



Commentator

NOVEMBER 2015

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates for public office but does encourage its members as individuals to participate actively in the political process. The League acts on those issues the membership chooses for study and action. The LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region covers the Ulster County area and the Dutchess County area. We belong to the LWV of New York State and the LWV of the US.

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WE WELCOME THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT ALL EVENTS!

2015

Check our online [calendar](http://lwvmidhudson.org/calendar.html) (<http://lwvmidhudson.org/calendar.html>) for updates.

November

3	6:00 AM - 9:00 PM	Election Day
10	5:30 PM	Materials Management, Gateway Diner, 379 U.S. 9W Highland, NY 12528
12	4:00 PM	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Rd, Hurley, NY 12443.
17	1:45 PM	Book Club Meeting Club at Enzo's Pizzeria, Boices Lane, Lake Katrine
21	9:45 AM-11:45 AM	Information meeting on "Raising the Age for Criminal Responsibility", Kingston Library

December

3	7:00AM - 7:00AP	League Day at the United Nations
5	TBA	Concurrence Meeting, LWV members only. Place TBA

Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves--and the only way they could do this is by not voting.

attrib. Franklin D. Roosevelt

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Prez Sez

Prez Sez

Yeah!!! It's voting season. Candidate signs are everywhere. But how do we find out what the candidates stand for? Simple. We ask them questions on Vote 411. The following are the questions for the Ulster County Legislature Candidates. The questions are modified for Town Supervisors and Dutchess County candidates, but you get the drift.

- 1)Priorities: What will be your top three priorities if elected?
- 2)Health and Human Services: What will you do to improve outcomes for our youth, persons with disabilities, veterans and senior citizens? How will you address the increase in overdose deaths?
- 3)Criminal Justice: How will you improve equity in all aspects of the criminal justice system; domestic violence, arrests, bail, length of time until sentencing and incarceration?
- 4)Rail Corridors: What is your vision for the future of the rail corridors in and around Kingston including the section that goes to Phoenicia?
- 5)Waste Management: What ideas do you have for improving municipal waste disposal in Ulster County?
- 6)Economic Development: What are your goals for the Ulster County workforce?

Thanks to the efforts of Anne Needham, Daisy Tyler and Vic Melville we have advertisements on Kingston City busses until election day. English on the rear of the bus, English and Spanish on the inside.



And.....your League members are everywhere moderating debates for City Mayors, Town Supervisors, and Ulster County Executive. The League is in demand. We are a hot commodity.

Jolanda Jansen

*Monthly Board meeting minutes and more can be found at:
<http://lwvmidhudson.org/Committees.html>*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Salad Supper Fall Gathering

LWV Mid Hudson Region enjoyed a Fall Gathering Salad Supper at the Town of Esopus Library in Port Ewen October 20th. Here NYS League President Dare Thompson introduces local farmer Dan Guenther and Professor of Sociology at SUNY New Paltz Brian Obach, author of "Organic Struggle: the Movement for Sustainable Agriculture in the United States."



Photo by Kathy OConnor

VOTER SERVICE

Moderating Guidelines

Guidelines for moderating and sponsorship of candidates' events by the League are on our website at <http://lwvmidhudson.org/Moderating.html> or from the [Home](#) page and the [Elections](#) page.

Vote 411

The Vote 411 Project is well underway. Over 130 candidates have been invited to submit answers to our questions, and responses are already coming in – and should arrive in even greater numbers as we follow up with candidates over the coming days.

The County Executive races provide good examples of the sort of information we are gathering. Asked about her top priorities if elected, Terry Bernardo, running in Ulster County, answered:

“The biggest problems facing Ulster County are lack of economic development, drug use, and hostile county government. I will work to solve these problems by focusing on economic development, partnering with law enforcement and running a county government that focuses on serving county residents.”

Diane Jablonski, running in Dutchess, answered the same question by listing her own top priorities:

“Bringing economic development that provides both job opportunities and a living wage as well as a long-term career path for workers”; “a review of our overall Criminal Justice system”; and “a review of services and priorities as established by the current administration.”

Be sure to visit the Vote 411 website

http://www.vote411.org/state_guide?state_id=New%20York#.Vi-nqNKrTmE

for more information and to look up your local candidates!

