

Report of Activities for 2020 – 2021
League of Women Voters of Needham and LWV-Needham Education Fund

Introduction—An Unusual Year

Although the entire 2020-2021 League year (July 2020-June 2021) occurred under pandemic conditions, with no in-person meetings or events, the League of Women Voters of Needham was able to accomplish a great deal, as summarized below. Using Zoom videoconferencing we were able to continue our work, especially related to the three major elections during the past year.

The League of Women Voters of Needham became the largest local League in Massachusetts as of the annual February 1 roster update, with 219 members (currently 225).

VOTER ENGAGEMENT AND GET OUT THE VOTE

Voter Service Committee, Eileen Mullen, Chair, Karen Price, Heidi Frail, Elizabeth Handler, Si Si Goneconto

- Encouraged informed voting for all elections through website, Facebook, Twitter.
- Offered rides to the polls for all elections.
- Posted LWV Vote! signs prior to each election.
- Posted a summary of how Needham voted in the November 3 election.

State Primary Election (September 1)

- Produced three candidate forums on Zoom involving 25 candidates. Collaborated with other LWVs in the region for Congressional District 4, Sheriff, and three other Norfolk County positions which were also shown on the Needham Channel.
- Created a web portal (“Toolkit”) for a single point of entry on our website for all election-related information (896 views through portal), including:
 - Voter Guide (LWVMA VOTE411) (4,156 views).
 - Recordings of the three candidate forums (6,111 website views for Norfolk County forum; 1,387 for Sheriff, 695 for Congress).
 - Voting Options with information and resources for voting in Needham, including mail-in voting, early voting, using the DropBox, etc. (1,057 views).



State/Presidential Election (November 3)

- Produced two candidate forums on Zoom with other LWVs in the region for Sheriff and Norfolk County commissioner which were also shown on the Needham Channel.
- Created a web portal (“Toolkit”) for a single point of entry on our website for all election-related information, (286 views through the portal) including:
 - Voter Guide (LWVMA VOTE411) (348 views).
 - Recordings of the two candidate forums (151 views for Sheriff forum; 241 for Commissioner).
 - Voting Options as described above (221 views).
 - Ballot Question information (474 views).

Needham Local Election (April 13)

- Run for local office or Town Meeting web post (357 views).
- Produced LWVN Voter Guide with information about and responses from town-wide candidates (*Needham Times* and lwv-needham.org) and from Town Meeting Member Candidates (lwv-needham.org) (3,869 views).
- Produced two candidate forums on Zoom: one for contested races and one for uncontested races involving 14 candidates (1,176 views).
- Co-produced with the Needham Channel nine get-out-the-vote public service announcements (PSAs) shared primarily via Facebook and Twitter (Si Si Goneconto).
- Created a web portal (“Gateway”) for voters to have a single point of entry on our website for all election-related information, including:
 - Voter Guides.
 - Recordings of two candidate forums.
 - Needham Channel candidate interviews.
 - PSAs.
 - Voting Options (791 views).
- 1,116 users entered through the Gateway.



COMMUNITY AND CIVIC EDUCATION

Anniversary/Suffrage

- Produced “Women’s Suffrage 100 Years: LWV Exhibit on the Common,” an experiential art exhibit featuring colored sashes with suffrage-related names on them, suspended from the seven trees on the town common. LWV-Needham gifted the exhibit to the town, and it was displayed October 17-30 to coincide with the early voting period for the November election.
- Prepared a companion website with biographies and photos of the featured suffragists (Heidi Frail, Andy Wizer, Jane Evans, Jan Soma, Chris Balmer) (172 views).
- Moved Library exhibit: “The Suffrage Cartoons of Blanche Ames” to LWV-Needham website, where it had 772 views over the year.



Civic Education Committee, Karen Walker, Chair

- Supported LWV-Needham at Needham High School Club (Cathy Dowd)
- Annual Book Discussion Mar 31, via Zoom (Harriet Goldin).
- Awarded the League of Women Voters Needham Scholarship to a NHS graduate.
- Co-sponsored the Civics Series, with Needham Community Education. Regional (October 8), state (October 21), and federal (October 28) government sessions (Susan Kirk, Amy Goldman).

