



HANDBOOK

Published June 2010

**League of Women Voters
of the Kalamazoo Area**

Making Democracy Work!

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Welcome to Members of the League of Women Voters:

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. As a member of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area, you are also a member of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) and the League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI), and are part of long traditions.

The LWVUS was formally organized in Chicago on February 14, 1920, as an outgrowth of the Women's Suffrage movement which worked nearly 50 years to obtain the vote for women. In describing the function of the new organization, Carrie Chapman Catt said:

"In the League of Women Voters we have an anomaly; we are going to be a semi-political body. We want political things; we want legislation; we are going to educate for citizenship. In that body we have got to be nonpartisan and all partisan. Democrats from Alabama and Republicans from New Hampshire must work for the same things."

The League of Women Voters of Michigan (LWVMI) initiates state programs and studies and provides, through its offices in Lansing, a valuable window for us on our state legislature.

This Handbook will give you a picture of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area (LWVKA). Our program consists of voter service; member education through study; and action at the local, state and national levels on positions we have reached through study and consensus. We also publish and send to each member our Bulletin which provides a calendar of League events and articles of current interest. The Bulletin will also help you get involved -- for we want every member to get involved.

The organization of which you are a part has a proud history and a very active present. We hope you will learn about it and become active in one or more of its many facets. You are welcome to attend Board meetings if you would like to see first-hand how we conduct our business.

Sincerely,

The Officers and the Board of Directors

HIGHLIGHTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE LWV OF THE KALAMAZOO AREA

- 1920 The Kalamazoo County League of Women Voters was formed on July 20, five months after the formation in Chicago of the League of Women Voters of the United States. Each of the 16 townships covered by the League had a chairperson. The League central governing board consisted of 5 officers. The same group of women which had been involved in the fight for the equal suffrage amendment was instrumental in forming the local League. Dr. Caroline Bartlett Crane, Mrs. Caroline Hubbard Kleinstuck and Mrs. (Leah or Lydia) Shakespeare were among the founders. The stated purpose of the group was to further the political education of the newly enfranchised women. In the fall the first non-partisan mass rally for candidates was held in Kalamazoo. It was judged a great success, having been attended by about 2,000 people. It was called "an innovation in political gatherings."
- 1922 Women candidates for state representative and Kalamazoo School Board were supported. The fledgling organization supported formation of a School of Nursing at the University of Michigan, and supported "dry" candidates and "anti-cigarette" programs.
- 1923 "Know Your Town" booklets were issued by the national League to be a guide for local leagues in conducting a thorough study of their communities. This study of the local community became a criterion for a provisional league to become accredited in later years.
- 1924 An intensive membership drive culminated in a party at the Y.W.C.A. for first-time voters. The membership was increased to 315.
- 1925 The Michigan League of Women Voters held its annual convention in Kalamazoo, and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, Honorary President of the national League attended. A survey of all Michigan counties' food sanitation ordinances and waste disposal practices was conducted as requested by the state League.
- 1926 The nonpartisan stance was established.
- 1930s Many different programs and activities were tried. Attendance and active participation fell. At the Annual Meeting in 1933, four study groups were organized around the topics of efficiency in government, child welfare, living costs and international cooperation. Another variation of the study group was adopted in January 1935. A six-week marathon "roundtable" discussion was organized on "The Evolving Foreign Policy of the United States." It was suggested that many community organizations should be represented at the sessions. However, later that year two prominent and active members died, Dr. Caroline Bartlett Crane and Mrs. Florence G. Mills. From 1937 on there are no news articles about the League in the Gazette. Although no formal dissolution is recorded, after 16 years, the League ceased to exist. Speculation is that the strong leaders were gone and the remaining members found it difficult to remain non-partisan.
- 1951 In the spring a small group of women organized a Provisional League of Women Voters. Caroline Ham led work on the "Know Your Town" study. Within a year there were 75 active members engaged in numerous local, state and national issues, including child care, housing, sewage disposal, reciprocal trade agreements, and metropolitan government consolidation, in addition to voter service activities.
- 1960s "Voteramas" were held in Bronson Park in September of election years to register voters.
- 1963 A study chaired by Helen Nelson found a serious shortage of housing for minority group members. The Kalamazoo Gazette published the story on the front page, to the delight of

members who cheered: "We finally got off the women's page." The city open-housing ordinance and building code enforcement, supported by the League, were approved.

- 1973 The League was an amicus curiae in a successful suit – taken to the Supreme Court – supporting school desegregation in the Kalamazoo Public Schools. Mary Brown delivered the brief to Washington and testified before Congress, an event that won mention of the League in the Washington Post. Members traveled to other Leagues, sharing their experiences with those mounting similar efforts.
- 1974 Kalamazoo joined other Leagues in welcoming men as members.
- 1980s Challenged with the need to discover new strategies for recruiting and involving members, the League revised its traditional patterns of work – including frequent daytime meetings – to accommodate the schedules of employed women.
- 1995 The 75th anniversary of the suffragist movement was celebrated. Commemorative postcards helped raise funds for operating expenses and honored our courageous predecessors in this esteemed organization which continues to play an active role in the Kalamazoo community.
- 2004 League members approved expansion of the service area to all of Kalamazoo County.
- 2010 In this year of the 90th anniversary, the League was awarded the YWCA Women's Group Achievement Award by the YWCA Kalamazoo, for "enduring contributions" to the community.

