

THE VOTER

News for League of Women Voters Minneapolis Members and Friends



Civic Buzz to Feature Proposed Minneapolis Charter Amendments

BY ELLEN VAN IWAARDEN & DEBORAH JINDRA



Ellen van Iwaarden

Like many Minneapolis leaders and residents, LWVMpls members are asking for more information about the two proposed amendments to the Minneapolis City Charter that will be on the ballot on November 2. In response, this year's Civic Buzz season will begin with two September events to educate members and the public.

On Thursday, September 23, at 7 PM, Reimagining Public Safety Committee (RPSC) Co-chairs Jane Lansing and Jennifer Wilson will present the RPSC's study results and how the provisions of the charter amendment proposed by Yes 4 Minneapolis, called *Department of Public Safety*, line up (or in some cases do not line up) with LWVMpls positions.

On Thursday, September 30, at 7 PM, LWVMpls members Patricia Kovel-Jarboe and Catherine Shreves will present on the *Government Structure: Executive Mayor-Legislative Council* proposal put forward by the Minneapolis Charter Commission. LWVMpls supports this amendment.

George Floyd's murder by a Minneapolis police officer in May of 2020 and the subsequent civil unrest and law enforcement response to that unrest illustrated for many how the dysfunctional structure of Minneapolis government hurts the city and its residents. How Minneapolis' elected officials might better manage government functions to serve and protect all its residents, whatever their color, is at the heart of both proposed amendments.

(continued on p. 6)

LWV
CIVIC BUZZ
MINNEAPOLIS

Thursday, September 23 at 7 PM
PUBLIC SAFETY

Thursday, September 30 at 7 PM
GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

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From the President COLLEEN MORIARTY, PRESIDENT



November elections are fast approaching and we have our work cut out for us. Voting rights and efforts to restrict access to voting are a grave concern. We must be diligent in our advocacy on this issue. The right to vote in a free and fair election is the cornerstone of our organization and of democracy. We have witnessed people who have sacrificed their lives to assure the right to vote for all Americans. Now is not the time to turn back the clock and rob voters of their rights. If you have not already visited the website *Your Vote Your Voice* (www.yourvoteyourvoicemn.org), I encourage you to do so. The site is a helpful resource that includes stories of the fight for voting rights along with information about the current landscape.

According to the website, the top concerns that compromise voting are:

1. Photo ID requirements
2. Language barriers
3. Negative and misleading advertising
4. Lack of transportation
5. Educational inequities
6. Gerrymandering and redistricting

Despite these efforts to create barriers and suppress voting, and with the additional challenge of a global pandemic, we turned out to vote in record numbers in the 2020 election. We must show up again this year.

I applaud our current efforts in Voter Services, and I challenge all our members to volunteer once again in record numbers to turn out the vote. For information on how to get involved, visit lvvmpls.org.

Editor's Note

BY DEBORAH JINDRA



I routinely threaten to write fiction when articles for this publication don't fill our pages. So now I will turn my hand to short story writing. Imagine, if you will, a large, elegant room where the assembled, having been sated and inspired by

great food and a spectacular speaker, rise to their feet in applause. Let's go really crazy and assume our characters are within a handshake, or better yet, hugging proximity, and are attending something like an annual meeting.

The person at the front of the room just saluted the intrepid folks who during several years of unpredictable plot twists and a challenging political landscape kept their noses to the grindstone, adapted to new technology and ways of doing business, and still managed to perform the very important duty of communicating the work of LWVMpls to our members and the public.

The extraordinary Katie Heit Gardner, who produced suffragist cards and an amazing voting rights timeline for the Minneapolis Elections Open House and put in

countless hours on the re-designed LWVMpls website, digital and print communications, and *The Voter* newsletter, receives the first standing ovation for all that she has done for this organization. For the unsung, behind-the-scenes accuracy of the wise and informed proof-readers for this publication, the crowd also salutes Jane Papageorgiou and Jennifer Johnson. Another round of applause erupts for Carla Jacobson, who makes sure that dates, donations, printing and other essential pieces come together for this team.

The last toast of the evening goes to those volunteers who, while working on voter services, candidate forums, and a myriad of other LWV projects, take the time to write an article about their work or take a photo. These efforts allow us to keep an historical record and inform others of the great job we do everyday to support this city.

This bit of creative license may not be as good as the real thing but I hope it serves to make readers aware of the many people who produce this publication to record our actions for prosperity.

Minneapolis Municipal Election 2021

BY MARILYN CANTISANO, VOTER SERVICES CHAIR

November 2, the date of the Minneapolis local election, is fast approaching, and early voting begins September 17. Become informed about what is on your ballot and make a plan to vote today!

