

TheVOTER

2021-2022 LWV-RMA Board of Directors (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)



TOP ROW: President Barbara Grosh, Vice President Myra Pelz, Treasurer Linda Saalman, Secretary Kris Rogers, Past President & Director Judy Sternberg.

BOTTOM ROW: Directors Mary Hussong-Kallen, Theresa McFarland-Porter, Tiffany Moore-Corteville, Beverley Pringle, and Sarah Sandler.

See pages 3 and 4 for more about the annual meeting.

Inside this issue:

2021-2022 LWV-RMA Board of Directors.....1	Great Job, Team!6
President's Corner2	LWV-RMA Hosts Discussion of Rochester's PAB7
LWV-RMA Positions for Update Studies2	Redistricting Campaign Team7
Annual Meeting.....3	Sunshine Corner8-12
Going Off Board.....3	Book Club Update 13
2021 Awards Presented4	Book Review 13
Candidate Forums and Vote411.....5	Calendar..... 14
Legislative Interviews.....5	First Fridays 14
Voter Services6	Leadership 15

President's Corner

Here we are, far enough into June that

- Our LWV-RMA Annual Meeting has voted in our new Board and adopted our 2021-2022 Program,
- The LWNYS Biennial Convention has voted in its new Board and adopted its 2021-2023 Program,
- All our Candidate Forums and WROC TV Candidate Debates have taken place,
- Our GOTV activities are in full swing and Early Voting has started, and
- COVID vaccinations have brought us optimism and a slowly increasing resumption of in-person activities.

Shortly, our new President, Barbara Grosh, will begin her term. Barbara is eager to assume the position and will lead with vision and determination. Our new Board will have a strong blend of old and new faces, with an increased mix of ages and racial identities bringing a wider scope of perspectives to our Board team.

Members at our Annual Meeting approved a follow-through on the work that began this past year on our Local Positions. The recommendations to delete several of our Positions due to redundancy with Positions now held by our national or state Leagues and to conduct studies to update the remaining five Positions were adopted. While the intent of the update studies is mainly to clean up the Positions, weeding out parts that are outdated or adding updated details, recommendations for substantive expansions to Positions are possible.

It will be the responsibility of the new Board to oversee the creation of committees to work on these studies. There is no set timetable, and this may be a multiyear process depending on the human resources available to do the work. Committees will include both Board and non-Board members. We look forward to our membership stepping up to help in this work. Watch for further information and opportunities.

Without missing a beat our usual Voter Services and VOTE411 work will continue, along with our Redistricting Campaign and planning for fall educational and candidate forums. Please lend your hand in this new League year. We cannot accomplish the work and make the impact we wish to make without your help.

As my 2019-2021 term as Co-President, which morphed into President, comes to an end I am deeply grateful to my Board colleagues and League members who have provided counsel and support throughout this time. I am pleased to be continuing on the Board and with a lighter load, to contribute energy and inspiration to the work ahead.

In League,
Judith Sternberg
President, LWV-RMA

LWV-RMA Positions for Update Studies

The following are our Positions in summary form. The complete Positions are found in the LWV-RMA 1987-1988 Impact on Issues document which will be part of the update studies.

EQUITABLE TAXATION

- Promote use of a sales tax revenue distribution formula that will reduce fiscal disparities among Monroe County municipalities

PLANNING AND ZONING

- Support of community development based on comprehensive planning at all levels of government

STRUCTURES, PROCEDURES, AND PRODUCTIVITY

- Promote governmental structures and procedures that make for effectiveness. Improve productivity and facilitate citizen participation.

STRUCTURES, PROCEDURES, AND PRODUCTIVITY

- Promote a budget process that includes documents that are understandable and foster good decision making and summaries that are made widely available and encourage citizen involvement.

POLICE SERVICES

- Promote an equitable method of financing and a coordinated approach to the delivery of police services.

Annual Meeting

On June 3 via Zoom, 28 LWV-RMA members participated in our annual business meeting. Among the items approved were the amended Nominating Slate for Board of Directors and Nominating Committee, the 2021-2022 operating budget and amendments to LWV-RMA Bylaws.

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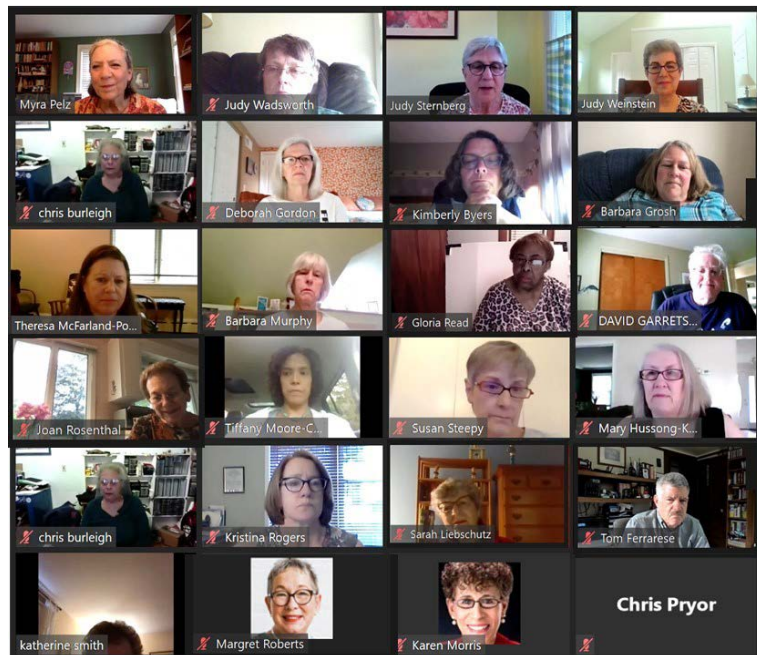
The following members were elected to LWV-RMA leadership positions:

Barbara Grosh, 2021-2023 President
 Myra Pelz, 2021-2023 Vice President
 Linda Saalman, 2021-2023 Treasurer
 Theresa McFarland-Porter, 2021-2023 Director
 Tiffany Moore-Corteville, 2021-2023 Director
 Beverley Pringle, 2021-2023 Director
 Judith Sternberg, 2021-2022 Director

Sheila Abeling, 2021-2022 Nominating Committee Chair.