Community Participation

- Adopted the Town's Needham Unites Against Racism Initiative (NUARI) Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, and Intentional Practices April 8.
- Participated in Exchange Club July 4 House Decorating.
- Participated in Town of Needham's Countering Hate & Fostering Inclusion in Needham workshop (Jan Soma, Susan Kirk)

Town Meeting

- Held New Town Meeting Member Orientation April 19 (Susan Welby).
- Sent emails to Town Meeting Members with relevant information.



PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Advocacy: National and State, Jen Muroff, Legislative Envoy and LWVMA Legislative Action Committee, Jan Soma, LWVMA Legislative Action Committee

- Held "What's Happening on Beacon Hill" events via Zoom videoconference with Senator Rausch (March 5), Senator Rush (March 26), and Representative Garlick (April 2).
- Met with Congressperson-elect Jake Auchincloss December 8 on Zoom.
- Attended lobby days and hearings remotely and Needham Black Lives Matter rallies.
- Attended LWVMA informational sessions on police reform, racial justice, how bills become laws, and the state budget.
- Advocated for Ranked Choice Voting ballot question (November 3 election).
- Participated in LWVUS Day of Action Apr 29 (redistricting forums).
- Responded to numerous state and national action alerts.
- Met with Sheriff Pat McDermott regarding Safe Driving Act and other immigration and voting bills.



Immigration Action Team, Jen Muroff, Chair

- Advocated for Safe Communities Act and Safe Driving Act.
- Attended Immigrants Day via Zoom.
- Issued periodic action alerts and updates.

Gender Equity Action Team, Jan Soma, Chair

- Formed committee in 2021 (Jan Soma, Eileen Mullen, Susan McGarvey, Cathy Freedberg, Chris Balmer, Jen Muroff, Gail Davis, Andy Wizer).
- Researched bills filed in the State Legislature in 2021. Selected nine bills to follow through legislative process. Each committee member will follow at least one bill.

Housing Working Group, Jeanne McKnight

- Responded to request for comments on the 40B regulations revision (Jeanne McKnight, Karen Walker, Heidi Frail, Si Si Goneconto).
- Developed a plan for an affordable housing forum for the fall of 2021.

Meatless Monday Team, Susan McGarvey, Eileen Mullen, Cathy Freedberg, Kara Holmquist, Karen Price, Rebecca Waber, Deb Schmill, Eleanor Rosellini

- Coordinated the Meatless Monday Needham program to encouraging eating less meat with website, Facebook page, and a monthly newsletter.
- Held the Meatless Monday with Dave Becker program (February 23), which sold out at 100 meals-for-two.
- Donated \$3,000 to the Needham Community Council Food Pantry from funds raised through Meatless Monday with Dave Becker.

Studies and Program, Carol Patey and Sally Toran

- Organized January 14 Program Planning meeting.
- Participated in LWVMA Program Planning (Jen Muroff).
- Completed new study of Needham Elected boards and offices (Carol Patey).
 - Assembled 12-person study committee.
 - Presented progress and findings at LWVN Program Planning.
 - Conducted interviews with 45 of 53 elected officials.
 - Researched other towns and laws governing boards and offices.
 - Analyzed 32 years of Needham elections.
 - Prepared “Study Guide and Consensus Questions.”
 - Held consensus meeting on May 20.

ORGANIZATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

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 \$25,216.96.

Finances

Budget, Erica Bond, Chair

- Prepared annual budgets for both LWVN and LWVN Education Fund (with Stacie Shapiro, Elizabeth Handler, Karen Price, and Karen Zarrow).

Treasury, Stacie Shapiro

- Kept track of all financial transactions and reported monthly to Board of Directors.
- Worked with Erica Bond to prepare FY21 budgets (LWVN and LWVN Ed Fund).
- Filed required reports with state and national agencies.
- Prepared financial records for review.

Fundraising

- Raised \$600 for LWVN (and thousands for LWVMA) through participation in LWVMA Phonathon. Called over 250 League members. (Gail Davis, Maureen McCaffrey, Susan McGarvey, Elin Soderholm, Denise D'Amore, Sally Toran, Karen Price).
- Raised \$2,285 through donations with membership renewal (LWVN).
- Received donations of \$1,000 from individual donations (Ed Fund).

