

December 2022 Calendar of LWV Events

Wed., Dec. 7, 1:30 p.m. — Book Club — Holiday Party
with Gift Book Recommendations and Used Book Gift Exchange

Mon., Dec. 12, 3 p.m. — Board meeting — via Zoom
All members are invited to attend board meetings.
Minutes are on the LWVMPC webpage under Board Minutes.



Salem's Climate Action Plan Explained at November meeting

Heather Dimke (pictured at right), the Climate Action Plan Manager for the City of Salem, described Salem's Climate Action Plan on November 16 at a Zoom meeting attended by 15 LWV members and four guests.



The City's plan includes more than 80 strategies to reduce greenhouse gases in Salem and mitigate the effects of climate change. A link to the page to read the plan: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/community/natural-environment-climate/climate-action-plan-for-salem>

During the Q & A period there was a question about green space around multifamily housing developments. Ms. Dimke emailed the following explanation: "Salem Revised Code Chapter 702 requires multifamily developments to provide open space. For developments with five to 12 units, at least 20 percent of the site must be open space. For developments with 13 or more units, the requirement is at least 30 percent of the site. The open space requirements for multifamily developments were updated in 2020 when Council approved code changes resulting from the Multifamily Housing Design project. The changes that were made increased flexibility in how developments could provide that open space. This was in line with the overarching purpose of trying to make it easier to develop multifamily housing in Salem."

Voter Education/Voter Service in 2022

Deanie Anderson, Voter Service Co-chair

Local Voter Service chairs and volunteers worked locally and with LWVOR during the Primary and General Elections to accomplish candidate interviews, live candidate forums, ballot measure research, ballot measure presentations both live and recorded, outreach information tables with voter registration, collaboration with community groups, distribution of LWVOR Voters' Guides and the successful application, award and use of a grant from National Voter Registration for 2022.

Voter Service volunteers met live and via Zoom to develop voter service plans, develop questions for both state and local candidate interviews, collect and enter election data on Vote411, redesign the Mock Election program and arrange displays for public events such as for voter registration.

Collaborating groups included LWVOR, Capital Community Media (CCM), Capital Manor, AAUW, Salem Public Library, Salem City Club, City Councilor Vanessa Nordyke, KМУZ and the National Voter Registration organization.

Outreach included broadcasting through television and radio stations CCM and KМУZ; presentation at Retired Teacher's Sorority ADK at Capital Manor; displays and voter registration information at Salem Art Fair, Salem Public Library and Chemeketa Community College. There was advertising with *Salem Reporter* and on-line platforms as well as in LWVMPC newsletters. (To next page)

Focus is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters® of Marion and Polk Counties.
Members subscribe through their dues, and membership is open to anyone 16 years of age and older.

Voter service was well supported by our local League membership. 42 volunteers from our local League and the other above-mentioned community groups accomplished the following: distributed Voters' Guides, moderated candidate interviews and ballot measure presentations, set up and staffed displays, answered questions about voter registration, developed questions and wrote scripts for candidate interviews, developed slide visuals, monitored and submitted candidates' data for VOTE411, worked on the Mock Election in which students learn about statewide candidates and ballot measures before voting in the mock election, wrote and followed through on use of the \$1,000 grant for voter registration. A quarter of the volunteers contributed in more than one capacity. In addition, several members assisted with the election process at County Election offices. (See next article.)



Thank you to the following individuals: (apologies to any missed names)

Cindy Burgess, Wendy Brokaw, Janet Adkins, Tomika Dew, Cindy Condon, Linda Kirsch, Barbara Sellers-Young, Diana Upton, Jean Sherbeck, Alice Phalan, Kathleen West, Alice LaViolette, Sally Hollemon, Joyce Zook, Amy Vandegrift, Linda Burke, Peggy Shippen, Peggy Bengry, Vanessa Nordyke, Claudia Carmichael, Kathy Patterson, Lois Derouin, Bobbie Clyde, Pam Garland, Karen Koepf, Hans West, Deanie Anderson. Support also came from staff at Salem Public Library, KMUZ, Capital Community Media, Capital Manor, AAUW.