Below are current Board members with terms continuing through 2022:

Kristina Rogers, Secretary
 Mary Hussong-Kallen, Director
 Sarah Sandler, Director



A major portion of the meeting was spent discussing 12 long-time LWV-RMA Positions. After lengthy discussion, motions were approved to delete seven of these positions (mostly because they are also Positions of the state and national LWV so are redundant), and to recommend update studies for the remaining five. A motion to adopt update studies of those Positions as the 2021-2022 LWV-RMA program was also approved.

Outgoing President Judy Sternberg as well as retiring Directors Kimberly Byers and Judy Weinstein were thanked for their leadership and service.

Going Off Board

Completing their terms and now going off Board are our Treasurer, Judy Weinstein and Director, Kim Byers.

Judy Weinstein, with her many years of League experience in several capacities and her selfless service, is a priceless League resource whether on or off the Board. Judy plans to continue chairing the Government/Advocacy Committee, managing our local VOTE411 site, coordinating Candidate Forums and our State and Congressional Legislator lobby visits, and managing our Zoom events. With extra time on her hands perhaps Judy will now engage in leadership development to prepare other members for some of these roles.

Kim Byers is completing a one-year post-presidency term and her fourth year on the Board. She first joined the Board as an appointed Director in the summer of 2017 and went on to elected positions including a one-year term on our experimental 3-person Leadership Team and an additional year as Co-President. Kim created the position of Volunteer Coordinator and introduced us to the SignUpGenius platform which has so greatly enhanced our volunteer recruitment and coordination efforts. Kim's skills in writing, speaking and finances were of great service to the Board. We thank Kim for her service and look forward to her continued off-Board contributions.



Treasurer, Judy Weinstein



Director, Kim Byers

2021 Awards Presented

On May 27, LWV-RMA board members and award recipients met at the home of Kris Rogers to present our 2021 awards in person to those being recognized rather than via Zoom during the Annual Meeting.

THE CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT AWARD

Annually, the League awards the Carrie Chapman Catt Award to a member of the League who exemplifies her values and commitment. Carrie Chapman Catt was a strong leader of great accomplishments who succeeded Susan B. Anthony as president of the National American Suffrage Association and helped form the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, today the International Alliance for Women. She worked tirelessly for the passage of the United States Constitutional Amendment allowing women to vote, and as passage of the 19th Amendment approached in 1920, established the League of Women Voters. This year, the Carrie Chapman Catt Award was presented to **Thomas Ferrarese** and **Sarah Liebschutz**.

Thomas Ferrarese is a strong dedicated advocate and supporter of voting rights. In his career as Monroe County Democratic Commissioner of Elections from 2002 until 2019 he has worked with the NYS Board of Elections as well as national and state agencies to administer and protect our elections, design updated election systems and advocate for expanded voting access. Tom built a strong relationship with the LWV-RMA to advance voter education. Tom's community activism includes work with local and national Gay and Lesbian organizations (secular and religious), his neighborhood association, historic lighthouse preservation, and the Monroe County Democratic Committee where he serves on their Executive Committee and is chair of their Special Committee on Voting and Elections. Tom has been a League member since 2012 and has presented on voting rights at a number of our community forums. He now works on our Redistricting Team. During Tom's acceptance remarks, he noted that Carrie Chapman Catt would have applauded our accomplishments in voter registration, absentee ballots, and voter education.

Sarah Liebschutz is a lifetime League member, and an influencer of public policy locally, statewide and nationally. She is a retired educator (SUNY College at Brockport) and a highly respected researcher focusing on intergovernmental relations and health care policy. In research, she has completed projects for local and national groups. She has published books, articles, and government reports for national and international agencies. Sarah has served in leadership roles for the Center for Governmental Research, Rochester General Hospital Board of Directors, RIT's Rochester Fellows, Temple B'rith Kodesh, The Children's Agenda, and the United Way of Greater Rochester. And our local League has benefited from her service on our Board of Directors and her community information forums on the Affordable Care Act, Medicare for All, the Supreme Court, and the Electoral College.

In her acceptance remarks, Sarah noted the importance of the League in her life and her enjoyment in the opportunities offered by the League to share her expertise in forums on a variety of topics.

YOU MAKE US PROUD AWARD

This award recognizes members who have recently assumed increased responsibilities in the League. This year's recipients are **Tanya Davis**, **Deborah Gordon**, and **Margret Roberts**.

Tanya Davis joined the League in 2018 and immediately involved herself in voter registration events. Since 2019, Tanya has served as Coordinator for the League's Students Inside Albany program, serving as mentor for our selected students.

Margret Roberts joined the League in 2019 and since July 2020 has served as Materials Manager for our Voter Services and other supplies at her home—keeping an inventory of all the items, preparing materials for pickup, and reorganizing the returning items.

