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

**Board Meeting – December 4, 2023**

**Zoom Video and Phone Conference**

The forty sixth board meeting of the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization (UMRR-ILO) was called to order by Chair Mary Ellen Miller (IA Des Moines Metro) on October 2, 2023, at 10:30 a.m.

**Board members attending the meeting in addition to the Chair:**  Gretchen Sabel (MN-ABC), Kay Slama (MN Willmar), Colleen Werdien (MN ABC), Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins (WI La Crosse), 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), Mary Ploeser (WI Madison – past chair),

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

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the 10-2-2023 UMRR-ILO Board meeting were included in the documents sent prior to this meeting. T. Prenosil moved the minutes be approved and E. J. Gallagher seconded. Motion carried.

**Financial Report**

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

Revenues: October 2023/November 2023: $325

* Memberships $125
* Memorial Donations – Lonnie McCauley $200

Expenses: $119.46

* Zoom $115 LWV UMRR & LWV ABC, MN share Zoom Account, (fee paid to LWV ABC MN bi-yearly
* Pay Pal Fees $2.48 Online Donations
* Pay Pal Fees $1.98 Online Memberships

Net Operating Revenue $205.54

Bank Balance as of 11-30-2023: $12,778.44

* Includes Judy Beck Memorial Fund of $0 and ERC Restricted Grant II balance $166.82)

Current 2023 – 2024 Memberships: 39. An email will be sent to all state and local chapters to remind them of the current year’s dues. (Possibly suggest chapters could pay their 2023-2024 year as well as 2024-2025 year.)

LWV-UMRR ILO will donate $100 to the organizations that each program speaker represents.

The financial report was accepted for future audit.

**Action Committee Update**

An update on the CO2 pipelines is the topic of the LWV-UMRR ILO educational program on December 4, 2023 at 7:00 via zoom. The panel of presenters includes Peg Furshong from CURE in Minnesota, Pam Richert from the Eco-Justice Collaborative in Illinois, and Jan Norris, activist from Montgomery County, Iowa.

LWV-UMRR ILO received permission from LWVUS after waiting about four weeks after the initial request was sent. G. Sabel had drafted sample letters and talking points for state and local chapters to use. These documents were distributed.

Included in the documents made available to Board members prior to this meeting was a comment letter drafted by G. Sabel and sent 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. G. Sabel has registered to attend virtually.

G. Sabel sent a copy of the Missouri Journalism report about how many people do not know they live in a watershed or basin.

In Minnesota the Minnesota state agencies are being taken over by industries or corporations. Some advocacy groups are initiating a letter writing campaign to protest this trend. The Action Committee decided to join this endeavor. K. Slama will make a sample letter available.

C. Mahlum-Jenkins showed the board what the LWVUS policy is for local, state, and other LWV organizations when taking actions at the national or federal level. She said some members of local leagues have expressed concern about the LWV-UMRR ILO taking actions on issues at the federal level prior to official permission in writing if the LWV-UMRR ILO believes it is consistent with LWVUS positions.

K. Slama moved and N. Porter seconded that the LWV-UMRR ILO reconsider and negate the process we previously decided about moving forward with advocacy actions prior to written permission from LWVUS. Motion carried. K. Slama did say the process is slow – sometimes taking weeks rather than the four days that has been indicated the decision would be made. Mahlum- Jenkins will share with LWVUS how discouraging it is to wait for a response when it takes so long to get it.

**Bylaws Update**

N. Porter thanked K. Slama who researched the most recent version of Roberts Rules (12th edition). The LWV-UMRR ILO will send a clean revision as well as a copy of the old bylaws with all the red revisions (for people who are interested in the comparison) to the local and state leagues prior to the annual meeting. N. Porter moved and K. Slama seconded that the bylaws as presented at this meeting be approved. Motion carried.

**Nominating Committee**

T. Prenosil reported the nominating committee members are Bonnie Cox (IL) chair, Lee Ekstrom (IL), Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins (WI), John Howard (MN), and Catherine Eisenhoffer (IA). From our bylaws:

* At least four (4) months prior to the annual meeting, the chair of the nominating committee shall request suggestions for nominations for offices to be filled. The request will be made to the president of each member League. Suggestions shall be sent to the chair of the nominating committee at least two (2) months before the annual meeting.
* The report of the nominating committee of its nominations for officers, directors, and the nomination committee chair shall be sent to the member Leagues at a minimum of one (1) month before the date of the annual meeting.

Currently we need to nominate a secretary for 2024-2026 and a co-vice chair for 2024-2025 to fill out the term of the previous vice chair who needed to resign.

G. Sabel will send a letter to all chapters regarding dues, new bylaws, and requests for suggestions for nomination for board members. She does not put this type of information in the newsletter.

**Financial Audit**

This past year it was done at the annual retreat, and it will be scheduled for the 2024 annual retreat again this year. The budget review will be scheduled in March 2024.

**Outreach to state leagues**

M. Miller suggested inviting state LWV presidents to our board meetings. And issues chair. Each state will decide who will extend this invitation. Every state now has a pull up banner and materials so take them to events where tabling is available. M. Miller writes an annual report so please make sure state board members get a copy.

**Annual Retreat**

M. Miller suggested holding it in the Davenport, Iowa Moline/Rock Island, Illinois area especially now that Missouri will be part of LWV-UMRR ILO. P. Ekstrom contacted Western Illinois University several weeks ago because there is a regional campus there. She will follow up. M. Miller recommended a documentary she saw that was made by people in the area that would be a possibility to show at the retreat.

We need to know when the states are holding their Council meetings to pick a date that works with Western Illinois University for space.

**LWVUS National Convention** will be June 27 through 30 in Washington D.C. The board will need to decide who might be willing to go to this event from LWV-UMRR ILO. It will be hybrid.

**LWV-UMRR ILO Annual Meeting**

The meeting will be virtual on Wednesday, May 29, 2024. Business meeting will be at 6:00 with a speaker at 7:30.

**Board Meeting Time**

In order to accommodate board members who are employed we will move our meetings to 5:30 pm on the first Monday of even-numbered months. The next meeting will be on February 5, 2024, at 5:30 pm. The program topic is the circular economy and G. Sabel has arranged for the speaker. The time of the program has yet to be determined.

**Book Discussions**

The Des Metro League has book discussions during the winter months on Saturday mornings. In February the book is Swine Republic by Chris Jones and in March the book is The River Knows by Neil Hamiliton. M. Miller will forward the dates when they have been set.

**Mississippi River Network (MRN) Grant**

M. Miller attends the Farm Bill “hive” of MRN and learned of a possible $10,000 grant (MRN received a total $90,000 to distribute but capped individual grants) which she proposes the LWV-UMRR ILO apply for. She has seen a series of large panels by artist Christine Curry depicting environmental issues in the Mississippi River watershed. This is a traveling pop-up exhibit which would cost approximately $3,000 for each location where it is shown. M. Miller showed pictures of some of the eventual 24 panels and the board members could envision events where this would be an impressive educational tool. M. Miller agreed to apply for this grant which has a deadline of December 30, 2023.

P. Ekstrom moved and G. Sabel seconded that the meeting adjourn. Motion carried.