

TheVOTER

LWV

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF ROCHESTER METRO AREA

*January 8, 2022
10:00 A.M. – Noon,
Plus 1:00 – 2:00 P.M.
Via Zoom*

Membership Meeting

*Share your input
from the comfort of home.
See page 3 to learn more.*

LWV-RMA January Membership Meeting to Focus On National and Local Priorities & Program

Your opportunity for input. Register at <https://www.lwv-rma.org>

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President's Corner

What Shall We Do Next Year? Thinking About Local Advocacy

The LWV is set up to do advocacy at every level: national, state and local. There are big, fat, book-length lists of League positions at the national and state level (they're called Impact on Issues and can be found on the national and state websites), and advocacy is coordinated from Washington or Albany on those issues.

At the local level, we had a group of positions that had been handed down for a long time and approved year after year. A couple of years ago we looked at each other sheepishly and decided it was time to quit handing them down. They were so old we didn't even know what the content truly was, the language was dated, and we never used them to support our advocacy.

We decided to overhaul them. That overhaul is under way, with committees revising our positions on Planning and Zoning and on Policing. (It's not too late to join one of these committees.) In preparing for the revision, I read our own League's Impact on Issues. I'd never even seen it before. It was last published in 1987-88 and contains a lot of our history. The League did a lot of local advocacy in the 60s, 70s and 80s. We were key players in the transition from the old county Board of Supervisors to the County Legislature we have today, made necessary because of the famous "one man, one vote" Supreme Court ruling. Some of our members played key roles in writing the county charter, another was elected to the first County Legislature and went on to become the clerk to the Legislature. When we didn't like how things were going, we joined lawsuits against the city or county by filing amicus briefs.

We've stumbled into a similar role in the present moment, via our work on redistricting. When we started, I expected us to do a webinar or two explaining how the process works. As events have unrolled, we've ended up taking a larger role, recruiting members of the public to learn about the process and helping them prepare testimony, and advocating strongly against the process the Legislature has been following. Now it appears the process is likely to be prolonged and to venture into new territory, unforeseen in the County Charter. As we continue to fight for a clean and transparent process and an outcome that will help build citizen engagement in the coming decade, I'm inspired by the members who came before us.

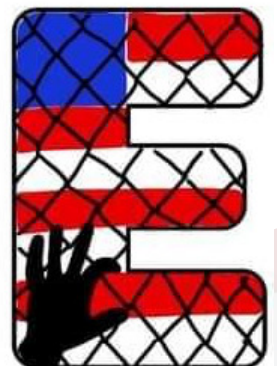
We've found some gaps in the County Charter and will probably work to get it amended after redistricting is finished. For example, while the Charter requires public hearings, it doesn't specify how the hearings should be publicized, and that's been abused this year by a Legislature averse to public input. The Charter also doesn't specify that the Legislature actually consider the feedback they gather from the public. They are allowed to vote on the proposal one minute after hearing from the public. We think these are regrettable omissions, perhaps relics of a greater faith in County Legislators than we are feeling after watching them in action.

It's an exciting time to be a member of the LWV-RMA. There's lots to do locally to make democracy work better, and we have a great heritage to work from.

In League,

Barbara Grosh, *President, League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metropolitan Area*

president@lwg-rma.org





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Membership Meeting

*January 8, 2022
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Membership Meeting on Advocacy Priorities

LWV-RMA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES AND PROGRAM PLANNING

Our local League can engage in local advocacy based on positions approved by the national or state Leagues, as well as our own. For example, our local redistricting committee has been actively pressing the County Legislature to change its redistricting practices, based on general League policies on transparency and accountability and principles of fair representation.

WHAT SHOULD WE WORK ON LOCALLY IN THE COMING YEAR?

Answering this question will be the focus of our Zoom meeting on the morning of January 8, 10AM-12PM.