Since joining the League in 2018, Deborah Gordon regularly attends Naturalization Ceremonies, updates our online calendar, reports on meetings of the Police Accountability Board and COMIDA for The Voter, and serves as a New Member Greeter. Deb was unable to attend the awards ceremony and received her recognition during the online LWV-RMA Annual Meeting.

50 YEAR MEMBERS

Achieving lifetime members status were Elizabeth Haigh (in 2020) as well as Susan Schwartz and Terry Schwartz (in 2021).



TOP LEFT: Sarah Liebschutz and Mary Hussong-Kallen who presented her with the Carrie Chapman Catt Award.

TOP RIGHT: Sheila Abeling presenting the Carrie Chapman Catt Award to Tom Ferrarese.

MIDDLE LEFT: Tanya Davis and Barbara Grosh who presented the You Make Us Proud Award.

MIDDLE CENTER: LWV-RMA President Judy Sternberg opening the awards ceremony.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Margret Roberts and Barbara Grosh who presented the You Make Us Proud Award.

INSERT: You Make Us Proud Award recipient Deb Gordon, who was unable to attend the awards presentation.

BOTTOM LEFT: Board members, award recipients, and award presenters at the awards ceremony at the home of Kris Rogers.

Candidate Forums and Vote411

We have had a successful primary season of Candidate Forums. We co-sponsored two Candidate Forums with WROC-TV8, one for the Democratic Party primary for Rochester Mayor and the other for the Republican Party primary for Wayne County Sheriff. The League was prominently mentioned in promotions and during the events. The WROC/LWV-RMA mayoral forum (as of this writing, the only one held) received heavy media coverage.

With community partners, we also co-hosted three forums involving candidates in the following Democratic primary elections:

- Rochester City Council at-large seats, with the Rochester Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority;
- Rochester City School District Commissioners, with SEAC (the South East Area Coalition);
- Rochester City Council at-large seats, with the Charles Settlement House, Cameron Community ministries, and Rochester Northwest Rotary Club.

The large number of candidates in each of these primaries created challenges. Working with the Deltas, we devised a new format for the City Council forum which we may use in the future when faced with such a large field. In addition to the five candidate events that we co-sponsored, we assisted ColorBrightGreen in producing its candidate event for County Legislative Districts 14 and 24.

We published the races within Monroe County on Vote411—the League of Women Voters interactive, community-specific online voter's guide—the day after the County Board of Elections posted the certified candidate list. As of this writing, 37 of the 66 candidates have posted their responses to our questions.

The League encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. If you missed seeing the forums, the Mayoral candidate forum can be found on the WROC website, rochesterfirst.com, and the City Council and RCSD forums are on our YouTube channel; there is a link on our homepage, www.lwv-rma.org. Visit Vote411.org to learn about all the candidates and encourage others to do the same.

Judy Weinstein, Government/Advocacy Chair



TOP: LWV-RMA President Judy Sternberg and SEAC President Tom Patecki who both welcomed participants; SEAC CEO Mike Evans who moderated the program.

OTHER ROWS: Candidates for Rochester City School District Board of Education Democratic Primary Election.



Participants in the May 17 debate among candidates for at large seats on Rochester City Council—

TOP ROW: LWV-RMA President Judy Sternberg and Rochester Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority President Jaqueline Tyson, both of whom welcomed participants; and moderator Katrina Owens.

OTHER ROWS: At-large Democratic Party candidates for Rochester City Council.



Participants in the News 8 WROC /LWV-RMA primary debates:

TOP: LWV-RMA President Judy Sternberg who introduced both debates; WROC Newscaster Adam Chodak who moderated both debates. MIDDLE: Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren and Democratic primary challenger, City Councilmember Malik Evans.

BOTTOM: Republican primary candidates for Wayne County Sheriff – Rob Milby, Chief Deputy, Wayne County Sheriff Department; and Stephen MacNeal, Administrative Sergeant, Macedon Police Department.

Legislative Interviews

Members of the Government/Advocacy Committee are meeting with the members of the Monroe County delegation to the NYS Legislature to discuss the post-budget legislative priorities of LWVNY and what their priorities are for next year. The issues we are discussing include Voter Enfranchisement, the New York Health Act and Government Ethics.

Judy Weinstein, Government/Advocacy Chair

Voter Services

• 10,000 door hangers!

That's how many we ordered, and we've gotten most of them onto doors in low-turnout districts in the city. Special thanks to some partners who made it happen: Zeta Phi Beta sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Girl Trek, Reenah Golden, and the fellows of the Avenue Black Box Theatre, Temple Emanu-El, the Brighton High School Key Club, as well as all the friends and members of the LWV who put on their sneakers and got out and hung them.

• High school registrations!

The LWV has three wonderful members who are high school students and they organized the chance for the League to get into their schools to register seniors to vote. Thanks to Mingna Xu, Addie Glozer, and Celeste Keyes, most of the seniors in Brighton High and Spencerport High can vote this year.

• Webinars!

We completed the series of webinars aimed at getting out voters who don't usually vote in local elections, primarily in the city, where primaries are key. Thanks to all the participants. The webinars were recorded and you can find them here: <https://www.lwv-rma.org/webinars.php>

• Registrations!

Dianne Stengel has been tireless at registering voters at the public market this spring, as well as publicizing Vote411.org. Thanks, Dianne!

Barbara Grosh barbaragrosh@gmail.com



READY TO VOTE JUNE 22?