The Board wishes to express our appreciation to member Marguerite Day for her research on the early history of our League, and to Mary Henderson who solicited members' recollections of the 1950s through 1970s for a series of Bulletin articles in 1995.

OFFICES

League of Women Voters of the United States

1730 M. Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036
202-429-1965; 202-296-0218----Action Line (after business hours)
www.lwv.org

League of Women Voters of Michigan

League of Women Voters of Michigan
200 Museum Dr., Ste. 104, Lansing, MI 48933
517/ 484-5383
Fax 517/ 484-3086
office@lwvmi.org
www.lwvmi.org

League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

P.O. Box 2106, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49003-2106
269-544-0303
www.lwvka.org

Membership is open to any person who subscribes to the purpose and principles of the League. Voting members are those who are citizens at least 18 years of age; all others are associate members. Membership in LWVMI and LWVUS is automatically conferred by membership in the local League.

ORGANIZATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Purpose

The purpose of the League is “to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected government issues.” To these ends the following League principles have been formulated and reaffirmed at national conventions. They form the basis for the selection of program study items on national, state and local levels of the League and the basis for action.

Principles

“The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.”

“The League of Women Voters believes democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizens’ right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and make public records accessible.”

“The League of Women Voters believes every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all, and no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.”

“The League of Women Voters believes efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.”

“The League of Women Voters believes responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.”

“The League of Women Voters believes cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and the development of international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.”

Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area believes in and is committed to diversity and pluralism in both its values and its practices. There shall be no barriers to participation in any LWVKA activity on the basis of factors such as, but not limited to, age, height, weight, race, color, ethnic or religious background, descent or nationality, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, disability, or marital status.

LWVKA recognizes that diverse perspectives are necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVKA believes that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization’s ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs. LWVKA is committed to reflecting the diversity of the community in its board and programs.

Nonpartisan Policy and Guidelines

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The LWV is nonpartisan in that it takes positions on selected governmental issues after member study and agreement, but does not support or oppose candidates for elective office (whether or not under a party designation), office holders, or political parties. While the LWV urges its members to be politically active, certain constraints are necessary in order to maintain the nonpartisanship of the organization. The board of directors of the LWV has established the following guidelines:

▪ Members

Members shall not undertake any activity which may constitute a public statement of partisan position that could be attributed to the League.

Members representing the LWV in the community should be sensitive to their responsibilities. When acting in public as LWV representatives, members must not allow partisanship to be discernable. These members should be fully aware of LWV positions.

Once the LWV (local, state, or national) takes a position on an issue, members may not identify themselves as LWV members in publicly expressing an opinion that is in opposition to a LWV position.

Members may serve on any public board, commission, committee, or coalition; however, that member does not represent the LWV unless officially designated as an LWV representative by the LWV board. If the appointment is LWV-related, the appointee should be fully aware of the LWV positions as they relate to the body's responsibilities.

Members who lead studies should not have conflicts of interest or partisan biases which would affect the objective conduct of information gathering and analysis.

Members in leadership roles at public LWV meetings have the responsibility to ensure the nonpartisanship of the meeting and its environment.

Only petitions approved by the board of directors may be circulated at LWV meetings.

The LWV member roster may not be made available for non-League use without board consent.

▪ Board of Directors

The board has the responsibility of maintaining the fact of nonpartisanship of the organization. Any board member who does not comply with this policy will be asked by the board to resign without delay.

In addition to the responsibilities of all members, board members may not:

- Run for or hold or elective office.
- Serve in any position in a political party.
- Circulate a petition or otherwise support an issue which is in opposition to a League position or principle.

If a board member plans to engage in political activity, that member must not do so as a representative of the LWV. If the member questions whether the organization's nonpartisanship is compromised by the activity, the board should be consulted.

Board members who hold positions of high public visibility, including the President, Voter Guide Editor, and Voter Service director may not:

- Take an active, visible role in a campaign for a political candidate or for a non-League issue. Prohibited activities include hosting and sponsoring campaign events; serving on campaign committees; signing public endorsements; or otherwise publicly demonstrating support. Other positions may also be prohibited from engaging in such activities if the member's participation may be construed as affecting the LWV's nonpartisan stance.
- Serve in any position in a political party.

The Nominating Committee will consider any past partisan affiliation, such as political candidate, office holder or campaign manager, in determining whether a nominee is able to represent the LWV in a non-partisan manner.