- We could build on LWV-RMA's work of the past year by advocating for changes to the Monroe County Charter to ensure an improved redistricting process in the future.
- We could follow up on an issue that might be spotlighted by the Policing or Planning & Zoning Committees that are working on revising our local policy positions.
- We could choose to act locally based on any of the many state and national positions. For example, we might pick up on environmental policies and advocate locally for changes in practices to fight global warming.
- We could choose to become more active in the controversies over how local schools deal with racism. There are many possibilities. What do we want to spend our time on?

STATE AND FEDERAL PRIORITIES

Each year we're asked by LWVNY and LWVUS to review ongoing work to update League positions. This year we will review things under consideration to give our input to LWVNY. We can also suggest new items. We'll resume for a second session, 1:00-2:00 P.M., to consider the LWVUS issues.

Please use the link on our home page (<https://www.lwv-rma.org/>) to register so you can participate in this important discussion.

Fair Election Practices Campaign (FEPC)

The FEPC Hearing Committee held one hearing on a set of complaints prior to the General Election. Please go to lwv-rma.org/FEPC.php to see the Decision and copies of the complaints. We offer our thanks to the FEPC Hearing Committee members and LWV-RMA FEPC volunteers for their participation in the 2021 Election Season. The FEPC process begins again in March 2022.

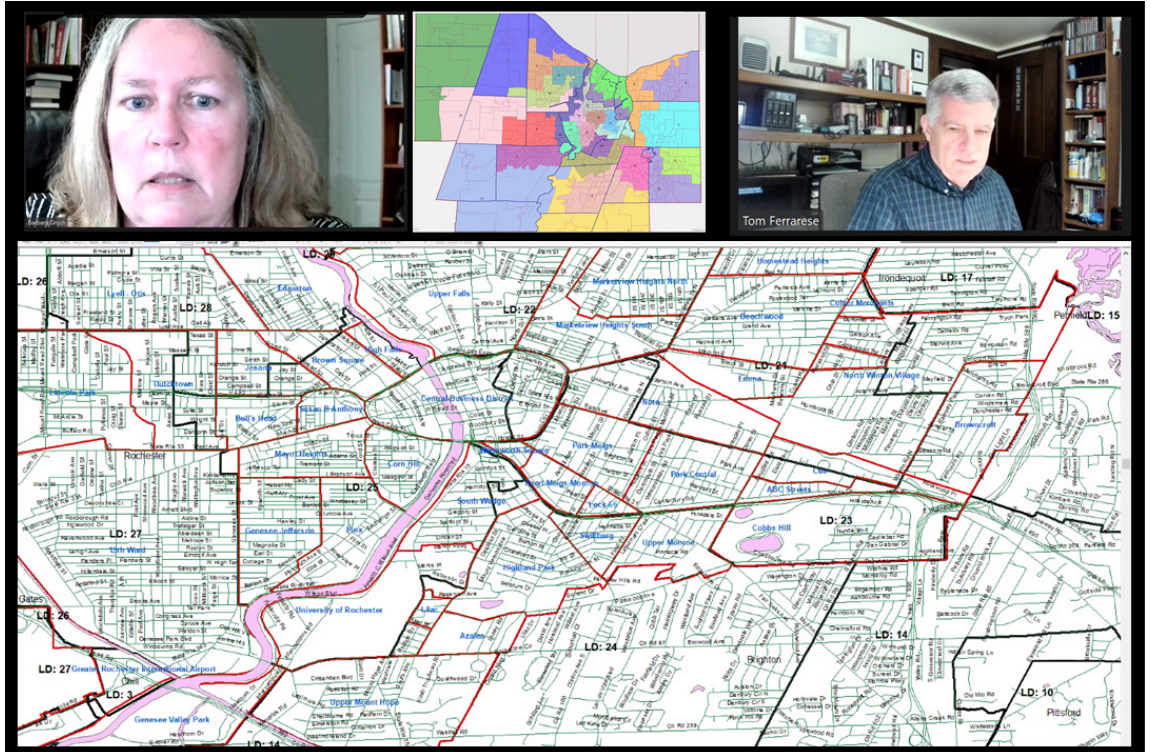
If you would like to know more about the FEPC or are interested in volunteering to assist in the FEPC project, please contact Kris Rogers at 746-6157.