Democratic Primary:

- Mayor of Rochester
- City Council At-Large (5 seats)
- Board of Education (9 seats)
- County Court Judges (3 seats)
- County Legislature

Visit [VOTE411.org](https://Vote411.org) to

- see who is on your ballot
- learn where they stand on issues

There are 3 ways to vote:

- Early! (see reverse for details)
- Election Day at your regular site (verify the location at monroecounty.gov/etc/voter/)
- Absentee. Request your ballot
 - call: 585-753-1509
 - email: mcboc@monroecounty.gov
 - online: absenteeballot.elections.ny.gov

Visit the League of Women Voters at LWV-RMA.org

 Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

AVOID DELAYS ON ELECTION DAY!

VOTE EARLY!

POLLING PLACES ARE OPEN: <=

June						12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9a-3p	9a-5p	11a-8p	9a-5p	11a-8p	9a-5p	9a-3p
20	IT'S SAFE, EASY & RELIABLE!					
9a-3p						

>= VOTE AT ANY LOCATION: <=

David F. Gantt Community Center 700 North St., Rochester, NY	North Greece Road Church of Christ 1030 N Greece Rd., Rochester, NY
Boys & Girls Club 500 Genesee St., Rochester, NY	Henrietta Public Library 625 Calkins Rd., Rochester, NY
Sibley Square 250 E Main St., Rochester, NY	Irondequoit Public Library 1250 Titus Ave., Rochester, NY
Edgerton Recreation Center 41 Backus St., Rochester, NY	FCC Community Room 1985 Baird Rd., Penfield, NY
Norton Village Recreation Center 350 Waring Rd., Rochester, NY	Perinton Square Mall 6780 Pinusford Palmyra Rd., Palmyra, NY
SUNY Empire State College 680 Westfall Rd., Rochester, NY	Sweden Clarkson Community Center 4927 Lake Rd., Brockport, NY
Town of Chili Senior Center 3335 Chili Ave., Rochester, NY	Webster Library 880 Ridge Rd., Webster, NY

LWV-RMA campaign to distribute door hangers for June primaries

Great Job, Team.

FROM LWVNYS CONVENTION

During Plenary on June 12, it was announced that LWV of Rochester Metro Area was one of three 2021 local League winners of \$500 awards for their Redistricting efforts.

Criteria for the Redistricting Awards included collaborating and engaging other community organizations, educating in new methods, and collecting data to evaluate the impact.

Thanks for the contributions of our Redistricting Campaign Team members Judy Sternberg, Dave Garretson, Judy Weinstein, Cathy Kane, Tom Ferrarese, Katherine Smith, Connie Flahive and Barbara Grosh. And thanks to Dave Garretson for writing the award application.

Our LWVNYS Convention delegates were Barbara Grosh, Theresa McFarland-Porter, Deborah Gordon and Georgia DeGregorio. Watch for their Convention reports and takeaways in the Aug/Sept issue of The Voter.

LWV-RMA Hosts Discussion of Rochester's PAB

On May 12, the LWV-RMA hosted a presentation on Rochester's Police Accountability Board by PAB Board Chair Shani Wilson and PAB Executive Director Conor Reynolds. Among their comments were the following:

- The PAB seeks to create a transparent, rapid, and fair system of investigation for the community and police officers.
- The PAB has been chartered with much more power than the current Civilian Review Board (CRB) to do its own investigations; once the PAB is operational, it is expected to replace the CRB.
- The PAB is not yet operational because it has very limited financial support.
- It is seeking \$5 million as part of the City budget.
- An effective PAB could potentially prevent expenses incurred dealing with lawsuits and protests.



TOP: PAB leaders Shani Wilson and Conor Reynolds.

BOTTOM: LWV-RMA President Judy Sternberg who welcomed viewers, and Barbara Grosh who moderated the discussion.

The discussion is accessible via the LWV-RMA YouTube channel at https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCjC9NCupn9AhZpH2k83m5_g

Redistricting Campaign Team

Our redistricting efforts are ramping up.

Our immediate project is working with the LWNYS and neighboring local leagues to prepare for the NY Redistricting Commission's public hearings in July. The Redistricting Commission will draw the new lines for the NYS Senate and Assembly districts as well as for the NYS members of the House of Representatives.

A series of emails is going to approximately 200 organizations and elected office holders in June. Plus, we hope to forward our message to additional stakeholders who need to know about the redistricting process. If you know of organizations that ought to know about redistricting, send their contact information to redistricting@lwv-rma.org. If they aren't already on our list, we'll add them.

Watch your own email. We'll also be sending a message to members (once we know the details of the Redistricting Commission's upcoming local hearing), which you are encouraged to share with others.

Our longer-term plan is developing a public education campaign to supplement our outreach to community groups. The critical time will be the fall, when the proposed district maps will be available for public reaction. Every voice deserves to be heard.

Also in the fall (or winter?), we will focus on local redistricting. New lines will be drawn for County Legislature, City Council, and Greece Town Board. We're hoping to facilitate public participation in those deliberations, too. If you run into an office holder from one of those bodies, please ask about redistricting... because the League is asking, but getting no answers yet. Let's put it on their radar. We are watching!

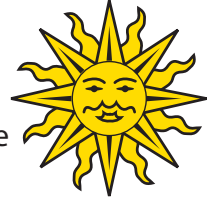
Would you like to join our effort? We're meeting every 3-4 weeks, so far by Zoom. Please contact redistricting@lwv-rma.org to be added to our notification list.

