on the 2020 Census.

Advocacy: National and State, Jen Muroff, Legislative Envoy, Wendy Silver, Jan Soma

- Needham League members attended lobby days and hearings at the State House.
 - ROE Act hearing Jun 17 (5 LWVN members)
 - ROE Act lobby day Nov 14 (6)
 - Environmental bills hearing Jul 23 (2)
 - Safe Communities Act hearing Jan 24 (4)
 - Immigrants Day, held remotely May 7 (8)
 - LWVMA Day on the Hill Oct 17 (6)
 - Women Power The Vote national LWV Day of Action Feb 6 (9)
- Held “Bagels and Bills” events via Zoom videoconference with Senator Rausch (Apr 3), Senator Rush (May 1), and Representative Garlick (May 12).
- Participated in marches, rallies, and tabling.
 - Voter registration table at Global Climate Strike Sep 20 at City Hall Plaza
 - Information table at Breaking the Cycle of Shame: A Reproductive Justice Forum Nov 6 at Needham Town Hall
 - Information table at Diversity Summit Jan 29 in Needham
 - Climate Strike Nov 29 in Dedham
 - Women’s March/Rally Jan 18 Rhode Island State House
- Met with Congressman Joe Kennedy to discuss immigration issues Aug 6 (8 members).
- Collected signatures for Ranked Choice Voting ballot question (fall 2019, spring 2020) (Stacie Shapiro).
- Responded to numerous state and national action alerts.



Advocacy: Local

- Wrote letter to Select Board about procedures for rescheduled local election (Voter Service Team).
- Participated in Women Power The Vote LWV National Day of Action. Designed and distributed to restaurants and town locations book marks encouraging enrollment in AlertNeedham emergency alert system and voting as part of LWV Nationwide Day of Action, Feb 14 (Heidi Frail, Karen Price).
- Met with Town Clerk Tedi Eaton to discuss her opinion on the proposed Election Day Registration bill and providing support for 2020 Census, Nov 13 (Jen Muroff, Carol Patey, Karen Price).

Budget, Erica Bond, Chair

- Prepared annual budgets for both LWVN and LWVN Education Fund (with Stacie Shapiro, Susan Anderson, and Eileen Mullen).

Anniversary/Suffrage

- Jul 4 Parade. LWV-Needham float, "The Silent Sentinels," featuring the Wilson White House and suffragists, awarded grand prize (Stacie Shapiro).
- Opening Forum Oct 3. "The Women's Suffrage Movement in Needham."
- "We Did It for You" theatrical performance at Powers Hall Nov 3 attended by over 400.
- Planning Town Common art installation honoring suffragists. (Heidi Frail, Andy Wizer, Jane Evans, Jan Soma, Chris Balmer)
- Library exhibit: "The Suffrage Cartoons of Blanche Ames" Mar 1-13 (Karen Price, Gail Davis, Cathy Freedberg, Stacie Shapiro).
- Girl Scouts Present: "The Women's Suffrage Movement" (Jane Evans).
- Attended Centennial Kickoff Celebration at Faneuil Hall Jun 25, sponsored by Suffrage 100 MA.



Communication

- Updated and maintained LWVN Facebook page (Karen Price, Jen Muroff).
- Started and maintained LWVN Twitter account (Jen Muroff, Karen Price).
- Kept website updated and relevant (Karen Price, Lollie Weeks).
- Regularly posted information about elections and LWV-Needham activities on Needham MA Facebook page.
- Posted online voters guide for the May 2020 Needham town election (Elizabeth Handler).

Bulletin, Missy Lankiewicz, Editor

- Prepared and sent monthly Bulletin and mid-month Updates via Constant Contact.
- Labeled, stamped, and posted issues of the Bulletin to members who do not use email.

Archives, Elin Soderholm

- Saved and stored electronic Bulletins and Updates in Dropbox.
- Identified and filed newspaper articles about LWV-Needham.

Media, Karen Price

- Created flyers, programs, and web posts for all events.
- Submitted/posted press releases and announcements for all events.
- Submitted letters to the editor as needed.

