

Voter

A look ahead...

LWV public meetings are held in the Sons of Norway Lodge, 722 2nd Ave. N., Fargo, in the meeting room behind the cafeteria. Members and guests who wish to go through the buffet table and eat together (in the lodge meeting room), may do so at 11:30 a.m.

September 7, 2001, Noon-1:00 p.m.

First Friday at Sons of Norway
What Can F-M Convention and Visitor's Bureau Do for Your Organization?
Speaker: Cole Carley, Executive Director F-M Convention and Visitors Bureau

September 4 and 17, 2001, 5:00 p.m.

Public Hearings on the Fargo Public Library Budget
City Commission Chambers ([See article](#))

September 19, 2001, 5:10-6:30 p.m.

LWVRRV Board Meeting
United Way Office, 219 7th St. S., Fargo

October 5, 2001, Noon-1:00 p.m.

First Friday at Sons of Norway
Issues Surrounding Rapid Growth in West Fargo
Speaker: Larry Well, West Fargo City Planner

November 2, 2001, Noon-1:00 p.m.

First Friday at Sons of Norway
Making the Fargo School Board Effective-Policy Governance
Speaker: Lowell Wolff, Community Relations Administrator, Fargo Public Schools

CANDIDATE FORUMS

October 23, 2001, 7 - 9 p.m.

Moorhead School Board.
Location to be determined.

October 25, 2001, 7 - 9 p.m

Moorhead City Council
City Council Candidates
Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

" The League of Women Voters values diversity in its members. In principle and in practice, the League knows no barriers on the basis of age, creed, disability, gender, national origin, race or sexual orientation, and encourages full participation in and contribution to the organization by all its members. "

From the President

Greetings to all! As summer begins to draw to a close, the baseball season is wrapping up (Minnesota Twins- From worst to first and back to worst!), the football players are donning their uniforms for pre-season games, and, yes, even National Hockey League news is creeping its way back into ESPN's SportsCenter.

It is time for the League to come together for a little pre-season practice of our own. Never before has LWVRRV enjoyed such collection of time, energy, talent and money at its disposal. As your new "quarterback," I hope to direct the League to even greater achievements. We will be joining forces with LWVMN to put on a Leadership Workshop in October. We will be a major sponsor of the Leaders of Today and Tomorrow conference held to inspire college age women leaders in our community. We will be working with the newly rejuvenated LWVND to study election administration reform throughout the state. These are just a few of the many projects already slated for the upcoming League year.

All events will give us ample opportunity to show through the media the impact we are having on the communities where League is located. It is through increased publicity that I believe we will be able to build on the incredible success that League Fund raiser Kathie Kvalvog has already achieved. In addition, I would like to energize the entire League membership to be involved in some of our projects throughout the year.

I feel that we may have lost touch with some of the membership. I would like to use this year to reinvigorate those members and involve them again.

League Membership Chair Suzanne Dobbins will be putting together a "Meet and Greet" function this fall to "give members opportunity to meet project leaders and discover the many different opportunities to volunteer within the League. From giving five minutes of your time to donating as much of your time as you would like, from working as a representative in the speaker's bureau to working behind the scene setting up voter service forums, there is a place for you in the League. I look forward to your involvement and to this exciting League season!
GO TEAM !

--*Andrea Sather, President*

Editor's Corner

Looking back over the past year, it has been gratifying to observe the amount of citizen interest and participation in public meetings concerning planning for the Fargo Public Schools and more recently the future of the Ten Commandments monument in the city hall mall.

I attend public meetings on a fairly regular basis, including the voters service forums sponsored by our organization and others. I envision how wonderful it would be if people turned out to hear and question candidates for the legislature, commission, school board and other elective offices. There are relatively smaller audiences at these meetings. The League will continue to search for ways to involve people with their government. Meanwhile we can all appreciate those who take an interest and voice their opinion whatever it may be.

