



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 17, 2020

Telephone Conference

CALL TO ORDER

This board meeting, which was scheduled to be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites in Alexandria, Virginia on April 17 as part of the AAUW of Virginia State Conference, was held instead as a telephone conference call. The board decided to cancel the State Conference due to the increasing concern about the coronavirus. The Governor's Declaration of a State of Emergency urged that non-profits curtail large meetings. The telephone meeting was called to order on Friday, April 17, 2020, at 1:02 PM by Co-President Leslie Tourigny. Recording Secretary Deborah Dodd took roll of all participants on the call. A list of board members and others in attendance will be distributed via email. **(Enclosure 1)**

CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT

The Co-Presidents' Report was distributed to the board via email. **(Enclosure 2)** Mary Anne Graham and Caroline Pickens volunteered for the reading committee for the minutes from this meeting.

Leslie announced that the board now has a debit card with Sun Trust Bank. She and Vice President for Finance Marsha Melkonian secured the card for ease of transactions associated with the State Conference. Although the conference was canceled, the card will be useful for board activities in the future.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The minutes of the January 9, 2020, board conference call meeting were distributed electronically by Deborah. **(Enclosure 3)** Leslie said that in the Nominating Committee Update section "Vice President for Programs" should read "Vice President for Program." The minutes were approved with this correction.

The minutes of the emergency board conference call on March 12, 2020, were distributed electronically **(Enclosure 4)** with the list of board members and others in attendance. **(Enclosure 5)** Hearing no corrections or objections, the minutes were approved as distributed.

One of our Public Policy Priorities addressed the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Because the ERA had been ratified by Virginia in January, an email request was sent on January 28 to board members to vote for a needed change to one item in the Public Policy Priorities. Board members were asked to vote electronically to approve the substitution for "Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)" with the following: "Support additional actions, as required, so that the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) becomes the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution." Votes from all board

members were received via email and the change was unanimously approved.
(Enclosure 6)

BRANCH LIAISON REPORTS

Leslie sent a summary of the liaison reports, showing their color-coded ratings, to the board via email. **(Enclosure 7)** All individual liaison reports were sent to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 8)**

One of the questions posed to the branch contacts was whether their branch had a membership brochure. Many branches do have brochures or other means of advertising their branch. Board members shared the types of brochures that they learned about in their calls. Some branches have trifold brochures or rack cards. The rack cards are put in areas such as libraries or stores for the public. Some branch contacts indicated that they thought their branches had membership brochures, but they were not familiar with them. Caroline Pickens said that all brochures should focus on the mission of AAUW as well as including information about their branch. Sandy Lawrence suggested that several kinds of templates for membership brochures be developed and put on the AAUW of VA website for use by all branches. Caroline mentioned that if the expense of printing brochures is a reason that some branches do not have them, the State AAUW might consider helping with the cost. Any samples of member brochures should be sent to Cheryl Spohnholtz, Vice President for Membership. She will design a template that could be used by all branches.

Leslie questioned whether the green/yellow/red rating system is a useful way to measure the areas of strengths and weaknesses of the branches. Most board members agreed that the system is a good way to help focus on the branches who need help or ones that have had a dramatic move in any direction. Gradations of colors might be another way to gauge when a branch has made a small change. There were some suggestions for how to improve the usefulness of the reports by including a summary paragraph highlighting where the branch needs assistance and how the board might provide that assistance. There was agreement that some criteria for rating the branch would be an aid when speaking with branch contacts. Cheryl agreed to design a template to use in this way.

Most of the liaison reports reflected the impact that the coronavirus has had on the branches ability to communicate with branch members and carry out branch activities. There was a suggestion that the branches be encouraged to stay in contact with their members during this time to check on them and remind them that AAUW is concerned about them.

Membership retention is still a problem area. Cyndi Shanahan suggested that perhaps a conference call with branch representatives might be useful as it has been with the Diversity and Inclusion group that she organized.

The membership of the Bedford County Branch decided to withdraw from AAUW effective July 1, 2020. They were unhappy with what they felt was a lack of support from

National AAUW. Despite being asked frequently for donations from National, they felt that they were not getting anything in return. Specifically, they thought that it was not right that they paid dues and made donations, but things like membership brochures were no longer forthcoming from National. They were troubled because they felt that AAUW was becoming too political. They also wanted to be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt group. They could not do that without a great deal of paperwork and would have to file their own taxes.

The State Board needs to be aware of and supportive of the rural branches in the state. Virginia is not homogeneous. Different areas of the state may want to consider the public policy priorities and choose those which they would like to focus on.