Kristen Faughnan

What Voter Service has done and What We're Doing

It's been a very busy past three months . We distributed 5,000 voter guides, distributed voter registration information at the Ulster County naturalization ceremony, held a first-ever voter registration seminar for our members, and participated in National Voter Registration Day by registering students at four local colleges. But wait, there is much more. This election season we moderated nine Meet the Candidates forums. At one of these forums, we served as the official sponsor. We were able to do all of this because we had so many members saying "yes" whenever there was a call for volunteers. Take a bow everyone. Well done!

Jean McGarry

And if MY praise isn't enough to bust your buttons, check out the email I received from National on October 26th:

Hi Jean,

I've been reviewing the League's overall impact on National Voter Registration Day 2015, and noticed that the Mid-Hudson Region League was incredibly successful. Congratulations on registering so many voters!

Just wanted to say, great work. We appreciate you!

Maggie Bush

Senior Elections Manager

League of Women Voters of the U.S.

STUDY AND ADVOCACY

Book Club

On Tuesday, September 29th several stalwart souls met to discuss books for the next session. THE POLITICS OF VOTER SUPPRESSION: DEFENDING AND EXPANDING AMERICAN'S RIGHT TO VOTE by Tova Andrea Wang was chosen for the November 17th meeting. It will be held at Enzo's at 1:45. The author discusses the more subtle challenges, such as "caging" {eliminating voters from the rolls on the basis of letters returned from their mailing addresses}, an uneven distribution of voting machines and poll workers. She includes suggestions for improving voter turnout. Please join us for a lively & interesting discussion.

WHY NATIONS FAIL by Daron Acemoglu & James Robinson explores one of the most perplexing problems in social sciences. It talks about income inequality which is perhaps one of the biggest problems in today's world. It is an illuminating book for ordinary people....not just economic majors. Date TBA

For a change of pace (even though Daisy Tyler thought we were going over to the dark side) the group choose THE END OF YOUR LIFE BOOK CLUB by Will Schwalbe. Books have the power to bring people together. A mother & son will discuss an eclectic range of books. Please join us to take this journey. Date TBA

Jacki Moriarty (845 331-3418) JACKIM@HVC.RR.COM

Materials Management Committee

"MANAGING STUFF"

Our Committee is all about REDUCING the amount of "STUFF" that needs to be transported to a landfill (or discarded by other methods). We are concerned about conserving our natural resources, REDUCING the amount of energy needed to make more "STUFF," and avoiding the use of any "STUFF" that is harmful to the planet and to our bodies.

We encourage REUSE AND REPURPOSING materials that may have outlived their original purpose. Many transfer stations collect specific items for possible reuse, and have "free" areas for immediate reuse.

And we do hope you know about the "Repair Care" program here in the Hudson Valley, that

rotates among municipalities, manned by dedicated volunteers who use their talents to breathe new life into a non-working small appliance, sharpen rusty knives, help mend a torn piece of clothing, etc. These Repair Cafes aim to turn apparently useless items into useful ones.

Our Committee is keenly in favor of COMPOSTING activities. You probably know that food waste and organic materials account for approximately 35% of what we send to our landfills. This is material, that through proper processing, can be turned into soil. Our League member Sarah Womer has developed a company called "Zero to Go" dedicated to dramatically upping the game of composting. She's got a pilot program in Beacon that picks up food waste from thirty residences and four businesses, and she's got her eye on expanding her pick-up services over the next several months. Sarah also has her team work with special events throughout the Hudson Valley, planning and executing truly "zero waste" events. These events result in mostly compostable output, some recyclables, and a very minimal amount of trash.

We are also so proud that the Ulster County Legislature has passed a resolution banning the use of STYROFOAM in foodservice establishments throughout Ulster County. Our Committee would like to see such a resolution introduced and implemented in Dutchess County. We are pleased to announce that the moving force behind this legislation in Ulster, Tracey Bartels has agreed to speak with our Committee at our January meeting.

And I'd like to mention that a member of our Committee (Kathie Beinkafner) sits on the Ulster County Legislature's appointed Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission. This Commission, having studied the matter for about a year, is soon to make its recommendation to the Legislature.

So, the final "R" (after Reducing and Reusing) would be "RECYCLING." We are pleased that we do have facilities nearby that can extract reusable materials from those slated as possible trash. If you ever have time, a tour of the Re-Community Center in Beacon, or the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency here in Kingston, would give you insight into how such processing takes place.

In closing, I'd like to note that November 15th is National Recycling Day. Robert Redford is quoted on one of the posters for this day as saying —

"What we are living with is the result of human choices,
and it can be changed by making better, wiser choices."