The Voter Services Committee is here to help educate you and the community on the candidates, issues, how and where to vote. But we need the help of the LWVMpls members to be successful.

What LWVMpls is doing and how you can help:

1. A 2021 Voter Guide will be available in print and pdf form beginning in early September. We need help distributing the print guide to neighborhoods, schools, businesses, churches, food pantries, Little Free Libraries, and more. We will target neighborhoods with traditionally low voter turnout, but will want to “paper” the city with the guide. The PDF guide will be on the LWVMpls website; forward it to friends, family and anyone you think might be interested.
2. Who are the candidates and where do they stand on issues? Find out two ways:
 - Candidate Forums. Attend/watch a candidate forum or watch a recording of one on lwvmpls.org. Forums have taken place for Wards 3, 4, 5, and 12. Still to come are: Mayoral forum on September 13, Ward 11 on September 15, Ward 13 on October 4, the remaining wards, and Park District 6. Check the website for detailed information.
 - Candidate Questionnaires. Queries will go out to all the Park Board candidates with questions specially geared to Park Board concerns. A separate questionnaire will go out to all Mayoral and City Council candidates focusing on issues of public safety and general concerns of the community. The answers will be unedited in the candidates' own words. Find this important information on our website in September and pass it on.
3. Minneapolis Votes 2021! articles are on the LWVMpls.org home page under the “For Voters” tab. Find the following information and more:
 - How to register
 - Duties of elected officials
 - Ranked Choice Voting
 - Make a plan to vote
 - Charter amendments

These articles have also been distributed to local papers, neighborhood organizations and partners. Pass them on!

4. Voter registration is taking place all over the city at fairs, farmers markets, health clinics, libraries, and more. September 28 is National Voter Registration Day. We will hold all-day events at selected Cub Foods, schools and other locations. Sign up to help.
5. Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts are underway. Please watch for ways you can help, including texting and sending postcards.
6. Election Night Services on November 2 will need at least 80 volunteers to work at one of the two drop-off centers (Bethel Church at 4120 17th Ave S and election headquarters at 980 E Hennepin). The hours are 7 PM to 11 PM for most people, including a 90-minute training session. CDC/State of Minnesota/ City of Minneapolis COVID safety precautions will be in place. Contact Janet Midtbo if you would like to help at jdmidtbo@gmail.com.
7. Consider being an election judge at a polling site. This is a great way for young people to be involved. Go to the Minneapolis election website to find out more and apply at vote.minneapolismn.gov/election-workers/apply-for-election-jobs/.
8. If you want to get involved, contact Marilyn Cantisano, Voter Services chairperson, at marilyncantisano@gmail.com. Join the Voter Services Committee (meets second Wednesday of the month at 7 PM) or just help with a particular event. Do whatever fits your schedule.

Reflections on Race

BY ALICE MOORMANN

Rummaging through some files recently I made a surprise discovery: the publication titled *Reflections on Race*, from LWVMpls, May, 1991. "The booklet represents a compilation of writings contributed by individuals of Asian Refugee, Chicano/Latino, African, Native American and Euro American descent... All of the writers felt more open discussion about racism was important, particularly now when tensions are so high. Some felt that racism was primarily a white problem and they were particularly pleased white writers were willing to talk about their racism." The booklet included group discussion questions, suggested actions to personally reduce racism, and suggested scheduling of follow-up meetings to review commitment and progress. It also included a list of resources to combat racism in both public and private sectors.

My reaction to the discovery was mixed. I had forgotten about the study and was pleased that LWVMpls had published this booklet thirty years ago. I did recognize that some of the language was dated. Using "minorities" to refer to people of color, for example, can mean "less than," and is no longer the preferred adjective. I also couldn't remember exactly what "tensions were so high" in 1991.

While reading what the individual authors' essays said, I felt very, very sad. Today, thirty years later, not much has changed. Many think and feel the situation is worse. Will anything change in the next thirty years? Will people of color still have a hard time feeling accepted and welcomed in Minneapolis? My discovery reinforces my feeling that becoming anti-racist, equitable and inclusive is never complete. It is never done. There is always more to learn and to do. My hope is that the murder of George Floyd will awaken us to our personal biases and prejudices and that we can change and also work to remove racism from our systems and policies.

Two books focusing on racism and diversity written by people living in Minnesota are:
A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota by Sun Yung Shin

SPARKED: George Floyd, Racism, and the Progressive Illusion, edited by Walter R. Jacobs, Wendy Thompson Taiwo and Amy August (published by the Minnesota Historical Society).