Consensus & Concurrence

Consensus in the League means agreement among a substantial number of members, representative of the membership as a whole, reached after sustained study and group discussion. It is not just a simple majority, not necessarily unanimity. Consensus is expressed in terms of rather broad objectives. It is not reached on specific legislative measures, nor is it tied to specific proposals of public officials or others.

Consensus within a discussion group is “the sense of the whole.” It comes after careful study of the facts and free exchange of information and opinion in which expressions of all points of view have been encouraged. The discussion should be summarized at the end of the meeting, or point by point, as considered necessary, so that the group may decide whether its thinking has been accurately assessed. In reporting the results of discussion to the local board, the information includes the number of members attending, areas of agreement, areas of disagreement, minority view and its strength, and areas in which the group was undecided or lacked sufficient information to make a decision. Consensus is the prerequisite for League action.

At times, a League may concur with a position reached by another League, without duplicating the complete study and consensus process

Program

The League's program is its agenda both for study of selected governmental issues (with the goal of developing positions on these issues), and for action to work for implementing the positions after agreement among members is reached. League program is developed on all three levels – local, state and national.

Program Development

The program review process begins at the local level, with members making proposals for retaining, amending or adding to existing League programs on the local, state, inter-league and national levels. They should be guided in their recommendations by the basic principles of the LWV, and the criteria for choosing programs listed below.

Local Program

Members meet to assess local program once a year, and the resulting suggestions are considered by the local board which then recommends a proposed program. This program is adopted or amended by members at the Annual Meeting in the spring.

State Program

Suggestions are made locally and sent to the state board, which formulates a proposed program. The program choices are made for two years by the delegates from all local Leagues in the state at the biennial State Convention.

Lake Michigan Inter-League Organization (ILO) Program

Suggestions are made by local Leagues. The program choices are made at the ILO annual meeting by the delegates from member Leagues.

National Program

The National program procedures are the same as those of the State, with the program selected for two years at the biennial National Convention.

Criteria for Choosing Program

For the selection of program at any level, three criteria must be met:

- The issue must be one on which governmental action is needed;
- Such action must be possible; and
- The issue must fall within the Principles of the League of Women Voters.

The following questions may help in making a choice:

- Is the issue of current importance, or one on which community interest could or should be developed?
- Is effective citizen action foreseeable?
- Is the issue important enough to inspire League interest and commitment?
- Is this issue most appropriate for this level of League study and action (i.e., local, state or national)?

Action

After a program item is adopted at any level, individuals or committees are responsible for overseeing them, with the objective of developing public support for League goals and influencing governmental decisions that implement League positions. They take the following steps:

1. Research through study of publications, field trips, interviews, and small group discussions;
2. Share information with membership at meetings, in programs on cable access TV, or through the Bulletin or website;
3. Reach consensus among membership at a general meeting;
4. Act on League positions after a program position is adopted – “watchdogging” governmental bodies whose actions may relate to the position; promoting governmental action through letter-writing to officials; giving testimony at public hearings; speaking at meetings; and distributing publications.

Members are welcome to join these efforts at any stage.

General Meetings

The purpose of the general meeting is to conduct the business of the LWV, to present an informational program, or to take consensus. When the program is to inform members of a topic under study by a resource committee, outside experts are frequently invited to speak. When consensus is to be taken, background information is necessary and it has been given either

through the Bulletin or at previous meetings. General meetings are announced through the Bulletin. Guests are welcome.

Finance

Each year, the Kalamazoo Area LWV conducts a finance drive soliciting members and non-members (businesses, industries and individuals) for monetary contributions. The LWV annual budget depends on the success of this drive. Fundraising for the League is more than raising money. The non-members finance drive brings League activities before the community, and fosters public awareness.

Observers

An observer is a LWV member who serves by watching governmental action at ringside and reporting to the LWV those discussions and actions appropriate to the LWV's interests. The observer wears a badge of identification as a member of the LWV to let the community know we are there.

If the League Board decides to express a League position to that body, a letter is sent or another designated member appears to speak.

The LWV of the Kalamazoo Area may have observers at meetings of the Kalamazoo City Commission, Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, Portage City Council, Kalamazoo Board of Education, and Portage Board of Education. Observers may also be present at selected meetings of boards and committees of the county, city and school district. Any member is eligible to observe.

The extent of the observer program depends on the availability of observers. Volunteers should contact the Vice President for Program. A member acting as observer does not speak for the League.

Public Relations & Cable TV

The Public Relations Director's responsibility is to keep the public informed of LWV and its activities. This is done through press releases, public service announcements, displays and other methods. One tool for Public Relations and Voter Service is public access cable TV. We produce our own shows, which may be interviews with government officials, candidate forums, live telecasts of League meetings and a variety of other topics. Crew members and on-camera people are always needed; training is available.

Voter Service

Through the Voter Service and Education Program, the League provides factual, nonpartisan information on the structure and function of government, voting procedures, election issues and candidates. The League neither supports nor opposes any candidate or political party. To maintain our policy of nonpartisanship, League positions are not stated in any Voter Service or education project.