I encourage each and every one of you to consider how your actions impact our planet
and how YOU can more effectively REDUCE, REUSE and RECYCLE.

Our Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month at the Gateway Diner on Rt 9W in Highland, at 5:30 p.m. We would love to see many, many of you at our meetings.

It is so enriching to meet with like-minded people, dedicated to preserving our natural resources.

Kathy OConnor, Chair

ULSTER COUNTY OBSERVER CORP

Audio recordings, addenda and minutes of Legislative Committee meetings can be found at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/legislature/committeesinfo/index.html>

Become A Member Of Our Observer Corps

Get to know your local government in a personal way! Strengthen local democracy by adding “sunlight” to the legislative process and publishing what you observe in our Commentator! You may observe your town or city board meetings you prefer. *We will guide you, so you do not need to be an expert to get started.* Call Margaret Sellers at 339-3180 with your questions.

**Economic
Development,
Tourism, Housing,
Planning & Transit
Committee**

Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning & Transit Committee

October 6, 2015, 6:03 – 6:58 PM

Committee Members: Thomas J. Briggs, Chairman, James F. Maloney, Deputy Chairman (absent), Chris Allen, Lynn Archer, Tracey Bartels, Herbert Litts, III, Mary Beth Maio

Meeting called to order by Chairman Thomas Briggs, and approval of September 1, 2015 meeting minutes, as amended.

Guest Presentations:

Suzanne Holt, Director of the Office of Economic Development discussed the status and activities for each of the provisions of the Ellenville Million. She also discussed the marketing project being conducted by Peter Fairweather, consultant.

Raleigh Green of Raleigh Green Inc. discussed the Tech Entrepreneur Campaign. The Ulster County Economic Development Alliance recently completed its Get the Tech initiative called ‘Do Business Differently in Ulster County’. The campaign targeted New York City technology entrepreneurs and invited them to relocate, expand or start up businesses in Ulster County. Stay tuned.

Broadband is to be discussed at the committee’s November meeting.

Resolutions for October 20, 2015 Session:

Resolution No. 369 – Appointing member to the Ulster County Planning Board – Village of New Paltz: Approved.

Resolution No. 376 and Resolution No. 377 pertaining to contracts – Department of Planning: Approved.

Resolution No. 374, Resolution No. 375, and Resolution No. 378 pertaining to contracts – Department of Information Services: Postponed due to lack of information and attendance of the department.

New Business: Related to the postponed resolutions, a new process is to be considered for resolution sponsors regarding required information and attendance.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer, 10-23-15

**Energy and
Environment
Committee****October 8, 2015, 7:02 PM – 7:24PM**Committee Members: **Peter Loughran, Chairman, Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr., Deputy Chairman (absent), Richard A. Parete (absent), Hector Rodriguez, Mary Wawro**

Peter Loughran, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Minutes of the September 3, 2015 meeting were approved.

Guest Presentations:**Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency Report:**

Tim Rose, Executive Director, reported on the preliminary budget that is to the subject of public hearing on Wed. October 14, 2015. There is slight change of the preliminary budget discussed at the committee's September 3, 2015 meeting. The UCRRA Board is expected to approve a final budget at their October 28, 2015 meeting. Thirty new recycling boxes with closed tops are to be ordered.

Resolutions for October 20, 2015:

Resolution No. 325 pertaining to setting a public hearing on a proposed local law regarding prohibiting the sale of products containing microbeads in Ulster County, to be held Tues. November 10, 2015 at 7:05 PM: Approved, following a discussion concerning the need of an Ulster County law vs. the need of a state law for uniform enforcement.

Old Business:

Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission – Brief Update by Legislator Hector Rodriguez: The report is due in March of 2016 to address short, medium and long term items. For examples, improving food waste recycling sooner than establishing a landfill or alternative long range solutions. Visits to other county sites and discussions with those in the industry are continuing.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer, 10-23-15

**Laws and Rules,
Governmental
Services Committee****October 19, 2015, 6:30 PM – 8:02 PM**Committee Members: **Richard A. Parete, Chairman, Kevin A. Roberts, Deputy Chairman, David B, Donaldson, Kenneth J. Ronk, Manna Jo Greene**

Other Legislators: John Parete, Legislature Chairman, Hector Rodriguez

Meeting called to order by Richard Parete, Chairman

Minutes from September 14, 2015 meeting approved.