The LWV-RMA Redistricting Committee held Two Webinars During One Week in November.

Urgent Forum 1:

**Redistricting
in Monroe County:
Let's Look
at the Maps.**

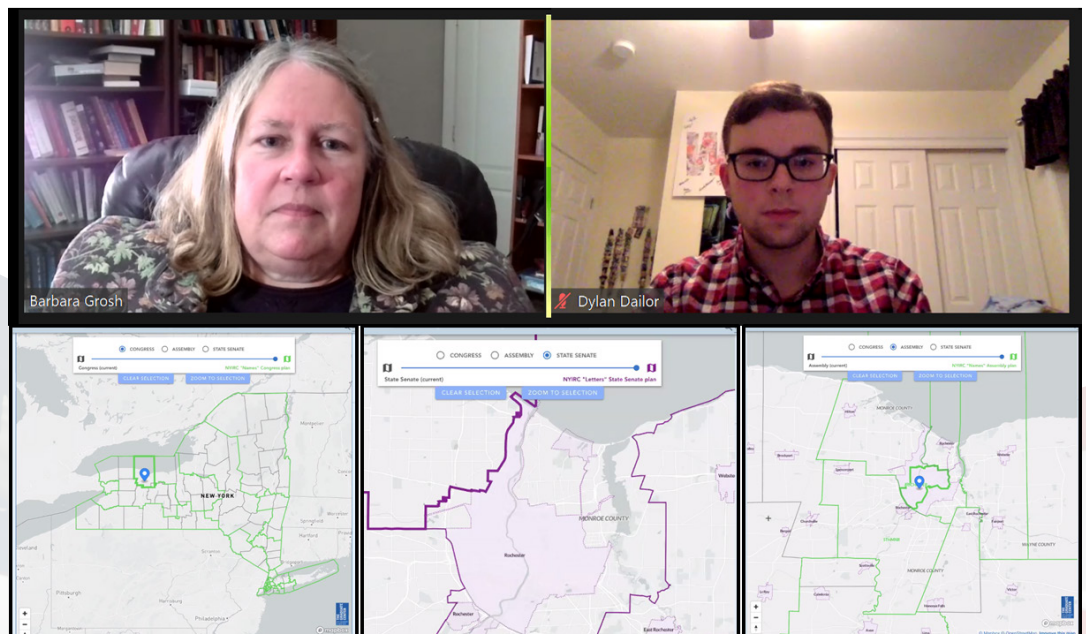
On November 8, the topic was "Redistricting in Monroe County: Let's Look at the Maps." Member (and former Elections Commissioner) Tom Ferrarese led a discussion of the current legislative district maps and the process being used by the Monroe County Legislative District Revision Commission (LDRC) to develop new legislative districts based on the 2020 Census. You can view the webinar at <https://youtu.be/9Ccw2kmGpQ4>.



Urgent Forum 2:

**Redistricting
in NY:
Let's Look
at the Proposed Maps.**

On November 11, the topic was "Redistricting in NY: Let's Look at the Proposed Maps." LWV-RMA President Barbara Grosh and member Dylan Dailor, redistricting consultant, reviewed the two sets of proposed maps for election districts covering Congress, the NYS Senate and the NYS Assembly that were published by the NY Independent Redistricting Commission. Both maps change the shape of the districts that represent the Rochester area. You can view the webinar at <https://youtu.be/9ooYS8eFCKk>.



Redistricting Team Update

Redistricting is now underway for seats in Albany, Washington, and the Monroe County Legislature.

In October, members of the League's redistricting team testified at the New York Independent Redistricting Commission's Rochester hearing. We found the bi-partisan panel to be attentive and eager to engage. Afterwards, most of them interacted freely with attendees in the lobby. The IRC concluded their hearings in early December. They plan to release their proposed maps on December 22, and vote on the final versions on January 3. Then the maps (NY Senate, NY Assembly, and US House) will go to the NYS Legislature for consideration.