Questions about mini-grants were posed to the branch contacts. Co-Vice President for Public Policy Sylvia Rogers reported that most branches believe it is an important program. There was some feeling that the application process is too long and difficult to complete. Cheryl has agreed to work with Sylvia, Susan, and the 2020-2022 Co-Vice President Denise Murden to streamline the application. Another problem that one branch mentioned was that they felt that it was risky and expensive to plan a project and then not receive the grant for which they had applied. Tammie suggested that a budget for the project should be part of the application or reimbursement process.

MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

A question was asked about branches that have been funded by mini-grants for 2019-2020 but had to cancel their activity because of the pandemic. If the activity has been completed and the money spent, then the branch should show their receipts and the money allotted by the mini-grant program should cover it. If the money has not been spent but the branch intends to only postpone the activity, then the money would be available when they are able to proceed. **Tammie Mullins-Rice moved that we carryover funds for Mini-Grants FY2020 to FY2021 as needed due to projects being postponed due to COVID-19.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

There was discussion about whether there was a need to address the possibility that a branch had already expended money in preparation for an activity that was then postponed or canceled. It was determined that no action was necessary at that time.

The Mini-Grant Program will be continued in 2020-2021. **Sylvia moved that the board approve \$1500 in the budget for the 2020-2021 Mini-Grant Program.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

VOTING and ELECTIONS PROCESS

Sandy Lawrence distributed the report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 9)** She received the spreadsheet from National with names of all the authorized voters. She will customize the ballot for the election. Leslie said that a reminder will be sent out to members the week before the election reminding them to vote.

BOARD REPORTS

FINANCE

Vice President for Finance Marsha Melkonian distributed the finance report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 10)** The actual income from dues in the budget last year was considerably less than anticipated even though we achieved 99% membership renewal. This is because we overestimated the income to be received because we did not consider the student memberships, honorary lifetime memberships, and dual branch members which accounted for lower dues. We will need to factor this into our calculations for the next budget so we present a more accurate figure for membership income. Because the spring board meeting was canceled, the money budgeted for that will be saved. Leslie explained the discrepancy in the accounting for the last Summer Leadership Meeting. Although the registration fee charged covered all the costs associated with attendees, we failed to consider in the budget that board members do not pay for registration. That detail should be considered in the budgeting for future Summer Leadership Meetings. Tammie suggested that that we might want to have a separate budget for future SLMs just like we have for state conferences. NCCWSL has been canceled for 2020 so the donation was not sent. Carol suggested that the money should be donated to AAUW Greatest Needs Fund out of our budget. **Cheryl Spohnholtz moved that the \$2000 in the FY19 budget for NCCWSL be donated to AAUW Greatest Needs Fund.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Marsha will send out an email with board members' categories in the 2019-2020 budget so that we can compare that with what was used and predict what will be needed in the 2020-2021 budget. The deadline for return of the information will be included in the email.

MEMBERSHIP

Vice President for Membership Cheryl Spohnholtz sent the Membership Report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 11)** Membership seems to be doing well. Retention of members who joined last year is the main problem. As reported, twelve of the branches have maintained or exceeded the membership they had last year. The branches that met this goal will be presented with a \$25 award. Cheryl suggested that the awards for the branches be in the form of Office Depot gift cards. Two women are interested in

starting a new branch in Clark County or western Loudoun County. Mary Ann has been in contact with them, offering to meet with them to give them more information.

COMMUNICATIONS

Vice President for Communications Patsy Quick sent the Communications Report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 12)** She participated in the April 10 AAUW webinar that launched their new website. She sent out emails to branch presidents, branch communications members, and the VA State Board with information about the new streamlined website. She suggested that everyone look at it and become familiar with it.

Patsy offered to help Cheryl design the membership brochure template.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Cyndi Shanahan, Diversity and Inclusion Chair, distributed the Diversity and Inclusion Report via email. **(Enclosure 13)** The group of Diversity and Inclusion points of contact that Cyndi established has been successful. The phone conferences have worked well.

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

District Reports were distributed electronically by each of the District Representatives:

Northern District **(Enclosure 14)** Kate MacLeod said that they ran the election by email vote for the Northern District representatives for 2020-2022. The Northern District reps will be Sara Anderson and Sandy Lawrence.

Northwest District **(Enclosure 15)** Mary Froehlich said that they are happy to welcome the Greater Richmond Branch to the Northwest District. Mary and Marsha Gochenour will not be returning next year. They have two suggested candidates. Sylvia Rogers from Harrisonburg and Carol Stephens from Greater Richmond have volunteered. The district will take a vote to make that official. They have a tentative program scheduled for the fall.