All candidates who meet the following criteria will be invited to participate in LWVKA Voter Service activities. In determining eligibility under the criteria, the burden of proof is on the candidate.

- Must be a legally qualified candidate for public office by the deadline that has been established for response.
- Has publicly announced an intention to run for office.
- Is eligible under the applicable local, state, or federal laws to hold the office being sought.

- Either (a) has qualified to be on the ballot; or (b) has publicly committed to be a write-in candidate, is eligible to be a write-in and has made a substantial showing that the candidacy is bona fide.

The Voter Guide is published in print and posted on the League website before the November elections and some other elections. The Voter Guide contains voting information pertinent to election and ballot issues, along with candidate biographical information and responses on issues the League considers important.

Candidate forums which enable people to meet candidates and learn their positions on issues are held shortly prior to major elections. These are usually broadcast on cable access television. . Refer to LWV Education Fund “Guidelines for State and Local League Debates” for acceptable practices. These include “empty chair” debates. In the event that one candidate in a field of two does not appear, the forum/debate cannot proceed under League auspices. There must be at least two candidates out of a field of three or more in order for the forum to proceed.

Publications

The League offers many publications. Some are free with membership. Others are available through the LWVMI and LWVUS websites at a nominal cost. These publications—produced and provided by the National, State or Local Leagues—can give you timely updates on legislative issues, in-depth studies of specific topics, complete wordings of League positions, and more.

BOARD ORGANIZATION & PORTFOLIOS

President

Vice President / Program

- Study / Issue Chair and Committees. Lead LWV studies; help with program planning. Focuses on a defined program area related to a topic of League interest.
- Action Coordinator. Coordinates legislative activity with resource committees. May also be accomplished by the President or resource committees.

Vice President / Organization

- Bulletin. Coordinates monthly publication to inform members of local LWV events and actions
- Public Relations. Promotes total LWV program through media.
- Voter Service / Voter Guide Editor / Candidate Forum Coordinator. Provides election information, candidate forums, Voter Guides, voter registration, and voter education programs.
- Development Committee. Organizes ongoing fundraising activities, including an annual finance drive for contributions.
- Membership. Recruits, provides orientation for new members, prepares interest inventories, edits handbook, and updates membership list.
- Observer Program. Coordinates observers for local governmental meetings (city commissions, boards of education, county commissions, township boards). [Limited activity in recent years.]

Treasurer

Secretary

Attendance Policy

All officers and directors must regularly attend meetings of the Board of Directors. Three consecutive unexcused absences will be deemed a resignation.

For more information about these roles, see portfolio job descriptions.

BY-LAWS

League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

As amended March 1991, May 2007 and May 2010

Article I Name

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area. This local League is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States and of the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

Article II Purposes and Policy

Section 1. Purposes. The purposes of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Section 2. Political Policy. The League shall not support or oppose any political party or any candidate.

Article III Membership

Section 1. Eligibility. Any person who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Types of Membership. The membership of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area shall be composed of voting members and associate members.

- A. Voting members shall be U.S. citizens of at least eighteen years of age.
- B. Associate members shall be all other members.

Article IV Board of Directors

Section 1. Number, Manner of Selection, and Term of Office. The Board of Directors shall consist of the Officers of the League, seven (7) elected Directors, and no more than seven (7) appointed Directors. Four (4) Directors shall be elected by the general membership at the Annual Meeting in even numbered years, and three (3) Directors shall be elected by the general membership at the Annual Meeting in the odd numbered years. They shall serve for a term of two years, beginning on June 1 following their election, or until their successors have been elected and qualified. The elected Directors shall appoint such additional Directors, not exceeding seven (7), as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the League. The term of office of the appointed Directors shall not exceed one year and shall expire on June 1 following the next Annual Meeting. One of the appointed directors shall be the immediate Past President.

Section 2. Qualifications. No person shall be elected or appointed or shall continue to serve as an Officer or Director of this organization unless such person is a voting member of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area.

Section 3. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors by reason of the resignation, death, or disqualification of an officer or elected member may be filled until the next Annual Meeting by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Powers and Duties. The Board of Directors shall have full charge of the property and business of the organization, with full power and authority to manage and conduct same, subject to the instructions of the general membership. It shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the Program as adopted by the National Convention, the State Convention, and by the Annual Meeting. The board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary.

Section 5. Board Liability. No volunteer Director shall be personally liable to the organization or its members for any monetary damages for breach of the fiduciary duties as a Director; except that this provision shall not eliminate or limit the liability of a volunteer Director for any of the following reasons:

- A. A breach of the Director's duty of loyalty to the organization or its members.
- B. Acts or omissions not in good faith or that involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of the law.
- C. A violation of Section 551 (1) of the Michigan Non-Profit Corporation Act as amended.
- D. An act or omission occurring before January 1, 1988.
- E. An act from which the Director derived an improper personal benefit.
- F. An act or omission that is grossly negligent.