FOCUS ON MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE REDISTRICTING

The Monroe County Legislative District Revision Commission held hearings in early October and dozens of people submitted comments, including requests for specific changes to the current boundaries. The Commission never discussed the public feedback and the proposed maps did not respond to many of the requests. The new maps continue to unnecessarily fracture communities of interest, chopping up villages and neighborhood associations. After six weeks of inactivity, the County Legislative District Revision Commission met on November 29 to approve their maps. According to testimony from their attorney, the maps were drawn and revised just hours earlier. Minority members of the five-person panel objected to the lack of transparency and deliberation in the process. At the time of the meeting, members had not yet received all of the relevant materials they sought. However, in a party line vote, the Commission decided to submit the maps to the County Legislature on the following day.

Public comment on November 29 was limited to emails read aloud by the clerk. About two dozen comments, including several from the League's redistricting team, were read. Comments fell into two categories: those critical of the lack of transparency and those saying the new lines did not correct the problems with the current lines. At the County Legislature meeting on November 30, the Commission's submission was accepted, and tabled. No public comment was allowed.

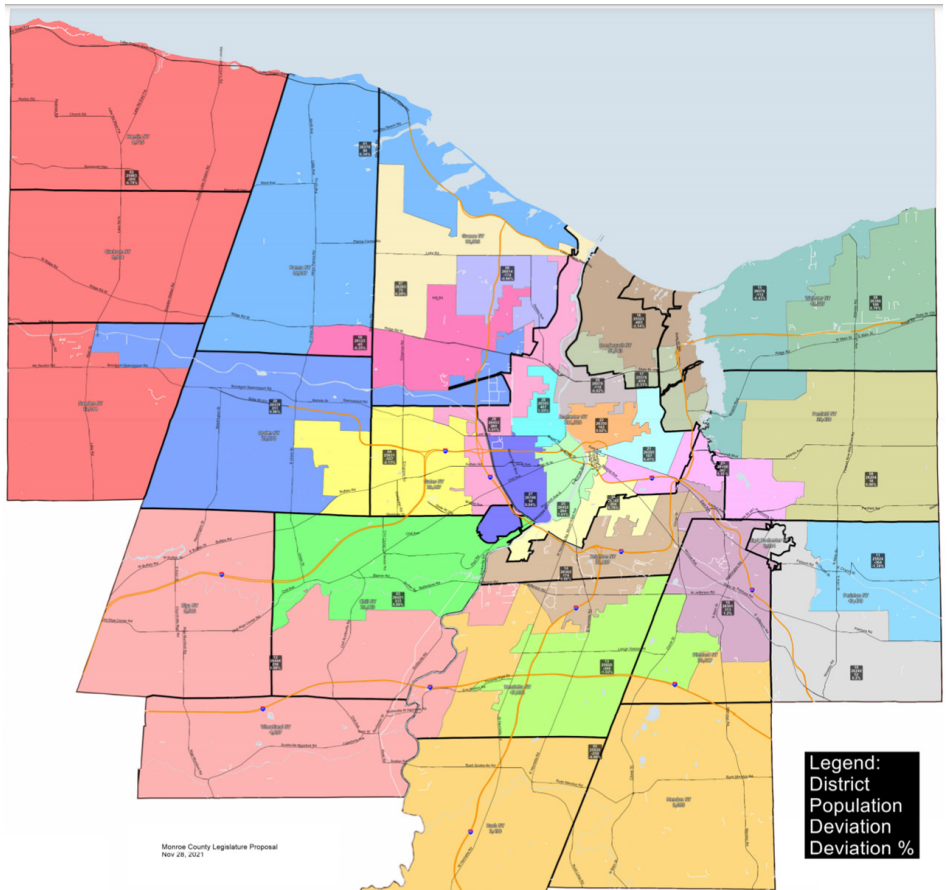
A public hearing on the Commission's proposal was held on December 9, but public comment was again largely limited to emailed submissions. Thanks to your team's efforts, about sixty-five citizens urged the County Legislature to delay the vote and allow for better public participation. There was discussion by lawmakers and an amendment of revised maps was introduced and discussed. The Legislature approved the amendment and by NYS law, the maps were tabled and will be voted on at a meeting on December 16 (which seems to have been changed to December 17, according to our sources).