LWV-RMA Redistricting Team



Artwork by Cedric Smith. For more about this artist visit cedricsmithstudio.com.

Sunshine Corner



MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE MAY 11 2021. OBSERVED BY ELAINE SCHMIDT

During the public forum, approximately 55 emails were read that supported action on the C-Pace (Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy) Financing Program.

A public hearing was scheduled for June 8 at 6:15 P.M. regarding a resolution requiring drivers to leave a 3-foot space when passing bicyclists on the road.

The controversial "Business Closure Transparency Act", which requires the creation and publication of a "Report of Justification" detailing the County's legal reasoning and jurisdiction for the closure, was passed 20 yes – 9 no.

Late in the meeting and as a matter of urgency, the Legislature passed a resolution to "enforce" existing laws, ordinances, rules and regulations pertaining to the Civic Center parking garage at 55 South Fitzhugh Street. The term 'enforce' concerned many legislators. It was feared that citizens living in the garage would be arrested. The County Administration stated at the meeting that their intent was not to arrest the citizens living in the garage but to intensify programs to relocate them.

A public hearing was set for June 8 at 6:16 P.M. regarding the Sustainable Energy Loan Program (C-Pace). The bill would provide low-cost loans for the installation of renewable energy systems and energy efficient measures to qualified applicants.

A public hearing was set for June 8 at 6:17 P.M. regarding Gantt's Law for the Utilization of Minority and Women-owned Businesses.

Three new positions were added to the Public Defender's Office and nine new positions were added to the Conflict Defender's Office using a New York State Grant.

A resolution to authorize \$9,000,000 in Monroe County Bonds to renovate Monroe Community College City Place was defeated by a vote of 12 yes – 17 no.

The Legislature authorized \$12,900,000 in Monroe County Bonds to finance the cost of an Energy Improvement Equipment Acquisition Project. The vote was unanimous.

A contract with Trybe Ecotherapy, LLC was authorized to provide a pilot program for holistic mental health services for veterans.

In another matter of urgency, a resolution was presented and passed that provided financial support in the amount of \$136,000 total to 18 specific arts programs in Rochester that were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds came from the community contingency fund.

Full minutes of Monroe County Legislature meetings are accessible at

[Agendas & Minutes | Monroe County, NY](#)

RCSD BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING APRIL 22, 2021 OBSERVED BY CONSTANCE FLAHIVE

Reports were presented by the Student Leadership Congress (SLC), the Parent Leadership

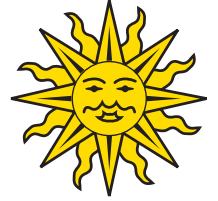
Advisory Council (PLAC) and President Van White. A written Equity and Student Achievement Committee report is available online as Vice President Elliott was absent due to illness. A large increase in parent interest and attendance at the PLAC meeting, providing hope that lines of communication are opening and parent voices will be heard, was highlighted. One goal of PLAC is to facilitate inclusion of parents' voices in RCSD decision making. SLC reported on a presentation discussing recruitment of diverse RCSD staff that included development of a program for city students in education careers. Students are advocating for teacher Professional Development (PD).

Board Committees of Finance (LeBron), Governance (Maloy), Audits (Clark) and Policy (Powell) provided reports that included summaries of recent special meetings, approval of finance reports, and dates of May meetings. Policy noted that a resolution for a vote would be presented later in the meeting. Finance indicated the discussion of the 2021-2022 Budget and the Board's vote would take place in a special meeting on May 10, 2021.

Superintendent Myers-Small's presentation began with CFO Carleen Pierce addressing the proposed Budget changes due to new funding from the NYS Legislature. The adjusted Budget request to the City Council is reduced from \$841,032,259 to \$840, 274,690. Adjustments in revenue– especially the NYS Foundation Grant

continued on page 9

Sunshine Corner continued from page 8



increase of ~\$40 million and the ability to avoid a Revenue Anticipation Note (RAN) –allowed substantial changes to the proposed budget including increases in instructional expenditures. Also noted by CFO Pierce were increases in the budgets for the Special Aid Fund and the School Food Service Fund due to increases in grant monies.

Superintendent Myers-Small stated that the proposed Budget reflects the RCSD Strategic Plan and NYSED Monitor Jallow's Academic and Financial reports to the NYS Regents. Budget highlights included a data dashboard and interventions targeting chronic absenteeism, increased PD in several areas including the hallmarks of literacy, special education engagement of parents, restorative practices, and culturally relevant curriculum. Specifically, under Academics, Dr. Myers-Small listed the following priorities: updated materials, summer extended learning, multi-tiered support systems (MTSS) PD, and strengthened evaluation to ensure program effectiveness. Dr. Myers-Small stated that the Special Education Management System would be upgraded. The district will also continue to analyze the declining enrollment and need to resize. [More detail is available in the slide presentation at the 59-minute mark of the video found on the district website.]

East High Superintendent Shaun Nelms highlighted bright spots at East and other schools in RCSD. He would like to see considerations made based on long-term data collaboratively throughout the district. Trend analysis can be used to find what programs are having positive impacts and acted on across the district.

The discussion of Resolutions between 743 to 790 (specifics will be available in the minutes published online once approved) resulted in approval. Numbers 743 – 752, related to teaching & learning, were approved unanimously. A Policy Committee request for a technical change in the by-laws was approved.

Under new business, Commissioner Maloy asked that Board meetings continue to occur remotely. (On May 4, the RCSD Attorney stated, after reviewing government guidelines, that staying remote to the end of the school year fits within guidelines and would be the best option through the end of this school year. Meetings are remaining remote.)

