

Newsletter

LWVN Supports the \$12 Million Override to be Voted on May 20

The League of Women Voters of Newton ("LWVN") has reviewed Newton's finances, the City's operating budget, its capital budgeting process, cash reserves, the 2007 Blue Ribbon Commission report and the Comprehensive Plan. Our research and discussion with experts have confirmed that Newton's budget is in deficit due to rising costs such as health insurance, energy, deferred building maintenance, debt service and a growing school population. We agree with the Blue Ribbon Commission that Newton is subject to a permanent "structural deficit", defined simply as an excess of current expenditures over current revenues. The expected rate of growth in revenues available to Newton in future years is inadequate to fund an expected higher rate of growth in expenditures for the current level of municipal services.

Passing the override on May 20 will allow the City to continue providing services at current levels for another year. However it is not sufficient to address the larger long term problem of the "structural deficit". Newton is primarily a residential community, and approximately 80% of its revenues derive from property taxes. This means that most of the City's revenue is limited by Proposition 2 ½. It also means that Newton's budget deficit cannot be solved in the short term without seeking voter approval for an operating override to balance the budget. Without funds from an override, we will see significant and harmful cuts to needed city services.

Some have suggested that the City's budget deficit can be funded by using the City's cash reserves, in particular, reserves from the Capital Stabilization

Fund. But the LWVN does not support such an approach and feels it is unwise and does not meet best financial management practices. We support the City's financial management practice of reserving such funds for future debt service needs. We learned that the City's other cash reserves are either legally restricted and not for general purposes or they have been designated by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen for specific uses. Such designations make them unavailable for general use in funding the budget gap and require both the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen to agree on any reclassification. We do recognize that it is critical that the City pursue other ways to increase revenues including transit oriented and sustainable development aligned with Newton's Comprehensive Plan, but understand

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LWVUS Adopts Immigration Position

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no

backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status

The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local

governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;

Continued on page five

LWVN Officers and Directors 2007-2008

OFFICERS

President	Sue Rosenbaum	617-332-0306
Vice President	Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
Vice President	Sharyn Roberts	617-969-9588
Vice President	Terry Yoffie	617-965-1796
Clerk	Sue Flicop	617-232-2310
Treasurer	Andrea Kozinetz	617-964-6490

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Bonnie Carter	Voter Education	617- 969-0686
Deb Crossley	Local Action	617- 244-7597
George Foord	Municipal Finance	617-332-1654
Andrea Kelley	Observer Corps	617- 964-4609
Priscilla Leith	Local Action	617-969-6837
Robin Maltz	Membership	617-969-1554
Lisa Mirabile	Webmaster	617- 332-5374
Sharyn Roberts	Voters Service	617- 969-9588
Sharon Stout	Fundraising	781-856-0004

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Jody Klein	617-244-4767
Carol Ann Shea	617-571-2942
Barbara Sydney	617-332-2160
Terry Yoffie	617-965-1796

OFF BOARD SPECIALISTS

Asst. Treasurer	Pat Acton	617-965-5572
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Human Rights	Holly Gunner	617-964-0767
Legislative Roundtable	Lucia Dolan	617-332-1893
Membership	Elaine Reisman Co-chair	617-244-6439
Recycling	Barbara Herson	617-964-7463

NEWSLETTER

Editor Ann Grantham 617-964-0333
To receive an **audio version** of this Newsletter call Sue Rosenbaum at 617-332-0306.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014.

PO Box 610207
Newton, MA 02461
617-964-0014
<http://www.lwvnewton.org>

Thank You to All of Our Members

I can honestly say that it has been an honor and a pleasure being President of the Newton chapter of the League of Women Voters for the past two years. Our recent Champagne and Chocolate event was one of the highlights for me. In addition to the wonderful gathering of long time members, new members, and future members, the refreshments were beautiful and delicious and the talk was incredibly provocative. Attorney Anne Bader Martin revealed some of the flaws and pitfalls that are inherent in our legal system; highlighting examples of laws and penalties that are often counterproductive. Although she was quick to admit that some penalties do fit the crime, others simply do not. In addition, she pointed out that we are very slow to forgive juvenile offenders here in Massachusetts, and crimes committed by adults (anyone over age 17 in Massachusetts) are never expunged. This can really be detrimental to the rehabilitation of non-violent criminals as their record follows them throughout their lives negatively impacting them and often society as a whole. Many members were eager to help Anne fix the system by supporting the nonprofit agency she co-founded called "One Can Help" which provides support to help rehabilitate these young "criminals" that we have labeled for life.