Civic Education Committee, Karen Walker, Chair

- Planned Civics Bee, including developing materials, questions, and recruiting teams. Canceled the week before the scheduled event.
- Conducted voter registration at tabling opportunities.
- Supported LWV-Needham at Needham High School Club (Cathy Dowd, Karen Walker)
- Discussed book *Talking to Strangers* Mar 30, via Zoom (Harriet Goldin).
- Awarded the League of Women Voters Needham Scholarship to a NHS graduate (Debbie Winnick).
- Distributed posters and created a plan for helping people with the census at the Senior Center and Housing Authority (which we were not able to complete) (Carol Patey)

Forums/Events (not listed elsewhere)

- In collaboration with the Needham Library, hosted the “Women Take Action Film Series.” The first two of the six films were shown prior to the closure of the library (Jan 28 and Feb 25) (Jan Soma, Karen Price).
- Hosted “We Did It For You Empowerment Workshop” Feb 29.
- Co-sponsored the Civics Series, with Needham Community Education. The first session was held on Mar 4 and the last three were rescheduled for the fall (Susan Kirk, Amy Goldman).
- Co-sponsored Climate Change forum with LWV-Newton Feb 26.

Fundraising

- Raised \$644 for LWVN (and thousands for LWVMA) through participation in LWVMA Phonathon. Called over 250 League members, Nov 5 (Gail Davis, Maureen McCaffrey, Karen Price, Susan McGarvey, Elin Soderholm, Denise D'Amore, Debbie Winnick).
- Raised \$1,415 through donations with membership renewal (LWVN).
- Raised \$3,000 from “We Did It For You!” Nov 3 and Votes for Women buttons.
- Received LWVMA Scharfman Citizen Education grant (\$300) for “Girl Scouts Present! The Women’s Suffrage Movement.”
- Received \$500 from Roche Bros. to fund Civics Bee, which will be held for next year’s event.
- Received donations of \$1,000 from Town Meeting Member solicitation and other individual donations (Ed Fund).

Immigration Action Team, Jen Muroff, Chair

- Co-sponsored speaker “I Am Every Migrant Child: Reflections of a World War II Orphan” Jan 26.
- Co-sponsored “Suitcase Stories” Jun 12.
- Advocated for Safe Communities Act, Safe Driving and Education Equality Act.
- Attended Immigrants Day via Zoom.
- Issued periodic action alerts and updates.

Environment Action Team Susan McGarvey and Sharon Soltzberg, Co-Chairs



- Planning Meatless Mondays Campaign in Needham (Debbie Schmill, Eleanor Rosellini, Eileen Mullen, Susan McGarvey).
- Followed our sustainable practices policy; all events this year were zero waste events.
- Four members attended the Local Environmental Action Conference at Northeastern Mar 7.
- Co-sponsored Solarize Massachusetts Needham.

Membership Committee, Susan McGarvey and Susan Kirk, Co-Chairs

- Welcomed 21 new members since Jul 1, 2019, 9 of them students. Membership currently 216.
- Made personal contact with all new members with welcome packet.
- Reached out to new members for program planning.
- Held LWV-Needham Summer Meet-Up Jul 24 at Susan Kirk's home.
- Produced and distributed the LWVN Yearbook.
- Planned Annual Meeting logistics.

League of Women Voters of Needham at Needham High School Club, Eva Gorenburg, Eleanor Mackey, Cathy Dowd (faculty advisor)



- Grew to 17 members.
- Planned and carried out 18 year old Birthday Bags project (containing items relevant to voting).
- Planned and carried out voter registration drive at Needham HS. Registered 64 voters.
- Interviewed by Needham Channel News.

Middle School Civics Education/Outreach, Jane Evans, Jen Muroff

- Discussed partnering on civics education projects with Middle School Social Studies Director.
- Obtained a Needham Education Foundation grant to

bring a live performance about Deborah Sampson, "A Revolution of Her Own!" to Pollard Middle School (Feb 4-6).

Financial Records Review, Steve McKnight

- Reviewed financial records for LWVN and LWVN Ed Fund.

Studies, Carol Patey and Sally Toran

- Organized Jan Program Planning meeting.
- Participated in LWVUS Program Planning.
- Researched vaccinations (Eleanor Shore)
- Developed new study of Needham Elected boards and offices for 2021.

Secretary, Jeanne McKnight

- Recorded minutes for monthly meetings of the Board of Directors and Annual Meeting.