Section 6. Meetings. There shall be at least nine (9) regular meetings of the Board of Directors annually. The President may call special meetings of the Board of Directors and shall call a special meeting upon the written request of five members of the Board. Regular and special meetings of the Board may be held by electronic means (such as e-mail or other Internet communication systems, telephone conferences, video conferences, facsimile, etc.) subject to the following:

- A. All Board members shall have access to the appropriate electronic meeting media. A quorum shall be verified by the response to a call for any particular meeting, and, once established, shall be assumed present until the meeting is adjourned.
- B. The technology used for the electronic meetings shall allow Board members full access to and full participation in all meeting transactions either continuously or intermittently throughout the specified time of the meeting.
- C. Procedural rules related to the conduct of electronic meetings shall be established by the Board of Directors.

Section 7. Quorum. A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Article V Officers

Section 1. Enumeration and Election of Officers. The Officers of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area shall be a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The President shall be elected for a term of one year while all other officers shall be elected for a term of two years by the general membership at an Annual Meeting and take office on June 1 following their election. The First Vice-President and the Secretary shall be elected in odd numbered years. The Second Vice-President and the Treasurer shall be elected in even numbered years. No officer shall serve in the same office more than three (3) consecutive terms or six (6) years, whichever is longer.

Section 2. The President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Board of Directors. She/he may, in the absence or incapacity of the Treasurer, sign or endorse checks, drafts and notes. The President shall have such power of supervision and management as

may pertain to the office of the President, and perform such other duties as may be designated by the Board.

Section 3. The Vice-Presidents. The Two Vice-Presidents, in the order of their rank, shall, in the absence, incapacity or death of the President, possess all the powers and perform all the duties of that office until such time as the Board of Directors shall elect one of its members to fill the vacancy. The Vice-Presidents shall perform such other duties as the President and Board may designate.

Section 4. The Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all business meetings of the League and of all meetings of the Board of Directors. The Secretary shall notify all Officers and Directors of their election; sign with the President all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the Board and shall perform such other functions as may be incident to the office.

Section 5. The Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive all monies due. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of these monies, shall deposit them in a bank designated by the Board of Directors, and shall disburse same only upon the order of the Board. The Treasurer shall present statements to the Board at their regular meetings and an annual report at the Annual Meeting. The books shall be audited annually. The Treasurer shall notify each member at least two weeks before the first of the month in which the dues are payable.

Article VI Financial Administration

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The Fiscal year of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area shall be from July 1 to June 30 of each year.

Section 2. Dues. Annual dues shall be payable on the first day of the anniversary month of the member's joining the League. Associate members' dues shall be assessed the same as members dues. Full-time students and citizens of 60 years and older may pay dues of one-half that amount. Any member who fails to pay dues within three months after they become payable shall be dropped from the membership rolls.

Section 3. Budget Committee. A budget committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors at least three months prior to the Annual Meeting to prepare a budget for the ensuing year. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of the Budget Committee, but shall not serve as chairperson.

Section 4. Budget. A proposed budget for the ensuing year, including an amount for annual dues, shall be sent by the Board of Directors to all members one month before the Annual Meeting. The budget shall be adopted by a majority vote of members present at the Annual Meeting.

Article VII Meetings

Section 1. Membership Meetings. There shall be at least four (4) meetings of the membership each year. Time and place shall be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. An Annual Meeting shall be held between April 1 and May 31, the exact date to be determined by the Board of Directors. The Annual Meeting shall:

- A. Adopt a local program for the following year;
- B. Elect Officers, Directors and members of the nominating Committee;
- C. Adopt an adequate budget; and
- D. Transact such other business as may properly come before it.

Section 3. Quorum. Twenty-five (25) voting members shall constitute a quorum at all business meetings of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area.

Article VIII Nominations and Elections

Section 1. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) members, two of whom shall be members of the Board of Directors. The Chairperson and two members, who shall not be members of the Board, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the current Nominating Committee. The other members shall be appointed by the Board of Directors at their first meeting. Any vacancy on the Nominating Committee shall be filled by the Board of Directors. Suggestions for nominations for Officers and Directors may be sent to this Committee by any voting member.

Section 2. Report of Nominating Committee and Nominations From the Floor. The report of the Nominating Committee of its nominations for Officers, Directors, and the members of the succeeding Nominating Committee shall be sent to all members one month before the date of the Annual Meeting. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be presented to the Annual Meeting. Immediately following the presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

Section 3. Election. The election shall be by ballot, except that when there is only one nominee for each office, the Secretary may be instructed to cast the ballot for every nominee. A majority vote of those qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.

Article IX Program

Section 1. Authorization. The governmental principles adopted by the National Convention, and supported by the League as a whole, constitute the authorization for the adoption of Program.

Section 2. Program. The Program of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area shall consist of those local governmental issues chosen for concerted study and action.