The League of Women Voters begins its second century of defending democracy and fighting for the voting rights of our citizens across the country! We are growing in strength, in numbers, and in impact. We're writing to you today to ask you to consider taking on a bigger role in the organization's future. We invite you to apply to our 2022-2024 National Board.

We are looking for individuals who are:

- Passionate about our mission to empower voters and defend democracy
- Eager to help advance the League's strategic goals and mission impact
- Ready to leverage skills and experience -- in and outside of the League -- to create an even stronger organization
- Able to envision the League's future power

If this sounds like you, please apply today.

We also would welcome your recommendations for candidates for the National Board.

More information about the role and application process are available online. Applications are due by October 29, 2021.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful organization. We hope that you will consider stepping into national leadership.

In League,
Judy Golberg & Hilda Walker Thomas
Co-chairs, LWVUS Nominating Committee

New Member Spotlight: Deborah Sugerman

BY NANCY ALBRECHT



Deborah Sugerman joined League of Women Voters Minneapolis in the summer of 2020 because she was concerned about the upcoming election and wanted to do something useful. She joined the Voter Services Committee and because of the pandemic, was glad to work on the Voter Guide,

a project that allowed her to work from home and use her skills as a writer and editor. After the 2020 election, Deborah took over compiling the Update, which goes out to members via email. In March of 2021, she was invited to join the Board of Directors as Communications chair.

Deborah has high praise for prior Communications chair Katie Heit Gardner. “Katie did an amazing job. She brought her incredible graphic design skills to the League, including designing our new website.”

In her new role, Deborah wants to ensure that all communications are integrated both internally and externally. She also wants to help new members understand the structure of LWVMpls.

Deborah grew up in St. Louis, where her mother was a member of the League of Women Voters as well as being active in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, a women’s pacifist organization. In high school Deborah went door to door organizing for Vietnam Summer, an anti-war movement, but her political involvement waned after college.

Her two sons were born in St. Louis. The family moved to New Jersey and then to Texas before landing in Minneapolis in 1992. One son now lives in California with his two children, and the other lives in Minneapolis.

Deborah trained and worked as a social worker and later transitioned to journalism. She ended up as a freelance medical writer and editor. Just prior to retirement, her work included writing patient education materials for HealthPartners and updating the Mayo Clinic health information website.

She enjoys traveling and hiking; her most memorable trip combined the two when she hiked the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. She’s an avid reader and also loves visiting her grandchildren as often as she can.

Deborah looks forward to getting to know other LWV members, hopefully in person, as well as learning more about the workings of Minneapolis city government.

Ward 5 Candidate Forum



A forum for the Ward 5 City Council seat took place on May 26 outdoors at Farwell Park. It was hosted by the Heritage Park Neighborhood Association and the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) and moderated by LWVMpls. Eighty community members attended and 700 watched via live stream on the LWVMpls Facebook site.

View this and other unedited, recorded videos of 2021 forums at:
www.facebook.com/lwvmpls/videos

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The first Civic Buzz of the season will analyze the Minneapolis City Charter amendment proposed by the advocacy group Yes 4 Minneapolis. It should be emphasized that LWVMpls has not taken a position on this amendment.

The charter amendment reads as follows:

Department of Public Safety

Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended to strike and replace the Police Department with a Department of Public Safety which could include licensed peace officers (police officers) if necessary, with administrative authority to be consistent with other city departments to fulfill its responsibilities for public safety?

This group gathered the required signatures to place a charter question on the ballot that addresses the City's approach to public safety. The language that will appear on the ballot has been a subject of much controversy, with a lawsuit filed over an explanatory note drafted by the City Attorney. The Council and the Mayor were unable to agree, despite three Council meetings on the day of the deadline. The Council had enough votes to keep the explanatory language off the ballot. Litigation about that Council decision has begun.

This previous explanatory note language, which was drafted by the City Attorney and approved by the City Council, read as follows:

This amendment would create a new Department of Public Safety, which would:

1. Combine public safety functions of the City of Minneapolis into a comprehensive public health approach to safety, with the specific public safety functions to be determined.
2. Include licensed peace officers (police officers) if necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of the Department of Public Safety.
3. Be led by a Commissioner of Public Safety. The appointment process for the Commissioner would include a Mayor nomination and a City Council appointment. The Mayor would not have complete power over the establishment, maintenance, and command of the Department of Public Safety.

This amendment would also do the following:

1. Remove from the Charter a Police Department, which includes the removal of its Police Chief, and the removal of the Mayor's complete power over the establishment, maintenance, and command of the Police Department.
2. Remove the City Council requirement to fund a police force of at least 1.7 employees per 1,000 residents.
3. Remove City Council authorization to impose additional taxation on taxable property in the City of Minneapolis of up to 0.3 percent of its value annually to fund the compensation of employees of the police force.