Treasurer, Stacie Shapiro

- Kept track of all financial transactions and reported monthly to Board of Directors.
- Worked with Erica Bond to prepare FY20 budgets (LWVN and LWVN Ed Fund).
- Filed required reports with state and national agencies.
- Prepared financial records for review.

Education Fund

- Prepared Annual Report and budget.
- Funded voter service events and educational forums.

- Oversaw “Needham LWV Endowment for Civic Awareness, Education, and Engagement,” currently valued at \$14,500.

Visibility/Community



- Participated in Jul 4 Parade.
- Responded to several requests for speakers, voting expertise, etc.
- Participated in the Needham Harvest Fair (spring Street Fair was canceled).
- Staffed Community organization table at Needham Farmers Market.
- Displayed panels about Frances Perkins from the Frances Perkins Center at League and Community events (Susan Kirk, Cathy Freedberg)

Voter Service Committee, Debbie Winnick, Chair

- Offered rides to the polls for all elections.
- Posted LWV Vote! signs prior to each election (Elizabeth Handler).
- Encouraged informed voting for all elections through website, Facebook, Twitter, Fairs.

Local Election (May 26)

- Posted information on running for local office on website and shared with LWVN and Needham MA Facebook pages.
- Prepared the Needham Times Voters Guide for the Annual Town Election (Debbie Winnick).
- Prepared Voters’ Guide for TMM candidates Voters Guide on website (Elizabeth Handler).
- Recorded, posted and shared candidate interviews via Zoom for contested races (Heidi Frail, Debbie Winnick).

Presidential Primary (Mar 3)

- Posted information on website about voting in primary.
- Posted reminders on Facebook and shared with Needham MA Facebook page.
- Distributed book marks with new polling locations.

Town Meeting

- Involved in discussions with Select Board Chair about Warrant Meetings (Susan Welby).
- Sent emails to Town Meeting Members with relevant information.

Participation in LWVMA

- Corlette Moore McCoy regularly disseminates information from LWVMA and LWVUS newsletters.
- Jen Muroff (gun safety and immigration) is a member of LWVMA Legislative Action Committee and LWV-Needham Legislative Envoy.
- Jen Muroff is a member of MA Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence state strategy team and Safe Communities Coalition (representing LWVMA).
- Susan McGarvey and Karen Price are members of LWVMA Steering Committee for Environmental Action and Advocacy.
- Karen Price is a LWVMA Field Service Representative and member of Membership Committee.
- Two members attended LWVMA League Leader Lunch.
- Donated to LWVMA.
- Participated in Phonathon to raise funds for LWVMA (and LWVN).

Participation with other local Leagues

- LWVN members served as moderators at candidate forums in other cities and towns (Debbie Winnick and Karen Price).
- Planning candidate events for 2020 primary and general elections.

Coalitions and Partnerships

- Coalition member in Green Needham Collaborative.
- Partner with Suffrage 100 MA.
- Coalition member in Needham Area Immigration Task Force.
- Member of Newton Needham Regional Chamber.

Canceled/Postponed Events Due to COVID-19 Emergency

The canceled events due to the COVID-19 emergency represent extraordinary efforts in preparation and planning.

- Exhibit: Suffrage Cartoons of Blanche Ames Mar 14-31 (Needham Library closure).
- Census workshops (3 at Center at the Heights and 2 at Housing Authority).
- Massachusetts in the Woman Suffrage Movement Mar 15.
- Needham Civics Bee Mar 22.
- FILM SERIES “She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry” Mar 24, “Atomic Homefront” Apr 29, “Summoned” May 21, “Made in L.A.” Jun 23.
- CIVICS SERIES Regional, State, Federal Government sessions.
- Conversation with Margaret H. Marshall Apr 1.
- Candidates Night Apr 6.
- 100th Birthday LWV program at Olin College Apr 16.
- Town Meeting Warrant Meetings/New TMM Orientation (Apr 27, Jun 1).

League of Women Voters of Needham Board of Directors

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|------------------------------|------------------|
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| • Jeanne McKnight, Secretary | • Carol Patey |
| • Stacie Shapiro, Treasurer | • Wendy Silver |
| • Heidi Frail | • Elin Soderholm |
| • Susan Kirk | • Jan Soma |
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- Harriet Goldin, Director