Southeast District **(Enclosure 16)** Tammie Mullins-Rice said that Barbara Woodlee would not be returning as co-representative. They sent out a request to the branches for a district representative for 2020-2022. Tammie was unanimously chosen to continue in the position so no voting will be necessary. A fall meeting has been scheduled. Tammie found a resource who might be able to consult with us on membership retention and growing leadership. He could perhaps be a speaker at a meeting.

Southwest District **(Enclosure 17)** DebraLee Hovey will not continue as representative in 2020-2022. She sent out a request for a new representative but has not found any volunteers. A fall meeting has already been planned.

PUBLIC POLICY

Co-Vice President for Public Policy Sylvia Rogers sent the Public Policy Report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 18)** Susan was on a recent call with AAUW and public policy representatives from around the country. The focus now is on getting out the vote

and making voting more accessible. Governor Northam signed legislation that will make voting more accessible in Virginia.

- Election day will be a holiday
- No requirement of a photo ID to vote
- Early in-person voting
- No excuse absentee voting, effective July 1, 2020
- Same day registration, effective October 2022

An absentee ballot will need to be witnessed, an issue that could be a complication for those living alone. That requirement will be challenged. Currently it is important to make our communities aware of the new voting laws and to make them aware that our constitutional rights are not affected by a crisis like this pandemic. AAUW National will be supportive of branch activities to Get Out The Vote (GOTV). Sandy added that there is \$191 in the GOTV fund from National that was used in past elections. There will be information on voting in the next *Vision*.

There was little accomplished in the last session of the Virginia legislature on closing the gender pay gap. This will be an important issue in the next session.

A change was needed in the wording of a Public Policy Priority to be presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting. **Sylvia moved that bullet #1 in Section 3 of the 2020-2022 Public Policy Priorities be amended to read "Support Title IX," not "Defend Title IX." She explained that AAUW of Virginia does not have the legal ability to "defend," so "support" is more accurate.** The motion was adopted.

BYLAWS AND RESOLUTIONS

Bylaws and Resolutions Chair Suzanne Rothwell sent the Bylaws and Resolutions Report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 19)** She had nothing to add.

AAUW FUNDS

AAUW Funds Chair Caroline Pickens sent the AAUW Funds Report to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 20)** Virginia is #4 in the country in contributions to AAUW with an increase in funds from 2018 to 2019. Contributions from 16 branches increased this year. That is an increase by 64% of the branches. In the coming year, there is a concern that contributions from Virginia branches to AAUW will be considerably less because of the cancellation of branch fundraisers due to COVID-19. Caroline is seeking ideas for alternative ways to raise funds. She will share those ideas with branches in the summer *Vision*.

Caroline learned of a possible way to use the money contributed to AAUW by the State to have Names Honored. This would honor one or more members in the state (excluding current state board members) who have done something extraordinary for the state. This will be considered at the summer board meeting.

HISTORIAN

Historian Neola Waller sent the Historian Report via email. **(Enclosure 21)** She still has 10 copies of the AAUW history book. She suggested that they be given to speakers at Virginia State events.

2020-2021 STATE CONFERENCE

The State Conference has been rescheduled for March 12-14, 2021, at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites in Alexandria, Virginia.

PROGRAM

Vice President for Program Sandy Lawrence sent the Program Report via email. **(Enclosure 22)** The question of how to honor Shannon Wolfe, who helped with the facilitation of our Annual Meeting which will be held on Zoom, was posed. It was decided that it would be appropriate for Leslie and Carol to write a letter of appreciation. Shannon will also be recognized at the Annual Meeting.

2020 SUMMER LEADERS MEETING

Leslie reported that our 2020 Summer Leadership Meeting is currently scheduled for July 25, 2020, at Sweet Briar College. Plans are tentative for now. A virtual meeting using Zoom is a possibility. Marsha will investigate the possibility of securing a Zoom account for the board.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING 2020

Leslie gave special recognition and thanks to Mary Anne Graham and Bianca Daugherty for their work in compiling the program book.

SUMMER VISION ARTICLES

All submissions for the summer 2020 issue of the *Vision* are due by **May 15, 2020**. The list of articles was sent to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 23)**

REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

Carol reviewed the action items. She will send them to the board electronically. **(Enclosure 24)**

FINAL REMARKS

Carol extended thanks to all those leaving the board: Mary Froehlich, Marsha Gochenour, Kate MacLeod, DebraLee Hovey, and especially to Neola Waller, who has been on the AAUW of VA State Board in various positions since 1991.

Carol is also leaving the position of co-president. She said goodbye to the board and was thanked by the board.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 PM by Leslie.

Deborah Dodd
Recording Secretary
AAUW of Virginia