I have also appreciated the relationship that we have enjoyed with our state legislators. The annual Day on the Hill, as well as our monthly TV show produced by NewTV, "Legislative Roundtable" has let me feel connected to our legislators. They work diligently for all the citizens of Newton and the other communities that they represent. We are fortunate to have four dedicated legislators keeping our interests in mind.

Lastly, I have enjoyed the in-depth study, discussion, and action that I have participated in with so many bright and caring League members. Considering all our activities are voluntary, it is astounding to me that we have so many members that give their expert advice to the many issues that we face in Newton and in our country today. Thank you for allowing me to represent all of you during the past two years. I look forward to continuing my involvement with this stellar organization.

Sue Rosenbaum
President, LWVN

*Welcome
New Members!*

JAMES BUECHE
235 Islington Road, Auburndale, MA 02466
617-710-1841 jbueche@alum.mit.edu

ELINOR NELSON
127 Pine Ridge Road, Newton, MA 02468
617-527-5225 elinornelson@comcast.net

KEN PARKER
965 Walnut Street, Newton, MA 02461
617-965-3723 ken@kenparker.org

Remembering Florence R. Rubin

“Florence was my mentor and role model for my initial experiences in community involvement in Newton in 1968. When she learned of my interest in affordable housing, she asked me to help her organize a major conference on Newton’s need for affordable housing. Florence recruited five other organizations that represented many different constituencies to co-sponsor the conference with the League. By working with Florence on planning the conference, I learned invaluable lessons on how to build an effective coalition. She taught me how to identify the strengths of each of the organizations that were involved in the coalition and how to use those strengths to plan a major conference. She asked the Chamber of Commerce handle all the publicity for the conference since they had credibility with Newton’s very conservative local newspaper. As a result we had front-page coverage of the event. She also taught me not to expect Chamber members to do some of the tasks that League and Fair Housing member were willing to do. Finally, she emphasized the importance of giving credit to other organizations. These were incredibly valuable lessons that I used through my career and as a worker and volunteer.”

Tamara Bliss

“Florence once said to me: ‘Nothing in all my accomplishments compares with being the mother of three boys.’”

Sandy Butzel

“Florence Rubin was Mayor Mann’s best appointment during his tenure because the Library wouldn’t have gone anywhere without someone like Florence. She understood the city politics and she put in the effort to make them work.”

Nancy Criscitiello



FLORENCE R. RUBIN
1925 - 2008

Although Florence was knowledgeable about some specific subjects, it is her ability to patiently explain to and, dare I say the word, mentor me in a general, League-like way that sticks with me. I was a bit afraid of her (something I learned over 20 years to overcome) so when I finally called her for clarification, information, or guidance, I really needed it. When she picked up the phone to call me, I KNEW it was important. I always then blocked off at

least a half an hour for listening. She had clarity, and knew her stuff. I so appreciated that, and her willingness, if not sometimes her need, to share.

Andrea Kelley

“Florence Rubin contributed a great deal to the Newton League while I served as president. Her legacy in the League was by then well established, and she brought tremendous knowledge, clarity and critical thinking to our League work. She was instrumental in drafting the 2000 ballot initiative to reduce the size of the Newton board of aldermen, guiding our campaign to win the question 2-1. She was active on the program and action committee and won a grant for our local League to participate in the LWVUS “Judicial Independence Project”. Florence had compassion, vision, and persistence - and she devoted her talents and herself to a career in public service and community activism like few others. She made things happen. Florence was also a good listener, patient and wise. I remember fondly our many long discussions on a wide range of topics. I feel privileged to have known and worked with her, and grateful for the strong role model she offered.”