Financial Records Review, Steve McKnight

- Reviewed financial records for LWVN and LWVN Ed Fund.

Communication and Media

Media, Karen Price

- Created graphics, flyers and web posts for all events.
- Submitted/posted press releases and announcements for all events.
- Submitted letters to the editor as needed (1 this year on running for office).

Social Media and Website

- Updated and maintained LWVN Facebook page (Karen Price). 467 followers and growing.
- Regularly posted information about elections and LWV-Needham activities on Needham MA Facebook page (Karen Price, Elizabeth Handler).
- Updated and maintained LWVN Twitter account (Jen Muroff). 136 followers and growing.
- Kept website updated and relevant (Karen Price, Lollie Weeks).
 - In past year, 42,410 views, 60 new posts.

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.

Membership and Outreach

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

- As of February 1, 2021, official roster, LWV-Needham became the largest local League in Massachusetts with 219 members.
- Welcomed 27 new members since July 1, 2020, five of them students. Membership currently 224.
- Made personal contact with all new members with welcome packet.
- Held a new member meeting on Zoom.
- Produced and distributed the LWVN Yearbook. All members received PDF version and a printed version was available upon request.

Secretary, Jeanne McKnight

- Recorded minutes for monthly meetings of the Board of Directors.

Membership Meetings

- 80th Annual Meeting, May 28, 2020 using Zoom videoconferencing.
- Program Planning/Winterfest January 14 on Zoom. Carol Patey reported on the progress of our study on Needham's Elected Boards and Officers.
- Virtual Trivia Night February 4.

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

- Grew to 21 members.
- Participated in Norfolk County primary forum.
- Presented board information and interviewed candidates for the "Meet the Candidates" forum for the town election.
- Two students attended the "Cheers to 100 Years" anniversary event.
- Shared voter registration information at the Black Lives Matter rally at Memorial Field.



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

- Shared information on projects related to the elections and suffrage.

Nominating Committee Susan McGarvey, Amy Goldman, Erica Bond, Elizabeth Handler, Jan Soma, Jane Evans

- Reached out to LWV-Needham members to discuss serving on the LWV-Needham board or taking on an off-board position.
- Developed a slate of candidates for the 2021-2023 Board of Directors.

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 is the LWV-Needham Legislative Envoy.
- Jan Soma (gender equity) is a member of LWVMA Legislative Action Committee.
- Jen Muroff is a member of MA Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence state strategy team and Safe Communities Coalition (representing LWVMA).
- Karen Price is co-chair of LWVMA Environmental Action and Advocacy Committee.
- Karen Price is a LWVMA Field Service Representative and member of Membership Committee.
- Members attended LWVMA League Leader Lunch.
- Donated to LWVMA.
- Participated in Phonathon to raise funds for LWVMA (and LWVN).
- Participated in State Program Planning March 9.
- Participated in "Cheers to 100 Years" LWVMA anniversary event December 13.
- Three members attending LWVMA Convention June 26.

Participation with other local Leagues

- LWVN members served as moderators at candidate forums in other cities and towns (Debbie Winnick and Karen Price).
- Collaborated with local Leagues in Norfolk County on four forums: Primary Sheriff, Primary Norfolk County, General Sheriff, General County Commissioner.
- Collaborated with local Leagues in Congressional District 4 on primary candidate forum for Representative to Congress.
- Assisted LWV-Wellesley in their Meatless Monday with Dave Becker event (Karen Price).

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.
- Co-sponsored At My Neighbors Table events.

League of Women Voters of Needham Board of Directors (2020-2021)

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|------------------------------|------------------|
| • Karen Price, President | • Jen Muroff |
| • Jeanne McKnight, Secretary | • Carol Patey |
| • Stacie Shapiro, Treasurer | • Wendy Silver |
| • Heidi Frail | • Elin Soderholm |
| • Susan Kirk | • Jan Soma |
| • Corlette Moore McCoy | • Karen Walker |
| • Susan McGarvey | • Debbie Winnick |
| • Eileen Mullen | |

League of Women Voters of Needham Ed Fund Board of Directors

- Karen Price, President
- Elizabeth Handler, Clerk
- Stacie Shapiro, Treasurer
- Kara Holmquist, Director
- Harriet Goldin, Director