



BULLETIN
lwva.com

March 2022

Calendar

Tuesday March 8 5 p.m.	Last day to submit Town Meeting candidate statements.
Tuesday March 8 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.
Friday March 11 8 p.m.	Last day for voters to register.
Saturday March 12	Deadline for submitting questions for Candidates' Night March 23. Details on page 3.
Wednesday March 23 7: 30 p.m.	Virtual Candidates' Night for the Town Election. Details on page 3.
Friday April 1	LWVA Membership dues for the coming year are due; please use the form on page 11. Thank you for paying your dues this month!
Saturday April 2 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.	Town Election.
Tuesday April 5 7 p.m.	LWVA Board Meeting, hopefully in person if people feel comfortable. Details will be in the April Bulletin.
Monday April 25 8 p.m.	Town Meeting begins.

Co-President's Message

Unlike last year as I write this message, it is decidedly warm outside. Being wrapped in a blanket on the couch is how I envision myself for this coming Friday as a storm is expected. I have often written that I hope for warmer temperatures to welcome our state legislators to our Legislators' Brunch/Get-Together. The weather was not a consideration as League members and a few friends met over ZOOM this past Sunday. This was a great opportunity to learn about the priorities of our legislators and to do a bit of lobbying. I am struck by the complexity of converting seemingly good ideas into legislation; some proposals languish for years without any discussion. (See page 5.)

Envision Arlington and the League are once again co-sponsoring Candidates' Night, which will be held on March 23. All candidates have accepted the League's invitation to participate in Candidates' Night. The only contested race is for Town Moderator. This will also be a virtual event and will be hosted by ACMi. (See page 3.)

Over the next few days my husband and I will be getting the "ARLINGTON VOTES" signs updated with the date for the local town election. Some signs need to be more than just updated – bent legs and mold seem to be a problem. I need the help of about 3 people to put up signs about a week before the election and to retrieve the signs as soon as possible after the election on April 2. **Please call me and leave a message at 781-646-9309 or e-mail me at carolynmparsons@msn.com if you are willing to volunteer a few hours of your time.**

Don't forget to vote!

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
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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.

Virtual Candidates' Night March 23

Submit questions by March 12th for this virtual forum.

Date: March 23, 2022, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Location: Remote participation via Zoom

The League of Women Voters of Arlington and Envision Arlington are sponsoring Candidates' Night on **Wednesday, March 23rd at 7:30 p.m.** Candidates' Night is a virtual moderated debate that gives the community an opportunity to learn about the candidates running for town-wide offices. Candidates' Night can be viewed over a variety of channels:

- Watch live on ACMi's Government Channel (Comcast 22, RCN 614, Verizon 26) or stream live on <https://acmi.tv>.
- Watch on Facebook (link available later)
- Watch on YouTube (link available later)

The public is encouraged to submit questions by March 12th for the candidates by using this online form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CandidateNight2022>

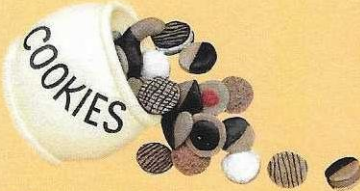
You may also email candidate questions to envision@town.arlington.ma.us indicating to which town-wide office your questions relate. Due to the logistics of the virtual event, the deadline for submitting questions is Saturday, March 12th. Arlington's Town Election is April 2nd.

View additional election information on the town website at <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/town-governance/elections-voting>.

Learn more about how Arlington Town government works by reading this primer compiled by the Fiscal Resources Task Group of Envision Arlington: <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/41026/637224522469130000>

Note: We don't think we need League volunteers this year. ACMi handles the timing, and a couple of Board members have agreed to review questions with Envision Arlington members after the submission deadline March 12. And we have decided we don't have the resources to do a Voter's Guide this year. If you'd like to help with one next year, please let Carolyn or Angela know.



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Legislators Speak with League about Major State Issues

By Kim Haase

State Representatives Sean Garballey and Dave Rogers spoke virtually with a number of League members and friends at the annual get-together that has not been a brunch for the past couple of years. (Sadly, State Senator Cindy Friedman had to miss the event because of a death in her family.)

Both Sean and Dave spoke of their strong partnership with each other and with Sen. Friedman in dealing with both legislative and multiple constituent issues during this time of Covid. Dave mentioned that the state legislature is functioning well, unlike the federal one.

