

PLANNING FOR YOUR ANNUAL MEETING

Members attending your League's annual meeting set the League's direction for the coming year by electing officers, adopting a budget, selecting program and possibly amending the bylaws. Listed below are suggested steps to take prior to the meeting to assure that procedures recommended in *League* and in your bylaws are followed. The time for holding an annual meeting varies; check your bylaws.

TIMETABLE

At Least Four Months Prior to Annual Meeting:

- A date for the annual meeting should be set.
- Budget, bylaws, local program and nominating committees should begin work. Be sure they have their materials and understand the deadlines for reporting to the board and membership. (Note that the president is an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee.)

Three Months Prior to Annual Meeting:

- The bulletin and membership meetings should be used to discuss how local program is chosen and to solicit suggestions for study items.
- The nominating committee should request suggestions through the bulletin. List positions to be filled.
- Bylaw suggestions should be solicited using the bulletin.

Two Months Before Annual Meeting:

- Board should consider recommendations for local program sent in by voting members and formulate proposed program.
- Board should discuss tentative budget and agree on the budget to propose to membership.
- Board should appoint an auditor to audit treasurer's books, a parliamentarian for the annual meeting and board members responsible for presenting the recommended program.
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- Board should discuss proposed bylaw changes. Recommendations should be sent to your state League regional director.

At Least One Month Before Annual Meeting:

Membership must be notified (usually through bulletin) of the following:

- Proposed program - Members must be notified of program recommended by the board. Though not specified in bylaws, it is in the spirit of League procedure to notify members of any subjects proposed which the board does not recommend (non-recommended items). See *LWVUS In League*. Check your bylaws to see what vote is needed for consideration of a non-recommended item, as well as the vote required for adoption. Remember that only program issues submitted by the bylaws deadline may be considered at the annual meeting.
- Proposed budget.
- Report of nominating committee.
- Proposed bylaw changes, if any. Prepare copies of these materials for distribution to members attending the annual meeting. Inform board members and committee chairs about their responsibilities at the annual meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING GUIDE

The following is a script to follow for your annual meeting. Remember to check your own bylaws to be certain of the vote percentage needed for approval of each item. Please copy the script, cut it up, and distribute it to the various directors who will have a role in the annual meeting, along with an explanation of what they are to do.

LOCAL LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING GUIDE

"Will the _____ annual meeting of the League of Women Voters of _____ please come to order? In accordance with our bylaws, there is a quorum present to conduct the business of the meeting." (Check privately beforehand with your secretary to be sure that a quorum is present. Otherwise, the business meeting cannot go on.)

"The official recorder or secretary of this meeting is _____. Our parliamentarian is _____."

"It is customary that minutes of the annual meeting to be approved by a special committee as soon as possible following the annual meeting. Last year's annual meeting minutes were so approved. With your approval, the chair appoints _____, and _____ to read and correct the minutes of this _____ annual meeting." (If your League has not used this system previously, then the minutes must be read aloud by the secretary or be written out in some way so that they are available to all members. The chair then follows the standard procedure of "are there any additions or corrections to the minutes, etc?" A motion is then needed to approve the minutes or the corrected minutes. Majority vote needed for approval.

OR

Announce that the minutes of the last Annual Meeting were approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting in _____, and ask permission to refer to the minutes of this Annual Meeting to the Board of Directors for approval.)

Treasurer's Report "We will hear the treasurer's report. (Call on treasurer who explains her report and answers any questions pertaining to it.) Are there any other questions? If not, the treasurer's report shall be accepted and placed on file."

(If your League has completed its fiscal year, an auditor's report is given at this time. The Secretary reads the auditor's report and then moves the adoption of the report. "Madame President, I move the adoption of the auditor's report." Majority vote needed. If your League has not completed its fiscal year, you will need to report the auditor's report at another business meeting or let the members know in some other way.)

Budget - (The budget is usually the next order of business.)

"Will you please refer to the proposed budget for the coming year. (Members have received it as they entered or have found it at their seats.) _____, budget chair, will present the budget as proposed by the budget committee and as recommended by the board." (The budget chair explains the budget and moves the adoption of the budget as presented. Requires a second. Under discussion of that motion, the budget may be read item by item and opportunity is given for amendments. Vote on each amendment as proposed in a motion.) "We will now vote on the budget as presented (or amended)." (Majority vote required.)

Bylaws - "Will you please refer to the proposed bylaws changes." (Members should have a copy in front of them and should have received them in writing one month prior to the annual meeting.) "_____, chair of the bylaws committee will present the proposed bylaws changes." (The chair reads them and moves the adoption of the proposed amendments.) "If there any discussion?" (The president then goes over each change separately asking for amendments.) "We will now vote on the motion to adopt the bylaws changes as proposed (or amended)." (Requires a two-thirds vote.) (When bylaws are amended, the local board should make sure that copies of the amended bylaws are made available to the members and the board and that they bear the notation "as adopted on ___(mo.), ___(day), ___(yr.), and amended ___(mo.), ___(day), ___(yr.)." - listing all the times they have been amended.)