Deb Crossley

...

Florence Rubin served as the 14th President of the League of Women Voters of Newton, 1967-1969, as LWVM Vice President, Program & Action 1969-1973, as LVWM President, 1973-1977 and as a member of the LWVUS Board, 1977-1984.

A celebration of Florence Rubin’s life will be held at Gardner Auditorium, Massachusetts State House, Beacon Hill, Boston, Thursday May 15, at 1 p.m. ■

Committees - in - Action

Observers

Coordinator: Andrea Kelley
617-964-4609

ELECTION COMMISSION Nancy Criscitiello
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES Deb Crossley
NEWTON FREE Mary Adelstein
LIBRARY BOARD

Committees

LOCAL ACTION

Focus *Community Preservation Act*
Contact Deborah Crossley 617-244-7597
Co-Chair
Priscilla Leith 617-969-6837
Co-Chair

MEMBERS

Anna Maria Abernathy Andrea Kelley
Leslie Burg Jody Klein
Lucia Dolan Terry Yoffie
George Foord

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Focus *Adoption of an Energy Action Plan in Newton*
Contact Lucia Dolan 617-332-1896
Co-Chair
Beth Lowd 617-325-1370
Co-Chair

MEMBERS

Mary Adelstein Deb Crossley
Jane Baier Sharyn Roberts
Carol Bock

Feel free to call committee contacts or a Board officer or director to learn more.

Wanted...

Members (or non members) who care about housing issues. If you like participating in local groups concerned with housing issues, love advocacy, or want to learn more...

Please contact Myra Tattenbaum at
Tattenbaum@verizon.net or
617-527-2830

Members who would love to rummage through our collection of LWVN materials and determine what we should keep and what we can recycle. We may also make a recommendation to the Board about the future of these materials.

Contact Ann Grantham,
Agrant46@gmail.com or
617-964-0333.

Action Alert!

Support "Election Day Registration Bill" S.2514

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem, Lead Sponsor

This legislation will allow any eligible voter to register and vote at their local polling place on Election Day in national and statewide elections through 2011 "as a trial period." At the time of registration, the individual must provide proof of identity and residency and must also certify that they are a United States citizen, are at least 18 years of age, and are not disqualified from voting for other stated conditions.

In addition, this legislation will create an advisory committee to review the implementation of Election Day registration following this trial period to assess its viability and will permanently change the registration deadline from 20 days to 14 days before a general election or primary.

Passage of this bill will:

- **Support increased voter participation.** *In 2006 the eight current EDR states had an average 50.9% voter turnout vs. 41.6% in non-EDR states.*
- **Allow highly mobile population such as students and young adults, as well as new residents, to vote in greater numbers.** *Deadlines to register are often missed by new district residents.*
- **Alleviate the problem of registered voters being turned away because of inaccurate or incomplete voter lists.** *An MIT/Cal Tech report found that 122,000 registered voters in 2003 were turned away because of registration-based problems.*
- **Shift the administrative burden of processing new voter registrations from the busy pre-election season to after Election Day.** *The post-election period is a much less hectic time for election officials.*

Passage of this bill will not:

- Increase voter fraud. *Multiple independent studies have found that voter fraud is as low in EDR states as in non-EDR states.*
- Add significant cost to the election process. *Election officials in EDR states report the work of adding newly-registered voters to the rolls has been manageable and relatively inexpensive.*
- Create dramatic shifts in the voting population. *Experience in EDR states indicates +/- 5% increase in registered voters.*

The lead sponsor for this bill in the Senate is our Senator Cynthia Stone Creem, and it is strongly supported by Senators Augustus, Candaras, Chandler, Downing, Fargo, Gallucio, Jehlen, Joyce, Menard, O'Leary, Petruccielli, Resor, Rosenberg, Spilka, Tucker, and Marzilli.