--*Audrey Richmond 235-3904 or Richmond@cord.edu*

Committee begins local program study

WANTED: League members to study local government
REWARD: Increased knowledge of local government

At the annual meeting in March, the League of Women Voters of the Red River Valley adopted a study of local boards and commissions, their purpose, meeting times and membership with emphasis on the appointment process.

A committee began meeting in May. Members Mary Davies, Suzanne Dobbins, Barb Headrick and Marlene Batterberry limited the study to city government. They are gathering information on all of the Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo citizen boards and commissions. The committee is developing a survey to send to board/committee members.

We need members from each of the communities to help with the study. We will work around your schedules and interests. We need people to interview board members, to observe meetings and to analyze survey results. This is an excellent way to find out how government operates and will be good visibility for the League. Some of the questions we are asking :

Are there barriers to appointment? Does committee membership reflect demographics of the community? Is citizen volunteer time well used? Is there training/recognition of board members?

Please let Mary Davies (233-2175 or marbob7@aol.com) know if you are interested in helping with this study.

Minnesota Legislative Session Highlights...

Firearms

Thanks to the statewide gun violence prevention coalitions for a Safer Minnesota, of which LWVMN is a member, one of the worst handgun bills ever to come before the MN Legislature was stopped. The bill which passed in the House but was defeated in the Senate would have stripped police chiefs of the ability to deny a permit to carry a loaded concealed handgun into public places. In the Senate the bill was stopped in the Senate Crime Committee but was attached to many other bills. None of our District 9 legislators opposed the concealed carry weapons bill.

Redistricting

It is probably no surprise that the legislature did not adopt a redistricting plan. If the legislature cannot pass a plan by March 19, 2002, a five-member panel appointed by the Chief of the MN Supreme Court will write the plan.

Campaign Finance Reform

No reform was adopted.

Election Reform

LWVMN had serious concerns about three election reform bills originating with the Secretary of State which would have had the overall effect of discouraging voter turnout. The bills did not get a hearing.

Mental Health

For the first time in many years this area fared well. Mental health workers will receive cost of living increases and medical assistance providers will see an increase in their rates. Health Care Increased funding for long-term care passed. Legislation encourages home and community-based options for long-term care. Measures also passed to increase the retention of long-term care workers. One with new regulations on temporary nursing pools and 150% cost caps for pool workers remains problematic.

--*Mary Davies*

Library requests funds for branch

The Fargo Public Library has requested funds from the city for the opening of a storefront library branch on the south side of the city. At a proposed cost of \$350,000, the project requires a 2 mill tax increase - approximately \$7.50 on a \$100,000 home. The earlier proposal for a new library and branch facility was priced at \$20 million.

Public hearings on the budget are being held on Tuesday, Sept. 4 and Monday, Sept. 17 in the Fargo City Commission chambers. The input will determine whether or not the storefront library project goes forward.

Observer Corps

Fargo City Commission Issues discussed besides those reported in the Forum in May-July meetings: There was a decision to acquire the old St. John's hospital building for use by Fargo-Cass Public Health and the Family Health Care Center, using money from the Dakota Medical Foundation to purchase the site. One possible source of income to be used to pay for operating expenses could be rents paid by local non-profit organizations who have indicated an interest in leasing space in the building, since the city will not be using all of the space available. In July, it was reported that this sale might not go through due to an inability to come to an agreement with the seller about whether the parking area and the outlying buildings would be included in the sale. Several large tracts of land in the southwest area of Fargo are planned for development. In one case the commission decided to be proactive and bring up possible issues of buffer zones and the removal of existing trees with neighboring developments, before allowing a rezoning ordinance to be approved. The city now has policies in place for how and when "extra-territorial" areas will be annexed. The city is considering different ways to lessen the impact of very large special assessments on those developments that will need extensive sewer, water lines, paving etc. The general underlying theme of a lot of the issues that the Commission has been facing in recent months is that they have been caused or at least influenced by the rapid growth of Fargo over the past few years. For example, Fargo is considering an agreement with Cass Rural Water to deal with the fact that the city is encroaching into rural areas at a much faster rate than was planned for in the '70s and '80s. Fargo will now try to be more proactive so that the city will be the official water provider before rural areas are developed, instead of having the more costly problem of having to purchase distribution lines, etc. from Cass Rural Water after they are already put in.