Future projects:

Voter Service will now undertake an evaluation of this past election season to review outreach activities regarding candidates, the potential for engagement of higher education institutions and a general consideration of the effectiveness of current voter education areas and delivery methods. The latter will be accompanied with a survey of our membership to find out areas of voter education emphasis and interest.

There is a new project initiated by LWVOR and LWVUS titled the Youth Engagement Project that has its initial focus on the development and execution of the redesigned Mock Election. LWVUS has requested the Oregon LWV to create a model program that can be implemented nationwide. The Voter Service component of LWVMPC will need to determine how this national project will fit into our current program.

Notes from LWV Volunteers on Election Boards

Alice LaViolette, Tomika Dew and Amy Vandegrift all worked at local Elections Boards during this election year. Following are their impressions of the experience:

Alice LaViolette

Have you wondered why your ballot and privacy envelopes have a small hole in the middle? After working as an Election Board worker at Marion County Elections Office, I now know. Board workers take large trays of ballot returns, sorted by precinct numbers and double checked for signatures and, one-by-one, remove the ballots from the envelopes. Workers at each table represent at least two



different political parties. The ballots are opened and stacked. Once the tray has been emptied, the envelopes are gathered up by running a small wooden stick through the holes. This verifies that the envelopes are empty and each ballot has been removed. A small piece of yarn goes through the holes to tie the bundle together for storage. We were told the envelopes are kept for at least two years.

After the ballots are opened and stacked by precinct, they go through pre-inspection. Again, each work table has members from at least two different political parties. Inspectors are looking for write-in candidates, torn edges, spills, crossed out/corrected votes, etc. Any ballots with no changes or damage are prepared for the automatic ballot reading machines. The others are put into a group that will be manually input.

I was also able to work on Election Day in the walk-in voting area on the first floor of the Marion County office building. This was a wonderful experience for me. The room was set up with voting booths and decorated with flags and balloons. Elections staff were on hand to help those who had lost or damaged ballots, had recently moved, etc. Staff sat on the County Commissioners' platform and waved small American flags to call up the next voter in line. I was the greeter and got to welcome voters, reassure them they were in the right place and pass out "I Voted" stickers. Most who came in were first time voters and their enthusiasm and excitement at being able to vote was evident. Many of them had photos taken as they cast their first ballot. One young woman, a first time voter, drove from Portland after getting off work and ran in just 5 minutes before the polls closed at 8 p.m. sharp. She was so relieved to have made it in time and to find out that she could take as long as she needed to fill out her ballot.

We are lucky to live in a state that makes voting so easy. But I found out that vote by mail takes many, many hands to work smoothly. I felt very honored to get to be a part of the process.

Tomika Dew



Given my involvement with Voter Education/Voter Service, I began to think more about what happens to a ballot after it is cast. Last spring, I contacted Polk County Clerk Val Unger about volunteering to help with elections. After confirming that my interest wasn't in working for a particular party, she said she would reach out if she needed additional workers. When she required help for the Primary Election, I went in for an interview where she explained what work I would be doing as a member of the "ballot processing board" and so my career as a ballot processor began!

On November 1st, Ms. Unger gathered a group of six (two additional workers joined us the day of and the day after the election) for General Election ballot processing. After outlining the specifics of the tasks involved, she swore us in and assigned us a partner of a different political party. The partners then began processing the trays of ballot batches after signatures had been verified. Our work covered the gamut from running the ballot envelopes through the mechanical letter opener to reviewing and adjudicating ballots to stacking the now-ready batch of ballots for the tabulating machine and the associated envelopes for storage.

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The most significant work is adjudicating the ballots which can be as easy as whiting out a crossed-out oval on a corrected vote to the very detail-oriented duplication of a large-print ballot to an actual ballot that can be tabulated. There is a great deal of camaraderie and assistance between the partners—a model of how individuals from different political parties can (and should!) work together.