It is not clear if the maps will be challenged -- by County Executive veto, lawsuit, or public referendum -- however, a challenge seems likely.

Your redistricting team will do our best to keep you informed. For the latest in county redistricting, check our site https://www.lwv-rma.org/redistricting_county.php.

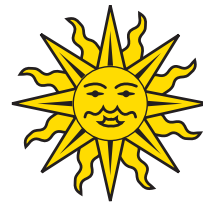
Still to come in 2022 is redistricting for Rochester City Council and Greece Town Board. We're watching them for you.

Dave Garretson davegarretson363@gmail.com



Sunshine Corner

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE



NOVEMBER 9, 2021 OBSERVED BY ELAINE SCHMIDT

The Legislature met online. The public forum was unusually short and included information about the COVID-19 mandates in Monroe County.

Overriding County Executive Adam Bello's veto, the legislature reconsidered and repassed the local law requiring metal scrap dealers to provide records of their purchase of used catalytic converters, 20 yes, 9 no, along party lines. The stated purpose of the law was to deter theft of catalytic converters; however, there is a question whether the law will be effective since the catalytic converters can be taken to scrap dealers in any nearby county which does not have to provide records.

The Legislature voted to encumber funds to private nonprofit organizations until it is verified that there are no past taxes due to Monroe County. The vote was 29 to 0.

The Legislature authorized the Legislative District Revision Commission to hire professional legal services for the purpose of ensuring compliance with federal, state and local laws. Legislator Barouth, who is a member of the Commission, pointed out that the Commission has not met since October 15 and that the Commission itself had not authorized or even discussed the hiring of professional services. The vote was 20 yes to 9 no, along party lines. The amount authorized for professional services was \$50,000.

Similarly, the legislature authorized the Special Ethics Committee to hire professional services to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws. The vote again was along party lines: 20 yes, 9 no.

MONROE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

NOVEMBER 23, 2021 OBSERVED BY ELAINE SCHMIDT

At a special meeting of the Monroe County Legislature, there were two proposals on the agenda. The Legislature voted to retain Fusco Law Office to work on the reapportionment maps for Monroe County for not more than \$20,000. After discussion, led primarily by Legislator Josh Barouth, the question was called and the Legislature approved the proposal along party lines.

The second proposal was withdrawn. No other proposals were presented.

RCSD BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING (VIRTUAL)

OCTOBER 28 OBSERVED BY CONSTANCE FLAHEVE (ONLINE)

Note: Because this meeting was virtual, relevant documents were not available to the public during the meeting. Two themes were evident throughout the meeting, commented on by the public, brought up in reports, and discussed during the Boards' deliberation on the various resolutions before them. 1) Transparency, including the need to have documents available in a timely matter which is moving from a RCSD Board policy to a mandate by Governor Hochul: A new law that takes effect on November 18 requires documents and proposed resolutions to be made 'available to the public on request or posted on the government entity's website at least 24 hours in advance of the start of the meeting.' <https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/in-the-news/anna-m-kaplan/hochulsigns-law-require-publicizing-meeting-documents-beforehand>. Transparency and timeliness were part of discussions regarding parent/community input, advocacy of student rights, selection of Board anti-racist training (professional development that is part of the NYS Monitor's Corrective Plan), and the process of hiring for top administrative positions in the district. 2) Keeping district schools and students safe from the increasing violence in the City of Rochester: The agenda included a resolution (247) to enter an agreement with the Rochester Police Dept to be present—off campus but visible—at 11 secondary schools during arrival and departure times. Superintendent Myers-Small addressed the plan in her report stating that the district did have social, emotional and mental health supports available although there are shortages, and the district is engaged in recruitment. Speakers had opposed the return to School Resource Officers and requested more mental health and restorative practice

Sunshine Corner *continued from page 6*



specialists instead. Concerns raised during the meeting involved the social emotional impact on the students versus their safety from potential gun violence. The District maintained that the proposal was a short term contract and was necessary as the Rochester Police Department is also experiencing shortages and cannot guarantee coverage without overtime payment.