Section 3. Action by the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting shall act upon the Program using the following procedures:

- A. The Board of Directors shall consider the recommendations sent in by the voting members two months prior to the Annual Meeting and shall formulate a proposed program;
- B. The proposed program shall be sent to all members one month before the Annual Meeting;
- C. A majority vote of voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting shall be required for adoption of subjects in the proposed Program as presented to the Annual Meeting by the Board of Directors;
- D. Recommendations for Program submitted by voting members two months prior to the Annual Meeting but not recommended by the Board of Directors may be considered by the Annual Meeting provided that:
 1. The Annual Meeting shall order consideration by a majority vote and
 2. The Annual Meeting shall adopt the item by a two-thirds vote;

- E. Changes in Program, in the case of altered conditions, may be made provided that:
 - 1. Information concerning the proposed changes has been sent to all members at least two weeks prior to a general membership meeting at which the change is to be discussed, and
 - 2. Final action by the membership is taken at a succeeding meeting.

Section 4. Member Action. Members may act in the name of the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area only when authorized to do so by the Board of Directors.

Article X National Convention, State Convention and Council

Section 1. National Convention. The Board of Directors at a meeting before the date on which the names of the delegates must be sent to the national office shall select delegates to that Convention in the number allotted the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area under the provisions of the By-Laws of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Section 2. State Convention. The Board of Directors at a meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the State office shall select delegates to that Convention in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area under the provisions of the By-Laws of the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

Section 3. State Council. The Board of Directors at the meeting before the date on which the names of delegates must be sent to the state office shall select delegates to that council in the number allotted to the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area under the provisions of the By-Laws of the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

Article XI Parliamentary Authority

Section 1. Parliamentary Authority. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-Laws.

Article XII Amendments

Section 1. Amendments. These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting, provided the proposed amendments were submitted to the membership in writing at least one (1) month in advance of the Annual Meeting.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PROGRAM AREAS

	National Program	Michigan Program	Kalamazoo Program
Representative Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen's Right to Vote • DC Self-Government & Voting Rights • Election Process • Apportionment • Campaign Finance Reform • Selection of the President • Citizen's Right to Know / Participation • Individual Liberties • Reproductive Choice • Congress • Presidency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election Laws • Intergovernmental Relations within Michigan • Taxation & Budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Gov't Services in Kalamazoo County • Financing Local Government Services • Library Services & Governance • Local Government Election Process
Social Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Opportunity (education, employment, housing) • Equal Rights • Fiscal Policy • Health Care • Meeting Basic Human Needs (income, support, housing) • Child Care • Children at Risk • Violence Prevention • Gun Policy • Urban Policy • Death Penalty • Immigration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children & Youth • Education: Structure, Finance & Goals • Teacher Certification • Health Care • Social Services System • Public Libraries • Prisons • Charter Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Housing
International Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations • Trade • U.S. Relations with Developing Countries • Arms Control • Military Policy & Defense Spending 		
Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resources • Resource Management • Environmental Protection & Pollution Control (air quality, energy, land use, water, waste mgt, nuclear issues) • Public Participation • Agriculture Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrated animal feeding operations • Great Lakes Eco-System • Land Use • Pesticides • Solid Waste Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use Planning • Parks & Recreation • Management of the Kalamazoo River • Preservation of Natural Areas

Positions are available online at each website: www.lwv.org, www.lwvmi.org, and www.lwvka.org

LOCAL PROGRAM

reviewed and readopted 2010;
dates of initial adoption and amendments in parentheses

Social Policy

Housing (1964, 2010)

The LWVKA supports measures:

- A. To establish safe, affordable, and permanent housing for residents of Kalamazoo County, providing for
 - 1. Oversight of the quality and quantity of the county's housing stock,
 - 2. Services needed to support housing stability;
- B. To provide for rapid re-housing of residents who lose their housing and are rendered homeless;
- C. To eliminate homelessness;
- D. To prevent and respond to housing discrimination.

Education (1972, 1982, 2004)

- A. Comprehensive curriculum development and evaluation in Kalamazoo County's public schools.
 - 1. The League of Women Voters supports school policies and appropriate budgeting which provide for:
 - a. Assessment and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum (it is expected that students, teachers, parents, administrators, university subject specialists, and other members of the community as well as the public schools' research and evaluation units would be integrally involved in this process).
 - b. Vigorous experimentation in curriculum involving certified staff as well as non-certified professional and volunteer resource people who have particular skills and expertise.
 - 2. We support, as components of the curriculum-making process:
 - a. Provision for decision-making and accountability for curricular change at the building level for elementary schools (at that level, teachers, parents and students would have the best opportunity to contribute ideas and to become involved in school programs);
 - b. Designation of department heads at the secondary level with substantial released time to encourage, guide and lead in the development of new courses and the evaluation of current courses.
 - 3. We support the provisions of substantial released time and in-service training for teachers and department heads to develop and implement curriculum which will reflect the changing needs of the community. In-service training should be available to all teachers in order to communicate and implement innovative ideas in education. We believe such training would result in a more effective and responsive curriculum.