Special Reports - (Some Leagues include special reports such as a president's report, committee reports, report of convention, etc. You may want to include these here. However, it may be included at another point, such as just before or after the nominations.)

Program - "We will first consider the local program as recommended to you by your board and sent to you in the last issue of the bulletin. Adoption of the recommended program will require a majority vote. Not recommended items, also listed in the last issue of the bulletin, may be introduced for adoption, but must first be moved for consideration. (Not recommended items must have been brought to the program planning meeting and listed in the bulletin as not recommended. Items directly from the floor are not allowed, as members have not been previously notified.) If you wish to consider a not recommended item, you must do so in the form of a motion. This motion needs a second, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote. If a not recommended item is voted consideration, a three-fifths (check your bylaws) vote is necessary for its adoption. We will have the presentation and discussion of all items, both recommended and not recommended, before we vote on adoption so that you may hear all of the discussion before voting."

"_____, board member, will present the first recommended item." (The board member will move the adoption of the item, given the exact wording. The motion requires a second. She will then explain the item after the second. If your board is recommending more than one item, the same procedure is gone through with each item.)

"If there are any not recommended items, this is the time to present them." (Any member wishing to present a not recommended item may do so by moving consideration of the item, giving the exact wording. Motion requires a second. She may present a very brief statement of reasons for presenting it. No discussion at this time. The chair calls for the vote. Majority vote is required for consideration. If the not recommended item is voted consideration, the person who proposed it then moves the adoption, Second required. It is a good idea to write all not recommended items on a blackboard or have them printed in advance, so that everyone can see the wording.)

"We will now have a discussion and debate on all recommended and not recommended items at this time. We will discuss them in the order in which they were presented." (Allow time for discussion for each item and get direction from the membership as to the scope of each item. Board members should be prepared to tell why the not recommended item was not recommended. The chair calls for the vote on the items after all discussion is completed. She reads the wording of each item before the vote and after the vote declares whether the item was adopted or not. At the conclusion of the voting, the chair announces the final program as adopted, or members may vote on all items at the same time by means of a written, secret ballot. Remember a recommended item requires majority vote, a not recommended item requires a three-fifths vote. Check your bylaws).

(Occasionally, a member who desires a one or two item agenda may move that the local program be limited to one or two items. This motion is out of order and the chair should explain that all items -recommended and not recommended- are legally before the meeting and that each must be voted on. She may further explain that members who are interested in limiting the program achieve this result by voting for only the numbers of items they would like to have on the program. A motion to reconsider may be used by a member if she feels that the adopted program is too large. In this case she must have voted on the prevailing side; the person who seconds the motion does not. The motion to reconsider requires a majority vote. If reconsideration is voted, the original motion is then before the meeting as though no previous vote had been taken. This same process to reconsider may be used by a member whose item has been defeated.)

"You have adopted the following as your local program for the coming year: _____

Nominations "_____, chair of the Nominating Committee, will read the report of the committee." (Call on chair who reads the slate. No action is taken on the report.)

"The Chair declares that nominations are now in order from the floor provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained. The Nominating Committee has nominated _____ for _____." (Have each nominee stand as

you call the office and name. After you have run through all the offices and asked for nominations for each, again ask for any further nominations.) If there are no further nominations, the chair declares the nominations are closed."

"The chair entertains a motion that the nominating ballot become the elective ballot." (Must be moved and seconded from the floor; majority vote required.) The chair instructs the secretary to cast a numerous ballot. The chair declares the following are elected: _____, _____, _____, etc."

OR

(Read the name of the nominee for each office in turn and ask for a voice vote after each name. Declare each person elected as the vote is taken.)

OR

(If there are nominations from the floor: (1) appoint tellers and ask them to distribute ballots (blank paper); (2) repeat names of nominees for each office; (3) tellers collect ballots and make count; (4) Ask teller to announce the result of the vote; (5) declare names of those elected to each office.)

(Thank-you and acknowledgments.)

(At this point, you may turn the meeting over to the new president who may wish to greet the members and make some brief announcements.)

Direction from the Floor - (Use this time to draw out members' opinions and feelings about how the League operates as well as on development of program and services.)

Announcements

Adjournment - "Is there any further business to come before this meeting? If not, we are adjourned." OR "The chair entertains a motion that the meeting be adjourned." (Motion is made from the floor, requires a second, and a majority vote.)

Important Tip - Do not assume that all directors are aware or informed about their responsibilities at the annual meeting. A phone call to each individual board member participating or a "dress rehearsal" at the previous board meeting insures smoothness and continuity and is strongly recommended.

Be sure that someone is prepared to make all necessary motions and to serve as minutes committee, etc.

RESOURCES

- *League Basics (In League)* (LWVUS) *League Basics (In League)* (LWVUS): An essential tool for League leaders. <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm>
- *Simplified Parliamentary Procedures* (LWVUS): Useful for local League annual meeting, and by other groups. <http://store.lwv.org/detail.aspx?ID=10>
- *In League in New York State* (LWVNYS): Contains job descriptions and policies for local League boards. See especially the section on local League use of tax-deductible funds. <http://www.lwvny.org/LLresources.html>
- *Successful Annual Meetings* <http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm>