**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGION INTER-LEAGUE ORGANIZATION**

**Board Meeting – February 5, 2024**

**Zoom Video and Phone Conference**

The forty seventh board meeting of the League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization (LWV-UMRR ILO) was called to order by Chair Mary Ellen Miller (IA Des Moines Metro) on February 5, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

**Board members attending the meeting in addition to the Chair:**  Gretchen Sabel (MN-ABC), Kay Slama (MN Willmar), Colleen Werdien (MN ABC), Megan Benage (MN New Ulm), Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins (WI La Crosse), Nancy Hill (WI La Crosse), Mary Ploeser (WI Madison – past chair), Lee Ekstrom (IL McHenry County), Paula Ekstrom (IL McHenry County), Catherine Franczyk (IL Wheaton), Nancy Porter (IA Iowa City), E. J. Gallagher (IA Blackhawk-Bremmer), Sue Wilson (IA Dubuque), Tamara Prenosil (IA Dubuque),

**Guests:** Michelle Croyle (MO Metro St. Louis), Sheryl Eufinger (MO Kansas City/JCP)

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the 12-4-2023 LWV-UMRR ILO Board meeting were included in the documents sent prior to this meeting. E. J. Gallagher moved and M. Ploeser seconded that the minutes be approved. Motion carried.

**Financial Report**

The Treasurer’s Report for December 2023 and January 2024 as well as Statement of Activity (December 2023 – January 2024) was available to Board members prior to this meeting.

Revenues: December 2023/January 2024: $27.70

* Memberships $ 25
* Interest Income $2.70

Expenses: $119.46

* Wisconsin State Tax Exemption Registration Fee $25
* Pay Pal Fees $.99
* Education Speaker Honorariums $333.18

Net Operating Revenue $331.47

Bank Balance as of 11-30-2023: $12,380.15

* Includes Judy Beck Memorial Fund of $0 and ERC Restricted Grant II balance $0( used the previous balance in the ERC grant of $166.82 to pay speaker honorariums)

Current 2023 – 2024 Memberships: 40 as of 1-31-2024

2024 MRN Mini Grant to promote clean water $10,000 check pending

Budget Committee appointments: The following people in addition to C. Franczyk (IL), treasurer, volunteered to be members: E. J. Gallagher (IA), G. Sabel (MN), M. Benage (MN), S. Eufinger (MO), Jeri McGinley (WI), previous LWV-UMRR ILO treasurer.

C. Franczyk included in her report an example of the LWV-UMRR ILO Volunteer Log. A blank copy was included with the materials sent prior to this meeting. Use this form to document time spent on LWV-UMRR ILO activities. (If you attend a meeting about an environmental issue, but not as a representative of LWV-UMRR ILO, do not include time or mileage on this form).

**Action Committee Update**

The next Action Committee meeting will be February12, 2024 at 4:00 pm. G. Sabel has sent a questionnaire to Action Committee members to try to determine when the best meeting time is. The LWV-UMRR ILO Board wants to encourage individuals who are still employed to be on the Board or Action Committee in order to engage with and promote LWV-UMRR ILO priorities.

K. Slama presented the Policies and Procedures document that was approved by the Action Committee for approval by the Board. K. Slama moved and T. Prenosil seconded that they be approved. Motion carried. The document will have the date approved at the top.

G. Sabel sent a letter last month to US EPA for inclusion in the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force meeting on December 6, in Fayette, Arkansas. The Gulf Hypoxia Task Force includes several federal agencies and representatives from 11 Mississippi River States. (In 1997, the EPA created the Mississippi River/Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force, more commonly known as the Hypoxia Task Force (HTF), to address the growing Dead Zone problem of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution.)

M. Croyle reported LWVUS approved the LWVMO request to sign on to a coalition letter to the EPA Region 7 asking to prioritize a strong ozone Federal Implementation Plan for Missouri to protect the health of our most vulnerable populations, save lives, and make air safer for Missourians. The turnaround for this request was three days.

N. Porter reported she signed a MRN (Mississippi River Network) letter requesting their bulletins and reports use a format that is easier to read. (This letter did not include any policy issues.) She is the LWV-UMRR IO liaison to the MRN. The LWVUS recognizes the LWV-UMRR ILO as a member organization. N. Porter and S. Eufinger will draft a statement to be included in the Policies and Procedures document clarifying the role of liaisons and what types of actions liaisons might take and what is the responsibility of the Action Committee.

LWV-UMRR ILO will send a letter to LWVUS requesting approval to support the 2024 MRRRI (Mississippi River Restoration and resilience Initiative) There is no Bill number yet. Letters to both the House and Senate were approved by LWVUS in 2023. K. Slama moved and C. Mahlum Jenkins seconded that we send a new letter to LWVUS requesting approval and each of the five states would send letters to both the House and Senate. Motin carried.

C. Jenkins will ask LWVUS if the ILO will share its software that automates letters regarding action alerts. G. Sabel and C. Mahlum-Jenkins will talk with LWVUS during office hours. G. Sabel will investigate the cost of having this software for LWV-UMRR ILO. This software has an autofill feature that individuals can sign their name and/or customize by adding their own comments.

M. Miller moved and G. Sabel seconded that the LWV-UMRR ILO add its name to a press release from the Friends of the Mississippi River endorsing MRRRI. Motion carried.

**Annual Meeting Update (May 29, 2024)**

The priorities for 2024-2025 were discussed and modifications were suggested. The document will be sent to member Leagues prior to the annual meeting. T. Prenosil and G. Sabel will draft the document. E.J. Gallagher moved and C. Franczyk seconded that the priorities as discussed be adopted. Maisah Khan from MRN was suggested as a possible speaker.

**MRN Grant**

LWV-UMRR ILO is working in collaboration with the Izaak Walton League in promoting the“Pure Sparkling Stream Water” Pop Art exhibit. M. Miller has shared a tentative calendar of exhibit locations. We need to take advantage of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge 100-year anniversary celebrations to promote the exhibit when we can. We need to look for exhibit possibilities in the five states (possibility state fairs) and inform M. Miller. T. Prenosil will go to the LWVUS Convention in Washing ton D.C. in June and set up the exhibit there. MRN is developing publicity.

N. Porter reported the MRN Celebrate the River will be June 1-15 in 2024.

**MRN Fly-In to Washington D.C. March 3-5**

MRN can offer a $300 stipend to defray the costs for individuals. No one attending could commit to this.

**April 1, 2024 LWV-UMRR ILO Board Meeting Program**

C. Franczyk will contact the Illinois Prairie Rivers Network about a speaker for the program in April.

**Des Moines Metro LWV is hosting virtual book discussions** with the authors of Swine Republic by Chris Jones (2-3-2024) and The River Knows by Neil Hamiliton (3-2-2024).

**Board Retreat (**possibly July 12-14, 2024**)**

M. Miller has been in contact with Nahant Marsh. (a 305-acre preserve in southwest Davenport, Iowa. It's part of a 513-acre wetland complex bordered by the Mississippi River, Highway 22, and Interstate 280). The venue can host the pop-up exhibit. Paula Ekstrom has researched possible hotels. All the cities in the Quad-Cities take their drinking water from the Mississippi.

All attendees will secure their own hotel rooms. M. Miller will find the venue for the meeting space.

**Bylaws**

K. Slama will resend the final version of the bylaws that were approved at the December 8, 2023. They will be sent to the Leagues prior to the annual meeting.

**Next Board Meeting: April 1, 2024 at 5:30 – 7:00 pm**

E. J. Gallagher moved and C. Franczyk seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.

Submitted by Tamara Prenosil