Working in the Polk County Clerk's office, I also gained an understanding of how helpful Ms. Unger and her staff are as citizens reach out for help with ballots. The phone rang all day on Election Day and the sunniness in the staff's voices never wavered. After I worked the Primary Election, I told Ms. Unger how impressed I was by the care and detail that went into ensuring that each voter's intentions were carried out. What a pleasure it is to play a small part in making democracy work!

Amy Vandegrift



In 2016, I began working as an election clerk for Marion County. This year is my eighth election. I am awed by the commitment and dedication of the election clerks and the Marion County Election staff, who value our democratic election process and are hardworking, respectful, and thoughtful as they carry out their duties to make sure everyone's vote is counted.

We always start the day with the Pledge of Allegiance, we take an oath to obey Oregon election laws and we sign a pledge to faithfully work the ballots through the election counting process.

All election clerks work in pairs, each from a different political party. The ballots are tabulated by a computer (not connected to the internet) but there are a lot of things that need to be done before the ballot is scanned and counted by the computer. I have done several of these jobs, always being paired with a partner from another political party. This past primary election, I even got to go collect ballots (again with a partner) from the drive-up ballot box in Sublimity when the polls closed at 8:00 p.m. I have sorted unopened ballot envelopes when they were first delivered to the election office to make sure they were Marion County ballots and that the envelopes were all facing the same direction.

All the envelopes are put through the "amazing" sorter machine that sorts them into precincts, checks the signatures, tallies the number of envelopes received, and cuts open each envelope. All signatures are verified, and, if there is a question, there is a team of election clerks trained in signature verification.

Ballots from the same precinct are put into trays to be processed by "opening board clerks." Either my partner or I pulled the ballots out of the envelopes and the other person unfolded the ballots, always checking to make sure that all the ballots were from the same precinct and matched the precinct number on the envelope. We slipped a piece of colored yarn through the center hole in a group of 50-75 emptied envelopes and tied them together. This ensured that all the ballots were removed, and the envelopes were ready for storage. As routine as the work is, we all have a sense of importance and urgency of what we do.

Ballots then move to the "pre-inspection board clerks." Once again, I worked with a partner. We checked to make sure ballots were marked carefully and could be automatically scanned and counted by the computer. Ballots where the voter made a write-in, marked two or more voting boxes (To P. 6)

in the same race, left stray marks on the ballot, used pencil or left stains of a kind that would make it difficult for the computer to scan—any of these ballots needed to be manually viewed. These go to the “Tally room” to be reviewed and adjudicated. I worked with another clerk in the Tally room to review those ballots. Under Oregon law the election clerks together must determine the voter’s intent and make sure the ballot is marked to reflect that. Most of the time the voter’s intent is obvious. It is impressive how carefully and accurately everyone works.



In 2020 I worked on the mandated Secretary of State’s hand count audit. By Oregon state law the Secretary of State’s office requires a hand count of three or more precincts and three or more races/ items on the ballot to make sure that the county’s reported count matches the hand count. I also did two after-election hand recounts requested by private citizens. Anyone can get a recount; however, you must pay for the staff time and resources used. Our hand recount matched the computer numbers.

I am most impressed by the Marion County Election staff who deal with the citizens who come to observe the election count process. We have always had some observers, but this year we had many people who had never viewed the process and knew nothing about our state’s election process. They only knew what they gleaned from social media, much of it not correct or relevant to Oregon. The Elections staff carefully, patiently explained our process, sometime multiple times. All states should have Oregon’s elections process.

Maybe some year League members should take a tour of the election process. I am sure that both Marion and Polk County Clerks would be pleased to show us how our elections work.