- B. Recognizing that the local School Board is responsible for final approval of the School System Operating Budget, the League of Voters of the Kalamazoo Area supports the incorporation of the following procedures in the development of this budget:
1. The Board should actively solicit and receive recommendations relating to community educational needs and methods of financing from interested and affected groups and individuals in the community, including school administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and citizens' advisory groups; and from others who have expert knowledge of educational needs and methods of financing.
 2. The Board should continually evaluate the effectiveness and quality of its educational program, and set priorities which reflect both the concern for quality and the community's ability and willingness to pay for education.
 3. The Board should examine all available and appropriate sources of funding for operations of the school system, and receive an accurate assessment of the level of funding which might be obtained from each source to meet budgeted revenue needs.
 4. The Board should carefully examine present management of funds, resources and facilities and the possibility of improving the cost effectiveness and efficiency of present management practices.
 5. The Board should take into account any special conditions of economic distress within the community which might have an impact on citizens' willingness to support local financing of public education.
 6. The Board should examine the effects of various budget proposals on educational services and programs available to all categories of students.
- C. Further, the League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area supports the adoption of a School System Operating Budget which:
1. Is adequate to provide a good education to all groups of students in the system, as defined by community educational needs and state educational requirements.
 2. Incorporates realistic estimates of revenue and expenditures.
 3. Reflects efficient and productive management practices.
 4. Reflects the effort to cooperate with other school districts to reduce duplication of facilities and programs for the benefit of all students.

Natural Resources

Land Use Planning (1972, 1995, 2004)

LWVKA, recognizing that land is a finite resource, not just a commodity, believes that land ownership, whether public or private, implies responsibilities of stewardship.

A. Planning Development

1. The League supports the development of:

- a. A comprehensive plan for the County of Kalamazoo, with input from each township, village and city;
- b. A land use plan and zoning ordinance for every local unit in the County.

There should be representative citizen involvement at all stages of these plans and ordinances.

2. Land use plans and zoning ordinances should reflect:

- a. Ecological concerns, e.g., fitness of physical terrain (rock-sand strata, oil), water conditions (ground water, surface water, drainage), elevation, flora and fauna (see also position on “Management of the Kalamazoo River”);
- b. Physical environmental concerns, e.g., noise, air, water and land pollution, provisions for open space and waste disposal, aesthetic standards and balanced transportation systems;
- c. Preference for redevelopment of previously developed areas over undeveloped areas..
- d. Social environmental concerns, e.g., dispersal of low and moderate income residential neighborhoods in local units and throughout the county; proximity of residential areas to transportation, employment, parks and recreation; encouragement of social, racial and economic heterogeneity within neighborhoods; avoidance of physical barriers that by intrusions cause fragmentation of existing neighborhoods (see also positions on “Parks and Recreation” and “Housing”);
- e. Balance between particular and general community interests.

B. Planning Implementation

1. Once a comprehensive plan has been formulated and adopted, the local government should assume an active role in implementing and enforcing the plan consistently.
2. Appointments to planning boards and commissions should be representative of the diverse interests within the community.
3. Site plan review to include independent ecological review.

C. Modification of Comprehensive Plans or Zoning Ordinances

1. A change in the plan or zoning should be made only after careful study of the proposal has shown it to be consistent with the goals of the plan and of exceptional merit.
2. Hearings on proposed changes in the comprehensive plan or zoning ordinances should be widely publicized by the local government well ahead of time so that all concerned citizens may participate.
3. In making decisions, planning boards and commissions should consider the values and needs of those most directly affected, needs of the community at large, and advances in information and technology which will address ecological, physical environmental and social environmental concerns.

D. Role of the County in Planning—The League supports increased authority for the County in developing and enforcing a comprehensive plan. At a minimum, we support voluntary planning cooperation among governmental units.

Parks and Recreation (1971, 1977, 1983, 2004)

Since recreation contributes to the physical and mental health of our citizens, the League supports the development of a coordinated, well-balanced, and geographically distributed system of parks and recreational facilities within Kalamazoo County.

A. Planning and Coordination of Systems. The League recommends that:

1. Units of government at all levels within the County develop and maintain parks and recreational facilities to serve all Parks and people, coordinating plans through the Kalamazoo Metropolitan Planning Commission and the County Parks Commission;
2. Citizens participate in planning, development and evaluation of parks and recreational programs;
3. Park commissions and boards cooperate with school systems in developing recreational programs which make optimal use of school sites;
4. Open space be acquired to meet future park and recreation needs;
5. The County Park Commission acquire and develop park land in the underserved parts of Kalamazoo County.
6. Emphasis be placed on natural area preservation.

B. Development and Maintenance of Parks. The League recommends that:

1. Development should maintain natural features of the land and allow for flexibility;
2. Provision should be made for adequate maintenance and supervision; volunteer programs for parks maintenance should be encouraged;
3. Operations should be funded primarily from public funds and minimally from users fees;
4. Neighborhood parks should be provided as well as larger, more comprehensive parks.

