



BULLETIN
lwva.com

January 2022

Calendar

Tuesday January 4 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting via Zoom teleconference. The meeting URL will be sent to attendees; email one of the Co-Presidents if you would like to attend.
Monday January 17 7:30 p.m.	Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Observance, which will be virtual. See page 3 for details.
Tuesday February 1 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting via Zoom teleconference. The meeting URL will be sent to attendees; email one of the Co-Presidents if you would like to attend.

We extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

Elisabeth Carr-Jones, 1 Lehigh Street

Diana Eastman (rejoined), 13 Belknap Street

Jo-Anne Preston, 42 Mystic Lake Drive

Carolyn Parsons and Angela Olszewski: Co-Presidents
CarolynMParsons@msn.com, amolszewski@gmail.com
Ann FitzGerald: Membership AnnFitz@rcn.com

Kim Haase: Bulletin Editor c.haase@comcast.net
Margaret Reiners: Bulletin Mailing mlreiners@gmail.com

Co-President's Message

Quoting my cousin again this year, this has been a "most unfortunate year".

The League's Zoom account has been renewed to allow us to have a holiday party with Arlington Town Manager, Adam Chapdelaine (minus the party part), LWVA board meetings, and probably a meeting with our state legislators. I really do not like speaking to my computer screen and then having someone responding from my computer screen. However, having the ability to stay home on a cold winter's night and participate in the January board meeting is a most welcome way to conduct the League's business.

Mr. Chapdelaine, our holiday speaker, is a wealth of information. Monies coming in from the federal government to offset the effects of a pandemic will be allocated to a wide range of needs within the town. (Refer to pages 5-7.) League members lobbied a bit for their particular interests – water and sewer pipes, the nursing staff at the Council on Aging. I am disturbed that the Mugar site will be having some development. Reduced from the original proposal but not zero development probably pleases no one.

Usually at this time of year, I encourage you and your families to attend the MLK Birthday Observance Celebration. The LWVA has contributed to this celebration for many years. Refer to page 3 as to how this event will be conducted.

I wish you a more fortunate and happy new year.

Carolyn Parsons

LWVA LEADERSHIP 2021–2022

Carolyn Parsons, Co-President	781-646-9309
Angela Olszewski, Co-President	781-648-8649
Meredith Zona, Organization VP	781-648-2753
Patricia Muldoon, Action VP	339-223-3300
Joan Martin, Treasurer	617-966-4521
Anne Linn, Secretary	781-643-0356
Ann FitzGerald, Membership Director	781-646-9711
Kim Haase, Bulletin Editor/Ads	781-643-3429
Margaret Reiners, Bulletin Mailing	781-646-9611
Janice Bakey, Email Coordinator	781-643-4345
Diana Eastman, Webmistress	774-266-3422
Samantha Dutra, Member at Large	857-266-9570

The BULLETIN is published monthly except during the summer and December by the League of Women Voters of Arlington, PO Box 461, Arlington, MA 02476.

MLK Event Will Be Virtual Again

From the Arlington Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance Committee

Please join us for this year's annual celebration to honor the legacy of Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Through this celebration, we will celebrate Dr. King's legacy and those who are committed to carrying on his legacy. This year's celebration will be held virtually, broadcast by ACMi due to COVID-19 restrictions. Watch LIVE at <http://acmi.tv/publive> at 7:30PM on January 17th or on the Public Channels: RCN 629, Verizon 31, Comcast 8. Also available on the Government Channels: RCN 614, Verizon 26, Comcast 22. The event will also be streamed on the Arlington Human Rights Commission Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/ArlHumanRights>.

This year's keynote will be delivered by Dr. Lynn Perry Wooten, the 9th President of Simmons University. Check out more about our guest at <https://www.simmons.edu/about/university-leadership/president/about-president>.

Donations: Checks can be mailed to Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance Committee of Arlington, Massachusetts, P.O. Box 320, Arlington, MA 02476, or donations can be made online at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/g94xr-arlington-mlk-jr-birthday-observance-committee>.

The Massachusetts Legislature: Democracy in Decline

A brief review by Patti Muldoon

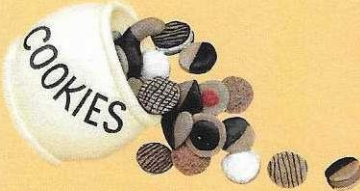
If you want to understand the situation our state legislature is in, I highly recommend reading "The Massachusetts Legislature: Democracy in Decline." The report was just released in November, 2021. This is the first clear accounting I have seen of why it is so difficult to reform the legislative process or to even get a bill passed through the legislature. The review, a project convened by Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts, points to House management and a lack of professionalism and transparency as leading causes.

