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

**Board Meeting – February 6,2023**

**Zoom Video and Phone Conference**

The forty second board meeting of the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization (UMRR-ILO) was called to order by Chair Mary Ellen Miller on February 6, 2023, at 10:30 a.m.

**Board members attending the meeting in addition to the Chair:**  Gretchen Sabel (MN-ABC), Lonnie McCauley (MN Coon Rapids), Kay Slama (MN Willmar), Nancy Hill (WI La Crosse), Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins (WI La Crosse), Shawn Stacey- Choinard (IL Rockford), Lee Ekstrom (IL McHenry County), Paula Ekstrom (IL McHenry County), Catheryn Franczyk (IL Wheaton ), Nancy Porter (IA Iowa City), Sue Wilson (IA Dubuque),Tamara Prenosil (IA Dubuque)

**Guest:** Sue Johannsen (IA Muscatine)

**Approval of Minutes**

T. Prenosil moved and S. Wilson seconded that the minutes from October 3, 2022, be approved. Motion carried.

**Financial Report:**

C. Franczyk, treasurer, sent the Treasurer’s Report for December 2022 and January 2023 as well as the Revenues & Expenses with Budget vs Actuals (July 2022 – January 2023) to Board members prior to this meeting.

Revenues: December 2022/January 2023: $85.13

* $50.00 - Memberships
* $33.11 - Donations (Unrestricted)
* $2.02 Other Income

Expenses: December 2022/January 2023 $13.58

* $12.00 Website
* $1.58 – PayPal fees

Bank Balance as of January 31, 2023: $12,525.85 (includes Judy Beck Memorial Fund of $100 and ERC Restricted Grant II balance $166.82) Moved $200 from Judy Beck Memorial Fund to Iowa Water Conference fees.

The financial report was accepted for future audit.

**Update from Action Committee:**

Minutes from the Action Committee Video Conference on 1-23-2023 will be included on the UMRR-ILO website.

Mary Ellen Miller reported on the meeting with LWVUS Midwest Regional Organizer, Jessica Rohloff (320-460-2304). Jessica is from rural Minnesota. Her region includes 219 local chapters, six ILO chapters all in 10 states. Mary Ellen suggested inviting her to the annual meeting.

Carolyn Mahlum-Jenkins reported she continues to develop a template for the UMRR-ILO to use when asking LWVUS for permission to engage in advocacy work.

*The Decline in Wisconsin’s Conservation Legacy and the Shift in Balance of State Government* is being co-sponsored by the Chippewa Valley LWV and the La CrosseLWV. G. Sabel moved and L. McCauley seconded that the UMRR-ILO also be a co-sponsor of this virtual event. Motion carried. The only obligation for the UMRR-ILO is to publicize the event using its website and newsletter and members will try to publicize the event in LWV state newsletters. The Action Committee also agreed to co-sponsor the Minnesota Climate Change Task Force educational programs with no financial expenditure from the UMRR-ILO.

K. Slama moved and S. Wilson seconded that C. Mahlum-Jenkins request the LWVUS approve the UMRR-ILO Board sign-on to an advocacy letter developed by the National Wildlife Federation to support $20 Billion in the 2023 Farm Bill be directed toward sustainable agricultural practices and clean water protections. LWVIA has already signed this letter. Motion carried.

L. McCauley moved and K. Slama seconded that the UMRR-ILO sign advocacy letters pertaining to Minnesota.

* Forever Green legislation helping fund farmers to purchase equipment for cover crops
* Minnesota Environmental Partnership letter addressing PFAS in Minnesota waterways and wells.
* Letter to Conservation Minnesota to support putting the renewal of the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund on the ballot to allow Minnesota voters to show their support.

Motion carried.

The Action Committee will review the LWV UMRR Program for Action 2022-2023.

**Next Action Committee meeting will be Monday, February 27 via Zoom**

**CO2 Pipelines Review**

The Iowa Utilities Board has not yet set a date for the decision about rules for these pipelines.

**MRN River Days of Action: June 10 – 16, 2023**

N. Porter reported these events are still in the planning stages. Iowa will probably plan something to coincide with the LWVIA state convention which is June 10. LWVMN state convention is June 3, 2023, in New Ulm and is planning a River Days of Action on the river to coincide with it. N. Porter will send MRN literature to G. Sabel and C. Mahlum for display at their state conventions.

**Annual Meeting: May 22, 2023**

The event will be virtual at 6:00 pm with the educational program to follow at 7:00 pm. Board members need to begin publicizing this to members in our respective states to insure a quorum. G. Sabel will send a notice to all local Leagues in our four states.

The following people agreed to be on the budget committee: G. Sabel (MN), C. Mahlum-Jenkiins (WI), L. Ekstrom (IL), T. Prenosil (IA). C. Franczyk treasurer and non-voting). C. Franczyk will ask Jeri McGinley if she would agree to be the non-board member.

Board members on the nominating committee are T. Prenosil and C. Mahlum-Jenkins. Bonnie Cox from Jo Davies County LWV was approached last year to be chair as well as John Howard (Winona MN and former Board member who agreed to be on this committee last year. Lynne Markus will be asked to join the committee.

The following positions were elected for the 2021-2023 term and these positions need to be filled for 2023-2025:

Chair: Mary Ellen Miller (Metro Des Moines, IA)

Co-Vice Chairs: Nancy Porter (Iowa City, IA)

Shawn Stacey-Choinard (Rockford, IL)

Treasurer: Catherine Franczyk: (Wheaton, IL) last year was elected to fill out the remaining term of the previous treasurer after that treasurer’s resignation.

Director of Communications: Gretchen Sabel (ABC, MN)

Chair of Nominating Committee: (non-board member – one year position)

LWVIA needs to appoint an alternate to the UMRR-ILO Board. Paul Schultz is no able to participate fully at this time. M. Miller has asked the Muscatine LWV chapter to search for a possible candidate.

UMRR-ILO Bylaws need to be reviewed. There is not enough time to give notice to all LWV Chapters if changes are recommended so a committee will begin work to be able to propose changes at the 2024 annual meeting. (T. Prenosil and K. Slama have agreed to be included on this committee)

Speakers have not yet been confirmed for the Annual meeting.

Bonnie Cox, LWV Jo Davies IL (a founder of the UMRR-ILO) and Debra Turner, LWVUS president, will be invited to attend the annual meeting and planning retreat.

**Planning retreat**

Board members agreed to change the retreat dates to June 11 & 12. It will be in Onalaska, Wisconsin. N. Hill and C. Mahlum-Jenkins will research venues and overnight accommodations. We will plan to begin at 2:00 pm on Sunday afternoon. Since the event is in-person, we will each do a COVID test prior to gathering.

**Other Business:**

LWV chapters in St. Louis MO and Kansas City MO are interested in UMRR-ILO. M. Miller will follow up. There have been news articles about interest in moving water from the Mississippi River to drought areas in western states. There needs to be protection of the Mississippi River similar to the Great Lakes Compact.

**Next UMRR-ILO Board Meeting: April 3, 2023, 10:30 am until noon.**

Submitted by: Tamara Prenosil