Sean reported that just this week, he and Dave had helped the House pass the Work and Family Mobility Act, which would allow undocumented state residents to obtain driver's licenses. He recognized that this was a League priority that he'd heard from several of us about. The bill now goes to the Senate.

Sean also spoke about the allocation of ARPA funds: the legislature has allocated \$2.5 billion, as well as the state surplus, to health care, housing, and other major needs. About \$2 billion is left to spend on these and other needs such as parks. The state will also be spending \$9 billion from the infrastructure bill.

Two bills Sean supported (as did Dave) have been signed into law in the past few months: an additional week of Covid-19 emergency paid sick leave, and a student nutrition bill. The paid sick leave is funded by a \$125 million appropriation. The nutrition bill increases access to free school lunches and prevents school districts from penalizing students whose parents owe money for school lunches. Both Sean and Dave support universal free lunch for students; this is a first step.

Sean, who is adopted, also helped pass a House bill he filed that would allow adoptees born between 1974 and 2008 to access their original birth certificates by right. The bill now awaits Senate approval. (Those born before 1974 and after 2008 already have this access.)

Dave is particularly proud of passing the most recent climate bill after the previous one had been vetoed by the Governor. It provides 5-year targets for emissions reduction between now and 2050, includes an environmental justice standard, and provides for more offshore wind, among many provisions.

Another important bill passed by the House, Dave noted, makes the recent Covid-19 changes to the state's voting laws permanent, including expanded early voting and mail-in voting, which enabled Massachusetts in 2020 to break the voter turnout record set in 2006. The bill also includes reforms to make jail-based voting more available and to set a deadline for the state to join the multi-state Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).

Dave is also proud of the passage of the Fair Share Amendment, which increases taxes on people with annual income over \$1 million and allocates the funds to education and transportation. Voters will vote on this constitutional amendment this fall.



(Continued on page 7)



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Legislators' Get-Together (Cont.)

In response to a question from Patti Muldoon on the voting rights bill, Dave noted that the Senate and House passed different versions, so the bill is now in conference committee and uncertain of approval in time for spring town elections. The main sticking point is election-day registration, which the Senate approved but which the House bill does not include. Sean noted that he and Dave both support same-day registration, and he is glad to see the pressure being put on the conference committee for a quick resolution.

In response to a question from Patti on the prison/jail construction moratorium, Dave said that he fully supports the move from a punitive to a rehabilitative approach encouraged by the recent criminal justice and policing reform packages. He supports the moratorium, since we already have a great many prisons and houses of correction, though some are outmoded. Sean, also a supporter, said we must address the safety and wellbeing of the incarcerated.

Jo Anne Preston, a member of the Arlington Housing Authority Board, noted that although there is money for creating new housing, not enough is available for maintaining or improving affordable and public housing. The AHA buildings are 40-70 years old and have leaky roofs, drafty windows, and faulty electrical systems. When funds are appropriated, they go to a state agency that sits on them for a long time before allocating them to cities and towns.

Sean thanked Jo Anne for her advocacy on behalf of the AHA tenants; he never used to hear from Board members. He empathized about the tragic loss of life at Chestnut Manor. He and Dave are working with Jack Nagle, the AHA director, to try to access funding on an emergency basis. ARPA gave us \$600 million for housing, but it does not all go to public or affordable housing. Dave added that they are trying to get the emergency funding into the state budget and that both have weighed in with the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Elisabeth Carr-Jones asked about the status of the home rule petition that Town Meeting passed several years ago to allow legal residents who aren't citizens to vote in local elections, so that they have a say in the use of their property taxes. Several towns have passed these petitions.

Dave said that he had filed a bill that would do this, but it may have to be refiled in a later session. Sean said that home rule petitions first go to the Attorney General for a decision on their constitutionality, and then go back to the Town Clerk for filing with the legislature. Dave said that this may be a situation that requires a change to state law, so the AG may have held it up. Sean also said he would check with the Town Counsel and Town Clerk to see if this petition was lost the year the previous Town Clerk failed to submit the home rule petitions.