Resolution No. 325 – Pertaining to setting a public hearing regarding the sale of personal care products containing microbeads in Ulster County to be held Tues. Nov. 10, 2015 at 7:05 PM: NYS legislative activity was discussed and a state level action is desired.

Legislator Peter Loughran has invited a representative of the industry to attend the public hearing. Approved, as amended, to change the penalties to \$500 (1st), \$2,500 (2nd), and \$5,000 (3rd and beyond).

Resolution No. 357 – Pertaining to setting a public hearing (2nd) regarding a proposed local law regulating pet sellers: Several pet breeders and sellers attended to offer comments and concerns about the intent and content of the proposed law. Several legislators shared those concerns and they had a heated discussion about the legislative process and content of the proposed law. The resolution was voted for no action.

Resolution No. 362 – Pertaining to adopting a proposed local law Known as the "False Alarm Reduction Act": Approved.

**UC Legislative
Public Health and
Social Services**

Resolution No. 363 – Pertaining to adopting a proposed local law allowing use of county-owned and leased building space by veterans and disabled member of Ulster County: Approved.

Resolution No. 364 – Pertaining to setting a public hearing on a proposed local law, amending the Ulster County Charter, regarding the Audit Committee to modify the appointment process and to clarify the authority of the Audit Committee: Postponed for more consideration.

Resolution No. 386 – Pertaining to setting a public hearing on a proposed local law, amending the Ulster County Charter, regarding the Charter Revision Commission, to modify the appointment process: Postponed for more consideration.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer, 10-23-15

The Committee was convened by Legislative Chairman Chris Lopez at 6:34 on October 5, 2015 and adjourned at 7:18. The next meeting will be November 2, 2015.

Present: Lopez, Belfiglio, Allen, Litts

Absent: Provenzano

Others: Nettie Tomshaw, Secretary to the committee, Erica Guerin, Legislative Counsel

Following the call to order the minutes of the August 31, 2015 meeting were approved.

There were six resolutions: Resolution #361 was taken up first. This resolution dealt with establishing a policy for Ulster County to provide methadone treatment services seven days per week (presently done only six). John Parete, Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature, spoke in support of this measure.

Legislator Belfiglio also spoke in support. This process would alleviate dispensing double doses on weekends. Previously when the methadone clinic followed this procedure there was an apparent occasion when the double dose got into the hands of a minor who later died.

This resolution establishes a policy, but committee chairman Lopez questioned whether the policy should be established before the UC Department of Health evaluates expanding the methadone program. The explanation was that given the problem of the narcotic situation locally, it is important to commence this procedure now. Legislator Belfiglio noted that the section of the resolution dealing with the second resolve (noted above re the UCDOH) to evaluate possible actions that will expand the current methadone maintenance program and/or reduce the number of patients on the methadone treatment list was important as the state was presently responsible for limiting the number of available slots. Resolution #361 Passed.

At this point upon being recognized, Legislator Belfiglio stated that he had a complaint with regard to the county executive's office not having a representative present at the committee meetings (DCE Crannell has been previously). He requested that a request be made to the county executive's office that a representative from that office be present at the committee's meetings. He further stated that he had questions that needed answers and he had been unsuccessful in obtaining such even though he had called that office several times during the previous week. Apparently, per Secretary Tomshaw, such a request for other committee, i.e. Public Works had been done and a representative from the county executive's office began attending.

Resolution #359: Proclaiming October, 2015 as Dyslexia Awareness Month in Ulster County. Evelyn White, representing the Dyslexia Group spoke to the committee on this matter.

Initially, she indicated that 20% of the population in general is dyslexia. She then read from a prepared report providing an extensive amount of statistical information with regard to the numbers and percentages of the general population effected by Dyslexia, how it impacts individuals as to managing reading, school, emotional problems, work ad general living as well as the point that those determined to be Dyslexic are not receiving the appropriate type of

treatment. Ms. White stated she wanted the above to be used to support the Dyslexia group's request not only for 2015 but all the years to come; as well as the committee spear heading the effort for NYS adopting a bill such as Connecticut has put forth to address the problems that those with Dyslexia face.

Legislator Litts stated the resolution is to be brought before the county legislature on October 20. Presently he is the sponsor of the resolution. At this point Legislator Belfiglio volunteered to be a co-sponsor. The committee will be co-sponsor for the resolution with Legislator Litts.