This is clearly a complicated matter, and the information gathered by the RPSC study, as well as the LWVMpls position on good governance in Minneapolis, will be helpful in understanding the amendment and its ramifications if passed. The Civic Buzz to analyze the the Department of Public Safety amendment (Ballot Question 2) will be held on Thursday, September 23, at 7 PM. Attend on Zoom at <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/88093383421>.



Mural by Adam Turman, Photo by Priscilla Gyamfi

Changing the charter to improve governance in Minneapolis has been a decades-long goal of our organization and LWVMpls is supporting the proposed *Government Structure: Executive Mayor-Legislative Council* amendment. The proposed amendment, which will amend the Charter to better define the roles of the Mayor and the City Council, is the result of years of study and listening to Minneapolis residents and city leaders.

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The charter amendment reads as follows:

Government Structure: Executive Mayor Legislative Council

Shall the Minneapolis City Charter be amended to adopt a change in its form of government to an Executive Mayor-Legislative Council structure to shift certain powers to the Mayor, consolidating administrative authority over all operating departments under the Mayor, and eliminating the Executive Committee?

There is no longer an explanatory note with the ballot language, but the previous note indicated that the Mayor would appoint all department heads, the City Council will continue to appoint the City Clerk, the current Executive Committee would be abolished, and a new City Auditor and Audit Committee must be established to assist the City Council in its oversight role. (Government Structure Charter Amendment Resolution, August 13, 2021).

In her public testimony before the Charter Commission last March, LWVMpls President Colleen Moriarty said, “Through years of research, discussion, and studies, our members have reached consensus to support a structure to provide City staff with direct accountability. . . . We believe this clarification of roles of the Mayor and City

Council will provide the City with direct accountability and in turn will benefit residents of the City of Minneapolis by improving the functions of City government.”

According to Charter Commission Chair Barry Clegg, the proposed Government Structure: Executive Mayor-Legislative Council Amendment is “probably the most important charter amendment that has come before the city in 100 years.” (*StarTribune*, April 7, 2021) Proponents of the proposed amendment, which include a long list of community leaders and former public officials, believe that by establishing a more balanced form of government, which will mirror the structure of our state and federal governments, Minneapolis will be a more safe, just, and well-managed city.

To learn more about the Charter Commission’s proposed amendment, Government Structure (Ballot Question 1), attend the second Civic Buzz by Zoom on Thursday, September 30, at 7 PM.

The Zoom link to attend the Government Structure Civic Buzz is: <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/89720603311>

All are welcome at our Civic Buzz events, so please feel free to share this information with friends and neighbors. We hope to see you on Zoom in September!

Looking for Lively Conversation?

LWVMpls units meet in member homes or public places (or via Zoom) for lively discussions of current LWV issues. Members and guests are welcome at any unit.

Find a unit meeting that’s convenient for you and participate! If you are new to a unit, please let the host know that you plan to attend.

<p>Unit 1: Second Monday at 7:15 PM · S Mpls Alice Moormann; akmoormann@gmail.com; 612-827-1358</p>	<p>Unit 11: Second Tuesday, 7:15 PM · SW Mpls Jane Papageorgiou; papag002@umn.edu; 612-824-2180 Pam Telleen; btelleen1@comcast.net; 612-823-3785</p>
<p>Unit 25/29: Second Wednesday, 2:00 PM · SE/NE Mpls Susan Anderson; susan331@mac.com; 612-331-1117 Kate Fournier; kandrfournier@msn.com; 612-331-5615</p>	<p>Unit 48: Third Monday, 7:00 PM · So/No/Up/Down Mpls Jennifer Johnson; jennaj5133@gmail.com; 612-377-6084</p>
<p>Unit 53: Third Tuesday, 7:30 PM · Bryn Mawr Gwen Myers; salmyers@comcast.net; 952-545-8696 Karen Ringsrud; rings001@umn.edu; 612-922-0555</p>	

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MISSION

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

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Welcome New Members (May - July 2021)

- | | |
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Important Dates

Key 2021 Election Dates

Early voting period Sept 17 - Nov 1

Early registration deadline Oct 12

(You can also register on Election Day or through the mail voting process.)

Recommended deadline to apply for a ballot Oct 19

Deadline to return your mail ballot Nov 2

Election Day Nov 2

(Polls open from 7 AM - 8 PM)

LWVmpls Dates

Civic Buzz One, Thursday, September 23, 2021

Topic: Charter Amendment

Civic Buzz Two, Thursday, September 30, 2021

Topic: Charter Amendment