Observer Corps Reports November 2022

Salem Area Mass Transit District Board— 11/17/2022

Janet Adkins

Items Discussed:

1. Reviewed draft Long Range Plan for district with consultant Jacobs Engineering. Highlighted the need and strategies for increased bus frequencies, diverse media use and marketing especially near transit hubs, more van pools especially to manufacturing and agriculture workplaces, more flex transit, same day paratransit capability, e-fares, expanded bike-on-bus capacity, expanded group pass program, and continued electric bus expansion. Discussed the relation of transit to city and regional planning and the importance of collaboration.



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2. Equity is a critical element looking forward. Cherrriots riders are five times more likely to live in households that earn under \$50,000 a year.
3. Continued ridership rebound—upward trends noted. Year to date 658,890 rides across system.
4. Popularity of new Youth Free Pass program (started in September)—89% increase over October 2021 in youth rides.

Actions Taken:

1. Accepted resignation of Board Director Chi Nguyen (due to move out of district).
2. Approved VIA Mobility contract for Demand Response Management Software; cost will be up to \$1.59 Million over seven years.
3. Approved budget hearings calendar.
4. Accepted report on upcoming January Service Changes—projected as going to 93% of pre-pandemic service levels.
5. Accepted report on July - September Performance.
6. Accepted Quarterly Finance Report—The budget revenue shortages noted were anticipated due to state and federal funding cycles.

Salem City Council Special Meeting—11/02/2022

Alice LaViolette

Actions Taken:

- Council accepted the resignation of Mayor Chuck Bennett, declared the office vacant and moved to appoint Council President Chris Hoy as Mayor (before he would normally take that office in January). Motion passed.
- Julie Hoy was nominated to fill Chris Hoy’s vacancy as Councilor of Ward 6. Motion passed.
- Virginia Stapleton, Ward 1, was elected Council President.
- Council also approved a transfer of funds from the 2023 budget to cover the cost of design and permitting for the Salem Airport Terminal.



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Salem City Council—11/14/2022

Alice LaViolette

Issues Discussed:

Public Hearing of proposal to amend the Unified Development Code due to changes in state law and a decision made by the Land Use Board of Appeals. Changes include: allows affordable housing in all zones except Industrial General, allows temporary permits for safe-parking shelters (car camping) on non-profit/gov/commercial owned property, removes rules for manufactured housing that don't also apply to standard housing and eliminates minimum parking space requirements for new developments located within ½ mile radius of transit stops on 15-minute service routes, adds psilocybin service center as an example of outpatient medical services and laboratories. Proposed changes were engrossed and will now advance to 2nd reading.

Public Hearing/discussion on petition from DEW Investments asking city to vacate right-of-way use of Cross St. SE west of 20th St. to allow its use by Hyundai Dealership. DEW Investments owns the property abutting the street in question. City staff recommended denying the petition. During discussion with petitioner's attorney, staff learned that the city has had three opportunities during the past 45 years to acquire the right-of-way when other developments in this area took place, but didn't see the need. DEW Investments is promising to maintain the street and add landscaping and pointed out that the property would be added to the city's property tax rolls. Also, there is a 15-inch city sewer main line that runs through the DEW properties that does not have a city easement. DEW is willing to give the city an easement at no cost if they can acquire the right-of-way. In light of this added information, Council approved continuing the hearing on 12/05/22.



Proclamations were read acknowledging National Runaway Prevention Month and Small Business Saturday (which will be November 26).

Actions Taken:

Consent Calendar – Council approved the following: appointments of Michelle Vlach-Ing and Sara Williams as Municipal Judges (2-year terms); an increase in various ambulance fees charged by the Salem Fire Department; funding of the Holiday Parade using Transient Occupancy Tax; sale of city owned property to Discount Nursery Supplies.

Approved acceptance of a grant from PGE to partially fund electric vehicle charging stations for the city's fleet of EVs; the location will be the library garage rooftop and city maintenance shops. Approved annexation and zone change to 1.95 acre property at 5536 Skyline for 16 multi-family housing units.