RCSD Board of Education Meeting for Voting to Adopt its 2021-22 Budget Proposal was held on May 10, 2021. The result of the roll call vote was six to one in favor of the proposed budget.

Meeting archives are available on the RCSD website at <https://www.rcsdk12.org/boemeetings>.

RCSD BOARD OF EDUCATION CODE OF CONDUCT FORUM:

MAY 6, 2021 OBSERVED BY CONSTANCE FLAHIVE

There were 3 speakers signed up to provide input into the proposed revisions of the 2016 Code of Conduct Policy. One letter was submitted and will be available Board of Education document page, <https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/rochny/Board.nsf/Public>.

The three speakers were all community members representing three interested agencies – the Community Task Force, assisting with the review of the policy; the Ghandi Institute, currently involved with district restorative practices (included an invitation for the Board to visit School 19 to view their current work); and The Children's Agenda, currently working on correlations between suspensions and reduction in courses taken resulting in academic successes and failures. All provided positive support for restorative practices and social & emotional support. Superintendent Myers noted the importance of training staff and students in restorative practices.

RCSD BOARD OF 2021-22 BUDGET ADOPTION VOTE:

MAY 10, 2021 OBSERVED BY CONSTANCE FLAHIVE

The special meeting consisted of three components: a brief presentation by Superintendent Leslie Myers Small; a round robin opportunity for board members to provide final comments, which mainly consisted of appreciation of the efforts of many people; and a roll call vote.

Superintendent Myers Small indicated that she is presenting a balanced budget that is educationally sound and fiscally responsible. She listed three important concepts that the budget is grounded in as 1) a shift from the focus on fiscal stability to prioritizing academics, 2) keeping the core belief that students are first forward, and 3) always making decisions with equity, transparency, and the best interests of students in mind.

In addition to the many thanks to the district team, the finance committee, the staff and the elected officials who have worked to provide additional money to the district, some of the concerns raised by the

Sunshine Corner *continued from page 9*



Commissioners are the following:

- The Charter School fund remains high, and it is important to make RCSD competitive so that Rochester children will stay in the district and attend city schools.
- Special Education and Bilingual Programs should be high quality and accessible. The Budget pays more attention to both; but the District should be proactive not reactive.
- Employee costs need to be in balance with quality of the education for all children. This point was made in different ways, both in the paying for recruitment and retention of quality and diverse teachers and administrators and in making sure that the needs of the children are prioritized for those costs. Transparency in the salary and benefits for excellent teachers and principals is important.

It was also noted before the vote that the American Cares Act funding is not included. Processes are in place through Budget Transfers but need to comply with federal rules which include required public input [<https://www.rcsdk12.org/arp>].

The result of the roll call vote was six to one in favor of the proposed budget.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD MEETINGS APRIL-JUNE, 2021 **OBSERVED BY DEBORAH RICE GORDON**

April 15

The budget proposal was released to the public and it was noted that additional community education is needed to explain PAB needs. There is a disagreement among city officials about PAB's functioning and need for the funding outlined in the budget. Mayor Warren encouraged Chairperson Wilson to conduct an executive session to revisit PAB's goals without the involvement of Executive Director Conor Reynolds. This comment was roundly rejected by the Board. Subsequent to this meeting, the requested PAB budget was approved in mid-May.

The next quarterly meeting with City Council will take place on April 20. It is expected that the question of whether or not the Board will agree to investigate complaints without having disciplinary powers will be raised. The Board's position is that they would investigate given the proper resources.

A motion to adopt the new operating rules was passed with one abstention and two absentees.

An education staff position will be offered to a candidate tomorrow. Executive Director Reynolds asked members to identify organizations that would benefit by education on the budget.

April 29

PAB announced a series of community forums on PAB functions and path forward on May 4, 11, and 16. The forums will be held via Zoom and registration links will be available on the Board's Facebook page. Community Forum #2 can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/rocpab/videos/440490890596993>.

This meeting was dedicated to an educational event: Black and Blue in Rochester - An Officer's Perspective on Policing, Race, and Creating Change in Rochester presented by Marvin Stepherson, a former Rochester Police Sergeant and currently an Adjunct Professor at Roberts Wesleyan. He produced a documentary film in 2015, Too Blue to be Black, Too Black to be Blue. The film is available on Youtube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOk-7MF8H-M>. Board members asked Mr. Stepherson questions about his experiences, perspectives and influences.

May 6

Executive Director Reynolds reviewed draft end-of-term rules since some of the Police Accountability Board Alliance-appointed members are approaching the end of their first terms. The Alliance would nominate one or more candidates and City Council could reject candidates and ask for replacements until an approval is given. All members must declare their intention to leave or be renominated at least 60 days in advance. The Board will send public notices of vacancies. Members must stay in place until their replacement is transitioned. The rules were adopted.

The first of three public educational forums went well. There was great interest in PAB review of police policies and procedures. Several other public forums are being planned.

Sunshine Corner continued from page 10



The Memorandum of Understanding on the documents, records, etc. that the PAB can obtain from City government and the Police Department is progressing. Access to these materials is integral to oversight investigations.

Candidates for two Senior staff positions are being considered for roles that have significant responsibilities: an educational/community outreach manager and an administrative leader. A difference of opinion between the PAB and city government exists concerning appropriate salaries. City government wants to offer a salary at the low end of a range based on one candidate's prior pay at a non-profit. However, salary offers based on prior pay, rather than experience, abilities, etc., hurt women of color and contribute to chronic pay inequity. The PAB will consult with their attorneys for a clarification about hiring authority defined in the Charter versus the City government's policy.