Rapid growth has resulted in many new neighborhoods. In these areas there seems to be much more friction about "not in my backyard" types of concerns than in older parts of the city. The commission considered an ordinance to limit the height of ham radio towers, and adopted an ordinance relating to the types of businesses that can be operated from a private home.

--*Carol Savicki, Observer*

Moorhead City Council

Moorhead City Council meetings this summer have dealt with land use issues, housing and health services.

In June, the Council voted not to support the Family Health Care Center with a \$10,000 contribution from Community Development Block Grant Funds. The money would be used for equipment at the Moorhead center. The issue was brought back for a vote on August 6th and the funding was approved.

Debate continued over proposals for working density housing vs. current land use zoning. Representatives from several neighborhoods appeared to protest increasing housing density from what had been set out in the city planning ordinance. A task force is studying the many housing needs in the city.

A proposal was brought forward to limit the number of hours residents could set their garbage out on the berm for collection. Several council members felt people left garbage on the boulevard too long, making it unsightly. Much of the concern was directed at college neighborhoods. The proposal was ultimately voted down but council is looking at a city policy that would discourage residents from placing garbage out before the pick-up day.

--*Mary Davies, Observer*

Fargo School Board

Due to hip surgery in May, I have not attended school board meetings this summer. Some highlights from the Board Briefs meeting summaries include: A Key Communicators focus group presented suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the board and administration in fulfilling the strategic plan. Among them were: Find ways to involve those who have no children in school. Create more interaction between the business sector and the schools. Listen to what youth have to say. Ensure that at risk youth are not left behind. Make tough decisions. Stick together as board, staff and community. Make decisions for the good of the whole community. "We are a community first not a series of neighborhoods." Be willing to do things differently. In the recent legislative session, the law concerning school board elections was changed to align the timing of city, county and school elections. In Fargo, school elections have been annual and terms for individuals have been set accordingly. The new law would require a change to biennial school elections and an adjustment in term lengths or a continuance of annual elections which are expensive and have had poor voter turnout. The district would have to pay in the off years. Legal advice on adjusting the term lengths will be sought. In July, board member Ken Olson resigned due to ill health. We thank him for his five years of service to the community and wish him well. A replacement, Jim Johnson, has been appointed by the board.

--*Audrey Richmond, Observer*

Policy Governance... A Management Model

In October, 2000, The Fargo School Board adopted the policy governance model for managing the district. As a resource for learning more about what is entailed, Lowell Wolff, Administrator for Community Relations and Planning for the schools suggested several resources. The following was drawn from the web site of John Carpenter, creator of the model.

Carpenter developed the system for the purpose of defining all aspects of board function in order to ensure the achievement of board-stated goals. An article by Carpenter and Carpenter on the web site (www.policygovernance.com/home.htm) cites a number of resources which purport that many boards are largely non-functional or at least not doing what they are supposed to do. It is Carpenter's belief that aboard exists to be accountable for the workings of the organization which it serves. It has total authority until it delegates it to someone else. Logical and consistent principles are required and the discipline to put them into effect. The board must be in the position to understand the various views held in the community about the purpose of the organization. It should lead the organization according to its perceptions of the values and judgments of these stakeholders.

Although the board has authority and responsibility to ownership, it must delegate actual work to others. This management staff must be clear about expectations, personalize the assignment of duties and check whether they have been met.

Carpenter uses a number of terms in discussing his model. Ends are the board-defined expected consumer results and the worth (cost) of these re- suits. Means are the personal and financial planning and details as to how the ends will be met. The board is not responsible for producing ends but assigns this responsibility to a CEO who is responsible and accountable to the board. Governance process in- volves the establishment of policies. Executive limitations set forth the limits of behavior for the CEO and staff and should define unacceptable behavior clearly.

As long as the ends are accomplished and the unacceptable means are avoided, the CEO can make any further decisions as to means. *(to be continued)*

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