Former Rep. Jay Kaufman, who used to represent part of Arlington and whom I deeply respect, is one of the authors. He concludes that we have to elect reformers to challenge today's House leaders in their own districts. Under the current system, which has evolved since 1977, reform from within by current Representative members cannot work.

I think you will find this report very informative:

https://www.progressivedemsofmass.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/democracy_in_decline_final.pdf?utm_medium=&emci=317df342-9449-ec11-9820-c896653b26c8&emdi=ab39d95c-074a-ec11-9820-c896653b26c8&ceid=9417311



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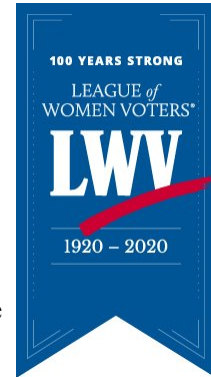


League Members Welcome Town Manager at Holiday Party

By Kim Haase

Adam Chapdelaine, Arlington's Town Manager, spoke to a small but enthusiastic group of members and family members on December 1 at the League of Women Voters of Arlington's annual Holiday Party, which was once again a virtual event instead of our accustomed potluck.

Co-President Angela Olszewski noted that Adam had last been our guest at the 2010 Holiday Party, when he was the new Deputy Town Manager. He became Town Manager in 2012.



Adam gave us an update on his work this year. First among his priorities for almost two years now has been the pandemic. Vaccine uptake in Arlington has been excellent, and he was looking forward to getting back to normal until the Delta variant hit. Now, the Omicron variant was making things hard to predict. He was proud that Arlington 5-to-11-year-olds had the highest vaccination rate in the state, almost 90%. He credited Christine Bongiorno and the town's Health and Human Services department with making the vaccines available, and Arlington's parents for taking advantage of them.

Next has come the allocation of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), passed last March. Federal funds are the province of the Select Board and the town administration. The \$35 million from ARPA is about equal to the annual budget of the town (not including the schools). The town has been getting advice from the federal treasury and feedback from the public on how it can and should spend the funds. Some funds are already being spent, and other spending is being planned. For more details, see <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/Home/Components/News/News/11406/16>. The main areas are as follows:

- Public health: Nurse staffing, behavioral health, the Arlington Youth Counseling Center
- Premium pay for essential workers in the public and private sectors
- Equity outreach to underserved communities, including translation services
- Behavioral health
- Food security (Arlington EATS)
- HVAC systems in school and town buildings
- Park and playground improvements
- Water and sewer infrastructure
- Homelessness, notably on the Mugar site
- Affordable housing (\$8 million), for Menotomy Manor improvements and others
- Rent and mortgage assistance
- Small business assistance

Adam is also working on other major town priorities:

- **The NetZero Action Plan** has the goal of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- **Connect Arlington** is a plan for sustainable transportation to reduce car use and also improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians (for example, the improved Mass. Ave./Appleton St. intersection).

(Continued on page 7)



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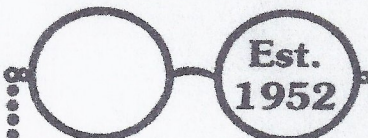
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Holiday Party (Continued)

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** Jill Harvey, the director, started right before the pandemic and is working with many town commissions on social and racial justice issues.
- **Building projects:** The High School is on schedule and on budget, and the first phase will open early in 2022; the Department of Public Works yard renovations have begun, but are being delayed because of supply issues (the High School ordered everything very early, long before the pandemic); the Central School renovations as a Community Center are also delayed but with the hope of finishing soon.
- **The town budget:** They are thinking about an override for fiscal year 2024, while trying to limit expenses on the town side (for the schools, pandemic needs have raised costs); the pandemic has depressed school enrollment, however, which may lower costs if this trend continues.

Adam then answered questions on the following topics.