Take Action NOW

Please contact Senate Ways and Means Chair Steven M. Panagiotakos to release this bill favorably at 617 722-1630. Contact Senate President Therese Murray and urge her to call for a vote on Election Day Registration at 617 722-1500. ■

Investigative Reporter Turns Author

Hank Phillippi Ryan changes laws and changes lives. She's recovered millions of dollars for scammed consumers, saved dozens of homes from foreclosure, sent wrong-doers to prison and forced state officials to resign. She is widely regarded as one of the most hard-hitting, informative investigative reporters in the region, having won numerous awards for her work. Her leading-edge consumer and investigative reports, "Hank Investigates," have become not only widely acclaimed, but also viewers' favorites.

Hank is a highly prized reporter with more than 50 prestigious awards from news organizations all over the world, including 24 Emmy awards. Her 2005 Emmy was for her investigative and consumer reporting, including an expose' of the failures of the state's 911 emergency system and a hidden camera investigation revealing widespread deceptive pricing. She also won a recent Edward R. Murrow Award, her 10th, for her investigative series "Cause for Alarm," which revealed extensive staffing and equip-

ment dangers in fire departments across Massachusetts. After breaking a highly acclaimed investigative series exposing unregulated home improvement contractors, who ripped off home owners in three of Boston's poorest neighborhoods, three new laws were passed.

Before joining 7NEWS in 1982, Hank was a reporter and anchor at WSB-TV in Atlanta, Georgia, she also worked at WTHR-TV in Indianapolis, Indiana and on Capitol Hill as a legislative assistant to a subcommittee of the US Senate Judiciary Committee. Hank also covered Washington D.C. as an editorial assistant at Rolling Stone Magazine. She wrote and edited a column called "Capitol Chatter" an inside look at D.C. politics.

Her first mysteries, Prime Time (Agatha nominee for Best First Novel of 2007 and RITA nominee for best first book and best romantic suspense novel of 2007) and Face Time (Book Sense Notable Book), were best sellers. Air Time and Drive Time are coming soon from MIRA Books. ■



Hank will be the dinner speaker at our **ANNUAL MEETING ON MAY 27.**

Come and learn about her experiences that led her to this point in her career.

Continued from page one

Immigration Position

- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

LWVN participated in this national study. Myra Tattenbaum, study Chair reports "our consensus results were very similar to the adopted position." ■



LWVM Council 2008

Engaging Democracy

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2008

NEWTON MARRIOTT

Registration	8:00-9:00
Panel Discussion	9:00-10:30
Plenary Session	10:45-12:15
Luncheon	12:30-2:00
<i>Speaker Congresswoman Niki Tsongas</i>	
Workshops	2:15-3:45

INVITED PANELISTS

Civic Engagement

Ron Bell, *Governor's Office of Civic Engagement*

Growing Membership

LWVUS Membership Field Support

League Advocacy

Louise Haldeman, *LWVMA Specialist*

Youth Pollworkers Program

Eva Valentine, *President, LWV Haverhill*
Member-at-Large Unit

WORKSHOPS

**Membership Initiative:
Tools for Success**

Looking for ways to grow your local League membership roster? Earn a PMP rebate when you grow your league! Learn about this exciting new program that will guide your League through a membership recruitment process with Marcia Hirshberg, Membership Chair and Pam Holland of the Membership and Training committee. This workshop fulfills a requirement for your League to receive a PMP rebate.

Lobbying and Blogging 101

Have you always wanted to get involved by lobbying? Take LWV Amherst member Leo Maley's advice to do it well. Plus: Have you ever blogged? This is the workshop to take if you want to learn how.

**Media Access: Public Access
Television and Print Media**

Do you need to increase your League's visibility? Learn how through media exposure. Pat Costello of the Membership & Training committee will share her many years experience and best practices for print media.

Maria Sheehan also from the M&T committee and General Manager of Westborough Cable Access will direct on utilizing local cable programming!