Resolution 247 was tabled until the Board could have additional input from a broader sample of parents. It was requested that the Superintendent provide data from parents on the question: Do you want police presence outside school buildings? The resolution will be discussed again in the Equity in Student Achievement Committee of the Whole meeting on November 9. Additional information related to the safe and secure issue was posted on November 3 in a letter from Superintendent Myers-Small on the RCSD website. <https://www.rcsdk12.org/HealthandSafetyplan>. Other resolutions, which were not provided within the Board's policy of 48 hours, as well as Resolution 252 regarding the Anti-Racist Training for the Board, were approved.

EQUITY IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

NOVEMBER 9 MEETING

OBSERVED BY CONSTANCE FLAHIVE (ONLINE)

The discussion and vote on Resolution 247, to allow police presence near 11 RCSD secondary schools for one month with the purpose of reducing potential violence in the current climate, took place. The District stated that it will continue to support mental health initiatives including restorative practices inside the school. The District will re-evaluate the effectiveness of the police presence at the end of the one month period.

Results of the poll on desirability of police presence near the schools were shared. The survey had been sent via robo-call and email to families and staff in the district. The results were overwhelmingly positive for the police presence, with 1906 voting yes and 230 no. The English Language respondents represented 8.7% of the district families and Spanish Language respondents represented 10.5% of families. Staff results were recorded as 2219 yes and 191 no. The Board voted to approve 5 to 1.

Superintendent Myers-Small also presented her School Reconfiguration Recommendations (her presentation and PowerPoint are available at the 2 hour, 38 minute point of the meeting video [Special Meeting: ESA Committee of the Whole | November 9, 2021 - YouTube]).

The State Monitor plans have indicated that reconfiguration is needed. The model recommended is to move to a PreK-5, 6-8 and 9-12 configuration by 2022-23 so that school access points are better aligned. District Guiding Principles for the decisions to be made regarding school reconfiguration are:

- access to equitable academic programming,
- enrollment and choice,
- accountability status (status of a school with the state), and
- building capacity, use & condition.

The recommendation to be explored over the next three months with the Board and the public involves eight elementary schools, three middle schools and two high schools with schools moving or combining, and some closing with students given programs of choice.

More details regarding the October meeting can be accessed at BoardDocs® Plus.

**VOTE AND THE
CHOICE IS
YOURS.**

**DON'T VOTE
AND THE CHOICE
IS THEIRS.**

Book Club Update

The LWV-RMA Book Club meets at 4:30 P.M., usually on the third Thursday of the month.

Books for February through June will be determined at the December 16 session which will begin at 4:15 P.M. for that purpose before discussing *However Long the Night* by Aimee Molloy led by Judy Wadsworth.

On January 20, Barbara Grosh will lead a discussion of *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee.

All League members are invited to help identify the remaining books for the program year or to participate in any or all of these book club discussions. If you wish to recommend a book or join the discussion of a book, send an email to Judy Weinstein (vote411@lwv-rma.org), who serves as the group's Zoom techie.



Composite showing participants in October and November book club discussions.

Remembering Marilyn Hare

LWV-RMA Member Marilyn Meanger Hare died on October 30, 2021. Her life blended strong family ties and friendships with community service. Marilyn grew up in Illinois and graduated from the University of Illinois where she studied political science. Marilyn and her husband Richard (Dick) moved to Rochester because of Dick's career in newspaper marketing.

From her earliest years in Rochester, Marilyn was a volunteer. Among the groups that benefitted from her involvement were the League of Women Voters; the Mental Health Association, for which she served as a member of the Board and President, and was later honored as Person of the Year; the Rochester Housing Council; Geva Theatre Center Board of Directors; and Mount Hope Family Services Board of Directors.

Marilyn's professional career also focused on community service. She became one of the first women elected to the Monroe County Legislature in 1973, followed by two years as Clerk of the Legislature. Shortly thereafter, she accepted a position as Senior Health Planner with the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency, one of the nation's oldest and most effective regional health planning organizations. For 10 years until her retirement, Marilyn advocated for needed health and mental health services.