- **Remote work:** The town has made remote work possible for employees, although most are in the office now, and is working on a hybrid plan.
- **Buses:** The 77 bus is extremely unreliable, with delays of up to 50 minutes, making students late for school, among other problems. Adam is working with Rep. Garballey to find out what is going on. Connect Arlington doesn't work without reliable buses.
- **Water/sewer funding:** The new funds may reduce town budget costs, but many are additional; they may be able to prevent or reduce cost increases for taxpayers. A member noted that the maintenance backlog has improved, that sewer system work helps reduce MWRA costs, and that overflows along Alewife Brook Parkway have been reduced.
- **Mugar property:** The conditional approval by the ZBA could be appealed by abutters or the applicant; we should know by the end of December. The ZBA permit reduces the number of units considerably and restricts most to age 55+, so the impact will be smaller.
- **Council on Aging:** There is no specific allocation of ARPA funds to the COA, but we do have room to meet needs for nursing and social workers.
- **Open space:** ARPA clearly allows work on active open spaces (playgrounds) but is ambiguous on passive ones. We are prioritizing playgrounds, which have been heavily used during the pandemic.
- **Solar panels:** ARPA does not include support for these, but the infrastructure bill should. We won't get direct federal funding through this bill, but the state legislature will be providing funding from this bill to support Complete Streets, sewer work, and the like in the next 4-6 months.
- **Facilities:** A member asked Adam to thank the facilities director for maintaining the Visitor Center in the Center, using it for holiday popups.



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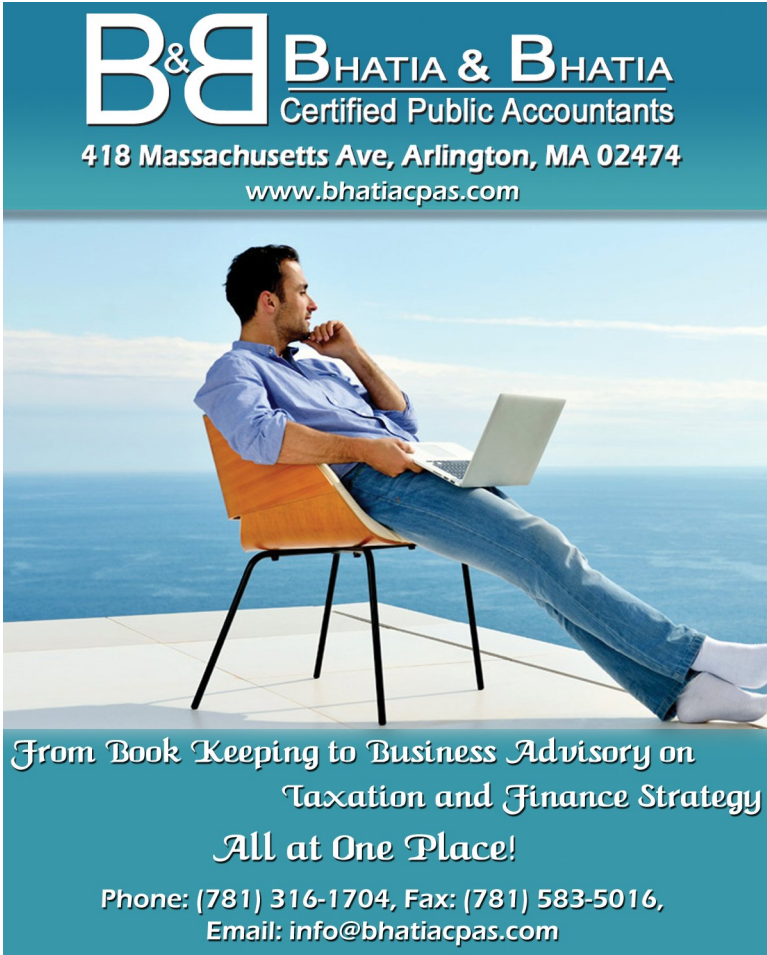
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Please check areas of interest and activity even if you can't be actively involved THIS year.

SPECIAL LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

- Join the Board. Position: Action: phone calls letters Bulletin: mailing soliciting ads Membership Nominating Committee Publicity Writer Voter Service: Rides to the polls Candidates Night Voters' Guide Attend State League's Phonathon Be a discussion leader at local meetings Fundraising activities Offer meeting refreshments Post fliers and deliver brochures Host a meeting in my home Monitor elections for nonprofit organizations

FOLLOW ISSUES, KEEP LEAGUE AND COMMUNITY INFORMED

- Congress/Presidency/Election Process Discrimination/Equal Employment/Civil Rights Education/Child Care Environment/Recycling Health Care Justice/Courts/Prisons Land Use Taxation/Budgets/Deficits Transportation/Urban Policy Voting Rights Warrant Articles Review Welfare Policies/Basic Human Needs Women's Issues Zoning/Community Development/Land Use

OBSERVE AT

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- Select Board (Mondays) Redevelopment Board (Mondays) School Committee (2nd & 4th Thursdays) Conservation Commission (1st & 3rd Thurs.) Housing Authority

SKILLS LEAGUE COULD DRAW ON

- Computer database Fundraising Graphic design Writing articles Desktop publishing Other Web site maintenance Membership development Moderating meetings

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January 2022

League of Women Voters of Arlington
Post Office Box 461
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