Meredith Zona, an advocate for energy efficiency, asked how the state could get to net zero emissions when it is currently so dependent on natural gas; Maine voted against sending power from Canadian hydroelectricity to Massachusetts, and our nuclear plant is shut down. Dave noted that wind power will be increasing, and that utilities are now required to use more clean energy. Sean, chair of the House Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, said that Brayton Point in Somerset, which used to have a coal plant, may be used to transmit offshore wind energy to the state; New Bedford and/or Salem may too. The legislature is working on another energy bill to build on last session's roadmap bill.

(Continued on page 9)



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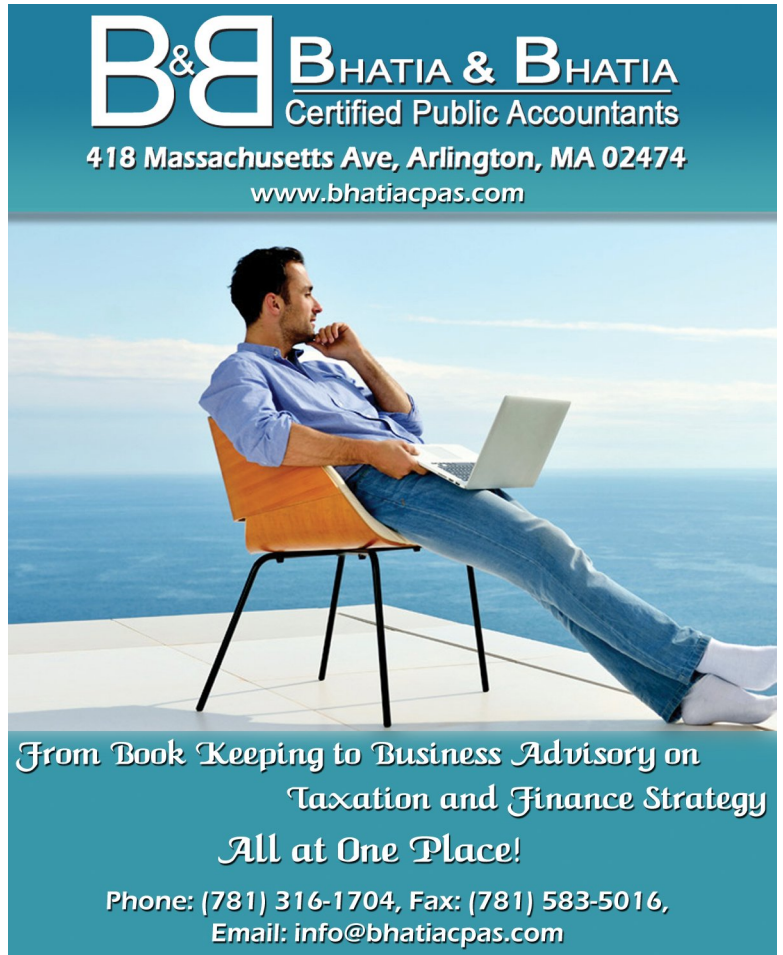
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Legislators' Get-Together (Cont.)

Carolyn Parsons asked about legislation to outlaw revenge porn; Gov. Baker, in his State of the State address, said that Massachusetts is one of only two states not to have such a law. Sean said that Rep. Jeff Roy had filed such a bill; Dave later reported that Rep. Roy had just texted him that the bill is likely to be taken up soon.

Carolyn also asked about the problem of combined sewer overflows to the Alewife Brook and Upper Mystic River. Sean said that he, Dave, and town officials had met with Fred Laskey of the Mass. Water Resources Authority to try to learn the MWRA's plan to close the last two CSOs in the Alewife Brook. ARPA funds are being allocated, and the infrastructure bill may help too. It is very expensive to close CSOs, particularly when they are caused by outflow from multiple jurisdictions (Cambridge and Somerville in this case).

Patti Muldoon brought up the energy problem again, noting that a new gas plant in Peabody may be in the works and that the Weymouth plant has had multiple leaks. Sean noted that the current Governor is not helpful on renewable energy, failing to implement bills passed by the legislature. He and Dave noted that the legislature has passed energy/climate bills during each of the last three sessions, but we need to do more.

Dave noted that the State House would finally open to the public on February 22, for the first time since the pandemic started, and he hoped citizens would come.