May 13

The meeting involved a presentation and discussion by three leaders from SMK Consulting, a group working with PABs across the country to develop the building blocks to create robust police accountability organizations. Among the critical needs discussed were staffing and budget requirements, clear statute of limitations for investigations, partnership with state crime labs, capacity to resolve cases via restorative justice/mediation, and ability to collaborate with other law enforcement agencies. Recommended internal structure, policies and procedures, and best practices were also highlighted as well as SMK's ability to assist with their creation. An executive session was held to discuss hiring issues. The meeting can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6luKTdYk7E>.

May 20

Executive Director Reynolds reviewed Mayor Warren's proposed PAB budget totaling \$5 million. City Council also has to approve the budget. He discussed the initial transitional work for the Board should the budget be approved, such as locating additional office space, hiring processes, developing procedures, and determining the best sequencing of work, and involving expert assistance to be successful. An Executive Session was held to discuss hiring, potential contracts and potential litigation.

June 3

Shira May, the CEO of the Center for Dispute Settlement (CDS) and Cheryl Hayward, Director of Police Community Relations (CDS) described the agency's functions and operations. The Civilian Review Board (CRB) is part of CDS. Under law, the CRB would be dissolved 60 days after PAB processes are in place. It was anticipated that PAB would be taking over relevant CRB functions in 6 months. However, employee departures occurring at CRB by the end of June will result in the loss of critical expertise and experience and effectively eliminate most operations. There is a question as to what happens to CRB volunteers.

Ms. May and Ms. Hayward offered whatever help they could to support the transition. PAB discussed the potential elements of the transition, the accelerated timeline for full functioning, possible stop-gap measures, and their desire to learn more of CRB's policies and procedures. A significant challenge is the absence of a full PAB infrastructure at this point in time. A retreat is being planned for June 24 at the regular meeting time to work on these issues.

Full minutes of Police Accountability Board meetings are accessible at

[City of Rochester | Police Accountability Board](#)

COMIDA BOARD MEETING APRIL 20, 2021 SUBMITTED BY DEBORAH RICE GORDON

New Projects

The following projects requested sales tax exemptions and/or real property and mortgage tax abatements. All requests were approved.

- Skull Diamond and Heart Capital, LLC for renovation of a 6700 sq. ft. office space in Sibley Center;
- Gascon Family Vineyards, LLC, Honeoye Falls, for building a new production facility and tasting room;
- 275 Wiregrass Parkway, LLC, for construction of 101,000 sq. ft. facility in Henrietta for Premier Packaging Corporation;
- 10 Winthrop Street, LLC, for the purchase and renovation of the former Hart Grocers location for

Sunshine Corner *continued from page 11*



- RDG+Partners, a tax and business consulting services company;
- 30 West Broad Street, LLC, for conversion of the building to reasonably priced mixed use offices and apartments, including an opportunity zone incubator;
- 39 Jet View Drive, LLC, for construction of a 52,500 sq. ft. building for Sydor Optics manufacturing;
- Forge Metal Finishing, Inc., for construction of a 5000 sq. ft. addition to their facility in Gates;
- Kodak Light Blocking New Materials, LLC, for renovation of vacant Eastman Business Park buildings in Greece for the development of proprietary light/radiation blocking materials.

Project Modifications

The following request for extension of a sales tax exemption was approved through December 2022: Clearwater Organic Farms, LLC for hydroponic growing operations at Eastman Business Park.

Other Business

The Multi-Craft Apprenticeship Preparation Program (MAPP) will be addressed at the May meeting following input from County Executive Bello.

County Executive Bello will deliver the State of the County address in May and will propose some recommendations for COMIDA reform which, for example, will bolster local labor and housing policies.

A Legal Services Request For Proposal has been issued; the deadline for responses is next week.

COMIDA BOARD MEETING MAY 18, 2021 SUBMITTED BY DEBORAH RICE GORDON

An Executive Session was held to discuss financial information from an unnamed corporation.

Amazon Services, LLC requested a blanket waiver for the local construction labor requirement. Letters of support were submitted by the Town of Gates Supervisor, Cosmo Guinta, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, Robert Duffy, and the Chief Executive Officer and managing partner of LaChase Construction, Bill Goodrich. A waiver was granted for no more than 30% of total labor costs provided local labor representatives are involved in weekly status meetings. The vote was not unanimous.

The following companies requested and were granted by unanimous vote a sales tax exemption for their projects:

- Rochester Clinical Research, Inc. for renovation of their existing building in Irondequoit;
- Skywave Communications, Inc. of Rochester for equipment purchase for use in their public safety communication work;
- SunDensity, Inc., a producer of smart photonic coatings, for creating a Phase 1 research and development facility in the Sibley Building in Rochester.

The following project modifications requesting an extension of sales tax exemptions were approved:

- AMS Sensors, Riverwood Campus site in Henrietta until December 31, 2021;
- Panorama Landing, LLC for a building site in Pittsford until June 30, 2022;
- 2016 Gateway Business Center, LLC for commercial development in Greece until Dec. 21, 2022.

Amazon.com Services LLC, increased their estimate for the total construction cost for a warehouse and distribution facility in Gates.

The Governance Committee met in April. Among the issues discussed was a review of the criteria for incentives for housing projects and how to potentially respond to the increasing number of local labor exemptions for items under warranty. Proposals will be brought to COMIDA at a future date.