Youth Advocacy

If you would like to deepen your League's relationship with your local schools and public officials and build your visibility in the community through civic education, join LWV Needham member Cathy Dowd for a how to lesson on a unique youth program your League can offer to High School students. The Youth Civic Advocacy Program is designed to get kids excited about political participation by enabling them to engage on a real state or local issue and to affect change.

VOTE 2008 Campaign

In this ongoing election season learn how your League can increase voter participation, voter awareness, and voter education by using the Vote 2008 campaign. Presented by Senior Director Jo-Ann Berry.

Organizing Observer Corp

Observer Corp is a League tradition that is being revived in many local Leagues. Public meeting oversight is crucial in our local communities. This workshop will feature experienced local League leaders to show you how it is done and why it is a hallmark of the League.

Registrant Name	Phone and Email	Program/Lunch \$48pp
		TOTAL

Make checks payable to LWVM or complete credit card information below.

Send forms to: League of Women Voters, 133 Portland St, Boston, MA 02114, Fax: 617-248-0881

Credit Card Number (MC/VISA/AmEx)

Name as appears on card

Exp Date

REGISTRATION DEADLINE MAY 9, 2008

Continued from page one

\$12 Million Override

that these are long term solutions which will not solve our immediate budget problems.

The League believes that government must maintain competent personnel and clear assignment of responsibility, have adequate financing and coordinate between the different departments, agencies and levels of government.

The League supports budgetary practices that include analyses of cost effective governmental programs and considers alternatives for service delivery. With that said, we urge and expect the City to move swiftly to establish a Commission to study operations in all departments with the goal of identifying cost savings

and efficiencies in service delivery. We also expect the City to follow the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission and include adequate funds in future budgets for building maintenance. For too long, Newton has funded programs and services by not caring for its fixed assets. The League has been critical of this practice for many years and does not support this poor management practice.

Finally, League tax policy supports a state and local tax structure that has an equitable impact on taxpayers and adequately supports state services with consideration of the effect on the state's economy. With this in mind, we urge City leadership to pursue and support

needs-based income assistance programs and various support services and policies that meet our basic League principles of adequate, equitable, flexible and progressive taxation. We believe that the diverse character of our city is one of its strengths and hope that City leaders will work to assure that the City's diverse character is protected.

For further information, please contact the League of Women Voters at www.lwvnewton.org. ■

This article was written by Terry Yoffie with information provided by the LWVN Municipal Finance Committee.

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Pierce Conway DESIGN

visual communications

508.651.7902
design@pierceconway.com

LWVN CALENDAR

May

- 2 Friday, 9 a.m. **Local Action committee meeting** at the home of Deb Crossley, 26 Circuil St., Newton Highlands, 617- 244-7597.
- 6 Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. **Working Board Meeting**
Last Day to Register for **LWVM Council 2008**. See pg 6
- 15 Thursday 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. **Celebration of the life of Florence Rubin**, Gardner Auditorium, MA State House, Beacon Hill, Boston
- 17 Saturday, 8 a.m.- 3:45 p.m. **LWVM Council 2008 Engaging Democracy**, Newton Marriott
- 20 Tuesday, Polls Open 7 a.m. -8 p. m **Special Election Day** Need a ride? Want to drive? Phone Sharyn Roberts, 617-969-4716.
- 27 Tuesday, **LWVN Annual Meeting**, 6:00 Social Time and Dinner, 7:00 Dinner Speaker, 7:45 Business Meeting. Neighborhood Club, 24 Berkeley St., West Newton. Contact Andreae Downs, 617-969-7123.
- 30 Friday, 9:15 a.m. **LWVN Environmental Committee**, at the home of Lucia Dolan, 20 Devon Rd., Newton Centre, 617-332-1893.

In Memorium

THELMA FLEISHMAN
VIRGINIA TASHJIAN

*We note with
sorrow the loss of
two strong figures in the
Newton Community
and members of the
Newton League.*

Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule,
log on to www.Newtv.org

League of Women Voters of Newton

PO Box 610207
Newton, MA 02461
617-964-0014
www.lwvnewton.org

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