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Salem City Council Work Session— 11/14/22

Alice LaViolette

Council held a work session to consider progress made on 2022 Council Policy Agenda and results from a community satisfaction survey and talk about priorities for 2023. Passage of the community infrastructure bond and update of the city website were highlighted. The City is still working on expanding air service, creating a customer service center for city services, opening the navigation center and increasing housing for homeless people. Future issues to plan for include an existing gap in funding for future city services and the fact that current programs for homeless people are not funded past 2024.



A Community Satisfaction survey was conducted in September 2022. The number one concern of respondents (57%) was homelessness; concern for crime/safety was 16%, and there was a drop in satisfaction with municipal court and code enforcement. After discussion about current and future goals, Council asked staff to look into what updates might need to be made to the city charter and how diverse representations on boards/commissions can be increased. Staff will present a list of 2023 priorities in January.

Salem Public Library Advisory Board— 11/09/2022

Alice LaViolette

Items Discussed:

- Teen Advisory Board held haunted house in the Anderson Room with 452 attendees.
- Chair Francine Boullosa presented a report on the many projects provided through Library Advisory Board allocations.
- City Librarian Kim Carroll introduced new Deputy City Librarian Bridget Esqueda.

Report and Questions for Librarian Carroll:

- Board members asked if the new “fine free” policy is causing books to be returned late. Librarian Carroll reported that this has not been a problem. She reminded board members that a checked-out item will automatically renew three times if there is no one waiting for the item. After that the item will be assumed lost and a replacement charge would be issued to the patron.
- The library will be issuing print copies of the events calendar in the future and would like suggestions of where/how these can be distributed.
- The library is using a translation service to produce promotional items in several languages. They would like native speakers to review the materials for understanding/accuracy.

Actions Taken:

- The board approved holding its next meeting on January 11, 2023, in person/hybrid.
- The board voted to request more information about how SPL could be involved in supporting the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program. This program sends one free book a month to children 0 – 5 years of age who live in low-income areas.



League of Women Voters of Marion and Polk Counties Membership through September 30, 2023

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all women and men 16 years of age and older. Membership includes subscriptions to local, state, and national League publications, many of which are sent by e-mail and all of which are supported by your local dues.

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Renewing members, please add below any information that is different from what's in the newest directory. If you've mislaid your directory, contact Elsa Struble at gstruble@willamette.edu, 364-3929.

New members, please complete the following contact information.

Phone (H) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Yes, I want to join the League: _____ as a *new* member. _____ as a renewing member

I am enclosing:

___ \$ 65 for *Individual Membership*

___ \$ 30 for each additional *Household Member, Student or Limited Income Member*
(Those with limited income may also contact Amy Vandegrift or Elsa Struble about scholarships)

___ \$ 90 for a single *Supporting Member*

___ **\$15 extra to receive printed newsletters through the mail**

\$ _____ Contribution to LWVMPC budget (not tax deductible)

\$ _____ **TOTAL to LWVMPC** (not tax deductible)

\$ _____ Contributions to LWV of Oregon are now tax deductible. Write a separate check payable to LWVOR and *send it to* Treasurer Elsa Struble; she will forward it to the state League and the amount will be held for us to use for our educational projects or per-member payments owed the state League. (Checks sent to the LWVOR office will not benefit our local League but directly benefit the state League, another good cause.)

Mail check(s) & form to Treasurer Elsa Struble, 1965 Manorview Lane NW, Salem OR 97304

For further member information, contact Amy Vandegrift at 503-364-0492, vandebloom@gmail.com
or Elsa Struble at 503-364-3929, gstruble@willamette.edu

Join online [HERE](#).



**League of Women Voters
of Marion & Polk Counties**
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Making Democracy Work™



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

December 2022

Calendar.....1

Membership.....2

 Dues form.....11

Observer Corps Reports for November.....7

Salem’s Climate Action Plan Explained.....2

Volunteers on Election Boards.....4

..

Voter Education/Voter Service in 2022.....3