Legislator Belfiglio suggested that the Dyslexia group be present on October 20 at the monthly county legislature meeting.

The resolution was passed.

Resolutions #370, #371 and #372 dealt with amending the 2015 UC Budget to accept increased funding from #370 NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Services for residential services-Department of Mental Health). Passed

#371 NYS Office of Mental Health and Services for a 2% increase in annual salary and salary fringe benefit costs for specific title series pursuant to part of Chapter 60 of the Laws of 2014 (Department of Mental Health). Passed

#372 NYS Office of Mental Health for supported housing. Passed

Resolution #373 dealt with approving a contract in excess of \$50,000 pursuant to the Administrative Code, the UC Legislature shall have the power to approve this contract with Rondout Legal Services to provide legal service of papers (serve petitions, subpoenas, etc.) on behalf of the UCDSS. Passed

The Golden Hill Health Care Center, Family Council Members did not attend.

There being no further business for the committee to handle, the meeting was adjourned.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

UC Association of Town Supervisors and Mayors

The October 20, 2015 meeting was convened by President, T/Rochester Supervisor Carl Chipman at 8:38 and adjourned at 10:11. The next meeting will be November 17, 2015.

Present: Marbletown, Plattekill, Rochester, Wawarsing, Shawangunk, Hurley, Hardenburgh, Denning, Rosendale, Ulster, Gardiner

Guests: Jen Metzger, councilwoman T/Rosendale, representative of Central Hudson

Following the call to order Supervisor noted that the contract mentioned at the September meeting had subsequently been passed by the county legislature.

Supervisor Chipman then introduced the next topic dealing with LED street lighting. Jen Metzger, councilwoman, T/Rosendale and a representative of Central Hudson led off the discussion.

Ms. Metzger indicated that a grant had been applied for to acquire funds to cover the costs of the changes/upgrades to LED lighting Whether this grant will be received will be learned in a couple of months.

She noted that a town can do this and cover its costs with a private contractor or involve Central Hudson and pay it. She noted that the City of Kingston and the T/Ulster have already applied for money and are moving ahead with the work.

The representative of Central Hudson stated that the Public Service Commission had granted permission recently for it to replace existing street lights with LED lights. It expects to receive the materials involved in December and commence work in 2016. If the towns move ahead with Central Hudson, the latter plans to have an overall agreement so that there would not need to be a need to contact each town for permission each time it changes a light. The charge is \$117 per

light. This involves both the bulb and the arm in which the bulb is placed. The existing fixture and bulb must be replaced as the existing fixture does not accept an LED light.

Over a 5 year period (the plan length) it is expected there would be savings to the town(s). Once the program begins Central Hudson must change 15% of the lights per year per town.

The towns must decide whether to have Central Hudson perform the work or it themselves by contracting with a company that performs this type of work.

Further, the suggestion was made that a decision would need to be made whether the work be done all at once or over a period of time.

It was also noted that the towns need to

- make an inventory of lights they have that would need to be included to be changed;
- if the work is performed by Central Hudson or if the town contracted it out to a private company: which would be less expensive.

The next topic to be discussed was Broadband coverage. Apparently there are a number of areas in Ulster County which do not have such coverage. As a consequence those areas and anyone residing in them or driving through them do not have access to TV or cell phone usage.

It was noted that the attempts to arrange contracts with Time-Warner to correct the situation are not done easily or at all, i.e., take years to do, have not been successful, find Time-Warner difficult to work with.

While Ulster County apparently has been working on this, it was felt that it should be more aggressive. Mr. Chipman asked that the group approve a resolution:

- allowing him to write a letter to the county regarding the group's thinking and encouraging it to do more;
 - allowing him to write a letter to the Public Service Commission as well reviewing the problem being encountered in dealing with Time-Warner and the cell companies and the need to address such in a timely matter for health and safety of the people in Ulster County.
- This was passed.

Budgets were the next subject for the group to address. Each of the towns observed what the individual towns were presenting for their 2016 budgets. Most appeared to be under the state cap. During comments made it appeared that health care costs continue to be higher than some of the costs some towns must pay for items like paving materials or black top. One suggestion that was made involved employing part-timers, paying what is viewed as the comping minimum wage: \$15 per hour, which would save costs and provide more coverage, as more part-timers would be hired, for the work that needs to be done.

Health insurance costs appeared to continue to be the biggest costs.

The minutes for the September meeting were not brought up for approval, nor was there a treasurer's report.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