In conclusion, Sean thanked the League for their partnership with the legislators, and thanked members for reaching out to him and Dave on issues they all care about. Dave said that he has introduced many bills in partnership with constituents. Democracy is fragile, and the relationship between citizens and legislators is the bedrock.

LWVM INCLUSIVITY TRAINING WORKSHOP - ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE FOR EQUITY

By Meredith Zona, Organization VP

On February 12, I attended the second of two LWVMA Inclusivity Training Workshops. Entitled "Organizational Change for Equity", this second workshop was a Zoom event facilitated by YW Boston, and included close to 40 participants from both LWVMA and many local Massachusetts Leagues. The group first discussed the various stages from an "exclusive" to a "fully inclusive" organization regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and discussed what stage participants thought LWV was at. The event then broke out into small workgroups to discuss individual Leagues and actions taken to become more inclusive. The session also delved into a deeper understanding of DEI in organizations, and presented the SMARTIE tool for outlining a plan of action (Strategic, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Time-Bound, Inclusive, Equitable) for fully incorporating DEI.

LWVA has been taking steps over many years to become more inclusive, but there's much more to do. We welcome your feedback — info@lwva.com, or please reach out to me at Meredith.Zona@stantec.com.

LWVMA Statement on 2022 Ballot Questions: Not Taking Positions

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts **is not taking any positions** on the 2022 Massachusetts ballot questions. This means that League members may participate in Yes or No campaigns **as individuals** but should not do anything to make the public think that the LWVMA or a Local League has endorsed a Yes or No campaign.

How Does The Board Decide?

The LWVMA Board votes to support, oppose, or take no position on specific ballot questions based on positions or goals previously researched and adopted by the League (<https://lwvma.org/advocacy/league-positions/>), which are described in Impact on Issues (<https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>) or Where We Stand (<https://lwvma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Where-We-Stand..pdf>).

Constitutional Amendment Ballot Question

The LWVMA Board voted to take no position on the “Massachusetts Income Tax for Education and Transportation Amendment,” nicknamed the “Fair Share Amendment” and the “Millionaires Tax.” This proposed amendment **will** appear on the November ballot. If approved by the voters, it would create an additional 4% tax on the portion of income above \$1 million and earmark that income tax revenue for public schools, colleges, and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation.

The Board has voted to take no position on this constitutional amendment because its earmarking (opposed by the League) is partially countered by the move toward a graduated income tax (supported by the League).

- The League is unequivocally opposed to the earmarking of revenues, especially through a constitutional amendment with no mechanism for periodic review and with no “sunset” clause.
 - ◆ The League firmly believes that the Legislature should set government program priorities through the budgetary process and annual appropriations.
 - ◆ The League’s opposition to earmarking applies even when the earmarks would support other goals of the League, like equitable education funding or bolstering public transportation to meet societal needs and to combat climate change.
- On the other hand, both the LWVUS and LWVMA support a graduated income tax, and this amendment would be a step in that direction, because it would add one new graduated tax bracket.

Citizen-Initiated Ballot Questions

There are a few citizen-initiated ballot questions that **could** appear on the November ballot. Each proposes a new law. If the legislature does not pass these laws by May, supporters of the ballot questions may choose to collect another round of signatures in July to put these questions on the ballot. The League has no positions on these topics, so the LWVMA takes no position on these potential questions:

- A law that would raise the number of licenses a single alcohol retailer can own
- Two different versions of a law that would define and regulate contracts between app-based drivers and companies. (Example: Uber)

The last potential ballot question would give the Commonwealth’s insurance commissioner power to require dental insurers to partially refund premiums to patients if a plan spent more than 17 percent on administrative expenses (as opposed to patient care and quality improvement). The League’s stated goal for health care is: “An affordable health care system that provides equal access to quality health care for all.” With no clear answer as to whether a 17 percent cutoff would be the most appropriate route to achieving that goal, LWVMA takes no position on this ballot question.

You can read more about the citizen-initiated ballot questions by searching <https://www.mass.gov/> or visiting https://ballotpedia.org/Massachusetts_2022_ballot_measures.

Member dues are due by April 1.

Thank you!

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ARLINGTON
Membership Application/Renewal Form**

Fiscal Year runs from April 1 to March 31

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

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- _____ 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
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- _____ 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

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

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March 2022

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