Full minutes of COMIDA meetings are accessible at

[Board Meetings | Monroe County Economic Development \(monroecountybusiness.org\)](https://monroecountybusiness.org/Board-Meetings)

Book Club Update

During their last two meetings of the program year, members of the LWV-RMA book discussion group reviewed:

Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement by John Lewis, on May 20, and

Tightrope: Americans Reaching for Hope by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl Wu Dunn, on June 17.

In late summer, interested League members will gather to identify books and a meeting schedule for the 2021-2022 year. A link will be sent to everyone who expresses an interest to Judy Weinstein (vote411@lwv-rma.org), who serves as the group's Zoom techie.



CAPTION: Book club members who met via Zoom in May and/or June

Book Review:

"The Agitators," by Dorothy Wickenden

I came to *"The Agitators"* by way of its shortened version in The New Yorker magazine (January 25, 2021) titled *"Civil Wars..."Three women's fight for a just America."*

Reading the short version was a revelation, a history lesson, a surprise, and a delight!

Who knew? Frances Seward, an abolitionist? I visited the Seward House Museum in Auburn, NY twice, but I remember only photos of - and letters by and to - William H. (Henry) Seward, Frances's husband, Governor of NYS, US Senator, and US Secretary of State.

Webster's defines "agitator" as "one who stirs up public feeling on controversial issues (political)." The three agitators in Wickenden's story are Frances A. Seward, Martha Coffin Wright, and Harriet Tubman. David Blight, author of *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom*, says that the three women "learned activism from the abolition and women's rights movements."

Wickenden's story begins in the 1820s when Tubman was still a slave and Seward and Wright were young housewives and neighbors in Auburn, New York. The friendship between Seward and Wright grew out of their passion for reading and their interest in social reform.

Passage of the Fugitive Slave Act (1850) emboldened Seward and Wright. In 1848, Wright joined her sister, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others to convene the first meeting on women's rights at Seneca Falls. Seward helped her husband, Henry, prepare a major speech to the Senate in which he argued for gradual emancipation. This pleased Frances and she wrote to her son, "The public opinion against Slavery is daily growing warmer – It is impossible to see where it will all end."

The Fugitive Slave Act emboldened Harriet Tubman, too. After months of planning, she finally made her escape. Using the Underground Railroad, Harriet walked alone from Poplar Neck Plantation (in Maryland) to Philadelphia where she was greeted by Lucretia Mott.

Over the next decade or so, Harriet guided members of her family and others along the same route. The Swards and Wrights were safe houses for runaway slaves on the route of the Underground Railroad. After some time, Tubman and her parents made Auburn their home.

Tension increased in the 1860s with the possibility of war. Wickenden covers the Civil War deftly, its sounds and smells, raids, assaults, bombings, encampments, and the sick, wounded, and dying soldiers. The sons of the Swards and Wrights were soldiers in this war. And Harriet Tubman nursed Civil War soldiers.

Frances (born 1805) died in 1865 shortly after the ratification of the 13th Amendment.

Martha (born 1806) died in 1875. Harriet (born 1820) died in 1913.

Amendments were ratified during the lives of the agitators. The 13th Amendment ended slavery; the 14th Amendment guaranteed all citizens equal protection under the laws; the 15th Amendment guaranteed the right to vote, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. About the 15th Amendment, Stanton and Susan B. Anthony expressed anger and disappointment.

There is so much more in the story to speak about. I leave that to your reading.

The article is accessible at [The Pre-Civil War Fight Against White Supremacy | The New Yorker](#).

Barbara Kay



Calendar



July

- 2 First Friday (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.) Join our virtual get together via Zoom. All members are invited to this monthly social hour. Zoom link will be sent to members via e-mail.

August

- 6 First Friday (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.) Join our virtual get together via Zoom. All members are invited to this monthly social hour. Zoom link will be sent to members via e-mail.

September

- 3 First Friday (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.) Join our virtual get together via Zoom. All members are invited to this monthly social hour. Zoom link will be sent to members via e-mail.
- 28 National Voter Registration Day

LWV-RMA Board Meeting dates and times for 2021-2022 will be decided at the July LWV-RMA Board Retreat.

There are no scheduled public Naturalization Ceremonies for 2021 in Monroe County due to the pandemic.

LOOK FOR US ON FACEBOOK!



We know you'll "like" us!

www.facebook.com/lwvofrma

Be sure to check your email and our website for other events as they are scheduled!

Join First Friday Electronically

Because of the pandemic, First Friday convenes via Zoom (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.) during this past program year. Join our virtual get together via Zoom. All members are invited to this monthly social hour.

July 2
August 6
September 3

October 1
November 5
December 3



Caption: Because of the pandemic, First Friday convened via Zoom during this past program year. Join the group for informal conversations on any or all of the dates listed—for a few minutes or for the full two hours, your choice:

Board of Directors meetings are currently via Zoom. Board meetings are open to all members. See calendar for dates and times and contact Judy Sternberg for link.

Forums are open to the public. Calendar information is subject to change.

For more complete information, consult our website at www.LWV-RMA.org, call 262-3730 or e-mail us at info@lwv-rma.org



PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610
585-262-3730
www.LWV-RMA.org

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER VOTER DEADLINE IS AUGUST 15!

League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan, political organization which encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principal and in practice.

League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the League's purposes and policies.

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Rochester VOTER

A Monthly Publication of the
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Looking for info on a League committee or activity? Look no further!

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Household	\$105
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