Her family has suggested that contributions may be considered for Foodlink, www.foodlinkny.org and/or League of Women Voters, Rochester Metropolitan Area, <https://www.lwv-rma.org/donate.php>.



Dear LWV-RMA Member,

2021 brought us the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. After assessing changing safety recommendations, the League of Women Voters of the Rochester Metro Area carefully transitioned to some in-person events as the year progressed. Whether in-person or through Zoom, we have successfully continued our mission of encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy.

It is time for the annual membership dues renewal for all members who joined prior to February 2021. (Life and Student members are exempt from renewals.) The due date for membership renewals is December 31, 2021.

2021 activities included voter registration and GOTV (Get Out The Vote), organizing candidate debates, and holding public forums covering topics such as police accountability, redistricting, and 2021 ballot proposals.

It is your support and participation as a member that makes these and many more activities possible. Complete information about renewals can be found by going to our website: <https://www.lwv-rma.org/join.php>. Options and information are available for both secure online payment, or payment by regular mail. Payment by regular mail can be sent to:

League of Women Voters / Rochester Metropolitan Area
PO Box 10573
Rochester, NY 14610

If you have any questions, please email them to membership@lwv-rma.org.

Membership levels:

- Individual Membership, \$75.00
- Household Membership, \$105.00
- Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass Membership, \$150.00
- Carrie Chapman Catt Membership, \$200.00
- Student Memberships are FREE!
- Limited Income? Do not let this be a deterrent to membership!

Please email for more information to: membership@lwv-rma.org.

Thank you for your support!

Sarah B. Sandler

membership@lwv-rma.org



Calendar

December

- 15 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 – 7:30 P.M.)
- 16 LWV-RMA Book Club (4:15– 5:30 P.M. via Zoom)
– *However Long the Night* by Aimee Molloy
- 31 Due date for LWV-RMA membership renewal

January

- 7 First Friday (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.) Watch your email for notification of whether this will be in person or via Zoom
- 8 MEMBERSHIP MEETING (10:00 – Noon via Zoom)
- 19 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 – 7:30 P.M.)
- 20 LWV-RMA Book Club (4:30 – 5:30 P.M. via Zoom)
– *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee

February

- 4 First Friday (11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.) Watch your email for notification of whether this will be in person or via Zoom
- 16 LWV-RMA Board Meeting (6:00 – 7:30 P.M.)
- 17 LWV-RMA Book Club (4:30 – 5:30 P.M. via Zoom)
– Book to be determined on December 16

There are still no scheduled public Naturalization Ceremonies 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!

Join other LWV-RMA members for informal conversations on any or all of the dates listed—for a few minutes or for the full two hours, your choice:

January 7	April 1
February 4	May 6
March 4	June 3

**Democracy is not a
spectator sport.
Tag! You're It!**



First Friday in person on November 5 and via Zoom on December 3

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

FEBRUARY VOTER DEADLINE IS JANUARY 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.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Rochester VOTER

*A Monthly Publication of the
League of Women Voters/Rochester Metropolitan Area*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Barbara Grosh (2021-2023)
Vice President	Myra Pelz (2021-2023)
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Director	Theresa McFarland-Porter (2021-2023)
Director	Tiffany Moore-Corteville (2021-2023)
Director	Sarah Sandler (2020-2022)
Director	Judy Sternberg (2021-2023)

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Looking for info on a League committee or activity? Look no further!

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Editor,
Judy Wadsworth

Layout/Design,
Chris Burleigh*

Join the League Today!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Check Amount: _____

Level of Membership: _____

Please send this form and your check payable to
League of Women Voters/RMA to:

LWV-RMA

PO Box 10573

Rochester, NY 14610

or join us online at: www.lwv-rma.org/join.php

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

Individual/Associate	\$75
Household	\$105
Susan B. Anthony/Frederick Douglass	\$150
Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200
Student (full or part time at an accredited institution)	FREE
Low income, call office at 262-3730	Sliding Scale
or send an email to: info@lwv-rma.org	