C. Recreational Programs. The League recommends that:

1. Programs be planned and provided to meet a wide diversity of needs and interests;
2. Special provisions be made for those least able to provide their own recreation.

Management of the Kalamazoo River (1971, 1991, 1995, 2004)

The League favors:

1. Support of measures to preserve, protect and restore the Kalamazoo River and its tributaries as a natural resource, while developing it for community needs;
2. Support for formulating and implementing a comprehensive river plan. Such a plan would allow the developing of the river for a variety of uses while preserving or restoring its natural state. Specifically, we:
 - a. Support the use of flood plain zoning

- b. Support land-use decisions and land management techniques such as riparian buffers and streambank stabilization which enhance river water quality and protect the river from point and non-point sources of siltation and pollution.
- c. Oppose extensive channelization to deepen, widen and straighten the river.

Preservation of Natural Areas (2006)

LWVKA supports preservation of most remaining natural areas within Kalamazoo County. Natural areas are undisturbed or reclaimed land generally with diverse biota which may still include native species. They are not heavily used by human beings. Some are quite small, while others encompass large areas. They provide benefits to human beings as part of the natural world:

- space for passive recreation
- aesthetic sensory benefits (sight, sound, smell, and touch)
- mental health benefits through physical and spiritual connections with nature
- air and water pollution mitigation
- noise and light pollution reduction
- habitat for both flora and fauna

The responsibility for stewardship and preservation of natural areas is shared among government agencies at all levels, property owners, and users of the areas:

- local governments—provide care for natural areas within public properties; planning and zoning with specified proportions of green space; sponsorship and identification of programs to encourage stewardship by private property owners
- intergovernmental cooperation—contribute consistent plans for contiguous habitats in different jurisdictions
- private property owners—maintain natural areas under enabling government programs and cooperative agreements
- users—respect the gifts of nature and the rights of the property owner, whether public or private; appreciate the fragility of life and the need to handle it with care; treat the property of others with consideration

County and local governments should take these actions:

- provide opportunity for public input early in the process of all land use decisions affecting natural areas; publicize upcoming projects
- develop a county-wide natural areas plan, including location and size of areas to be preserved; set standards for acceptable proportions of natural and developed areas within neighborhoods, cities and townships
- promote programs that encourage preservation of natural areas by
 - purchase of development rights
 - transfer of development rights
 - tax policy favoring natural areas
 - support for nongovernmental organizations that demonstrate, teach and develop natural landscaping in residential and recreational spaces
 - coordination with land conservancies and similar organizations that preserve open space
 - planning for alternative development patterns, such as cluster and planned-unit developments, which recognize, promote and reinforce the desirable attractiveness and economic benefits of closely associated natural and developed areas

Government

Providing Government Services in Kalamazoo County (1976, 1991, 2008)

The League of Women Voters supports:

- A. Full cooperation among governmental units;
- B. Public services delivery systems in Kalamazoo County which are:
 - 1. In the best interests of the community as a whole;
 - 2. Feasible to implement;
 - 3. Accountable to residents

When judging whether a system meets these criteria, the following areas should be assessed:

- a. Administrative systems (e.g., flexible, responsive, sound)
- b. Funding mechanisms (e.g., adequate, equitable, stable)
- c. Resource management (e.g., less duplication, cost-effective, efficient)
- d. Service quality (e.g., accessible, effective, adequate, affordable).

Library Services and Governance (1976, 1984, 1991, 2004, 2008)

The League of Women Voters:

- A. Believes that every resident in Kalamazoo County should have access to public library services;
- B. Recommends that unserved townships provide increased library service by contracting with existing libraries;
- C. Supports the District Library form of governance

Financing Local Government Services (1970, 1990, 2004)

The League of Women Voters favors:

- A. Measures to develop an adequate, equitable and flexible local fiscal system which is:
 - 1. Based on ability to pay; and
 - 2. Easily administered at a minimal cost.
- B. Measures which enable the local units of government to secure additional funds for needed facilities and services by:
 - 1. Levying a city income tax; and/or
 - 2. Issuing municipal bonds for capital improvements; and/or
 - 3. Consolidating services.
- C. Measures to improve and reform the procedures of property assessment and tax administration.

- D. Encouragement of payments in lieu of taxes by public and private tax-exempt institutions which require public services.

Local Government Election Process (1998, 2004, 2008)

The League of Women Voters supports measures to ensure that local government is accessible to all its residents and responsive to their needs, carries out its functions in an ethical, effective, and efficient manner, provides creative and constructive leadership in resolving both local and regional issues, and pursues policies that promote the physical, economic, and cultural well-being of the jurisdiction as a whole.

The LWV supports an election process that:

- Fosters an active discussion of issues and ideas
- Encourages qualified candidates representing the racial, economic, political and cultural diversity of the community to seek public office
- Enhances voter participation in the electoral process
- Promotes political equality among all residents
- Results in a local government that considers the well-being of the entire jurisdiction and is responsive to the needs of its residents