

AAUW BENNINGTON BRANCH BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 2 pm
at the home of Kathy Wagenknecht, Bennington, Vermont

Present: Claudia Dalton, Mary Feidner, Beth Hardesty, Margaret Howland, Gudrun Hutchins, Madeline Kennedy, Jennifer Kern, Suzanne Kirkpatrick, Julie Mackaman, Norma McShane, Judy Murphy, Sheila Mullineaux, Dawn Rodrigues, Kathy Wagenknecht.

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes. President Wagenknecht called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm. Kennedy moved, Hutchins seconded that the minutes of the October 1, 2019 board meeting be approved; motion carried.

Reports

- **Finances.** Treasurer McShane distributed a FY2020 year-to-date report, reflecting \$10,112 in the checking account without the current round of scholarships having been paid out. Her report was supplemented by detailed monthly report of deposits and expenses. (See Financial Report, attached.) In discussion, she suggested that future requests from the Scribble Sisters for advances on publications be drawn out of scholarship instead of operating funds, as proceeds repay the advance and support the scholarships. Feidner noted that the number of Silent Angels contributing \$100 each year to the scholarships has remained static (18-20). The board discussed outreach through the newsletter and personal invitations extended by the board to members who are not Silent Angels, with names of current Angels shared only among the board.
- **Programs.** Committee members Howland, Mackaman, Mullineaux and Rodrigues reported on the range of programs organized around this year's **Suffragist Centennial theme**, providing platforms for promoting our branch and publicizing activities, selling suffragist notecards and *Scratchings*, registering voters, developing partnerships with the Bennington Performing Arts Center (BPAC-Oldcastle), and integrating technology, e.g., film exhibition and distance presentations via Skype.

Rodrigues summarized costs of the **Women's Suffrage Film Series** and **historical reenactment performances** (Vermont Humanities Speakers Bureau), with financial support from co-presenter BPAC-Oldcastle, proceeds from notecard sales, and one-time donations from board members. Kennedy agreed to look into arranging a block of tickets for a pop-up excursion to Hubbard Hall in Cambridge, New York to see the **Susan B. Anthony Project** on May 3. Howland said she is working on a public program for May on the topic of **voter suppression**; Mullineaux offered to contact the Peace and Justice Center, which is organizing an event on the same topic, about a possible co-presentation. Kirkpatrick said that the date for the **picnic** is June 13.

In discussion as to whether we should identify a programmatic theme again next year, several suggestions surfaced: climate change (impact on girls and women); women in education (local issues, e.g., closure of Vermont colleges, and national issues, e.g., pros and cons of STEM); and memoir writing. Rodrigues suggested looking at TED talk topics for ideas.

- **Membership.** We currently have 70 national and local members. Dalton and Hutchins will update the membership brochure to be available at upcoming public programs. Dalton will plan a reception this spring to welcome new members to our branch. The public program in May on voter suppression will promote AAUW's "Shape the Future" new member recruitment campaign.
- **Social Lunch and AAUW Donations.** Jane Chamay has stepped down as the organizer of the annual social lunch; Wagenknecht and Dalton have arranged for the lunch on April 18 at the Country Club in Bennington. The board approved the proposed single *prix fixe* vegetarian meal. The reservation form will run in the March newsletter with a reservation deadline of March 31. As in the past, the form will ask for donations to support our branch contribution to AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund and Public Policy program, divided evenly between the two.

- **Member Concerns.** Hardesty said that members appreciate the Suffrage Centennial programs.
- **State Board.** Hutchins said she will not continue as administrator of AAUW of Vermont when her term expires in June 2020, with no replacement in evidence, although Mackaman has agreed to continue as secretary and Jenifer Ambler of Brattleboro as treasurer. Hutchins continued that a value of maintaining a statewide organization is the pipeline from AAUW on state and national public policy. She is in discussion with AAUW about the feasibility of continuing the state branch with a policy point person in lieu of an administrator.
- **Scholarships.** The board praised Murphy's newsletter article on scholarship recipients for the Spring 2020 term. Kern reported that in this round, the committee awarded \$2,600 in scholarships and \$350 in book awards, for a total of \$2,950; and that since 2007, we have awarded \$48,414, including scholarships (\$41,939) and book awards (\$6,475).
- **Public Policy and Campus Liaison.** Wagenknecht referenced the report submitted by Cathy McClure, adding that because McClure wishes to focus on Public Policy next year, we need to identify a replacement if we are to continue her work as Campus Liaison.

Murphy moved, Rodrigues seconded that the above reports be accepted; motion carried.

New Business

Candidates Forum. Wagenknecht suggested that a committee be created to organize a Candidates Forum(s) in October, preceding the November 3, 2020 elections. She and Howland offered to serve again as the moderator and committee point person, respectively. The committee will be formed in the June board meeting; the May 28 filing deadline and August 11 primary will clarify competitive local, regional and statewide races.

Board Nominations. Wagenknecht said that while the three elected board officer positions (President, Secretary, Treasurer) are not up for election until June 2021, the terms of several leadership positions are expiring in June 2020. All except Chamay have agreed to be appointed to another two-year term: Kern (Scholarships), Kennedy (Theater Fundraiser), Murphy (Media Liaison), and McClure (Public Policy). Instead of continuing Social Lunch Coordinator as a board position, Hardesty (Member Concerns) and Kirkpatrick (Hospitality) agreed to organize the 2021 lunch as a joint function of their two program areas. Wagenknecht offered to take the lead on recruiting a Campus Liaison to assume McClure's work.

Adjournment. Kern moved, Kirkpatrick seconded that the meeting be adjourned; motion carried, meeting adjourned at 3:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Mackaman
Secretary

Attachments: Financial Report

Bennington Branch AAUW Position Description, revised March 2020

Legal Advocacy Fund Liaison/Public Policy (LAF/PP) Liaison

Functions:

- 1) To communicate with branch members and officers about the functions and actions of the National AAUW LAF/ PP activities.
- 2) To encourage donations from Branch members to the LAF/PP funds through notices in the Branch newsletters and a brief report at the Branch's Spring Luncheon.
- 3) To coordinate with the Branch Treasurer the collection of donations to LAF/PP
- 4) To communicate with the staff of National AAUW LAF/PP concerning coordinating resource of National with activities by the Branch to address the State and Local level needs
- 5) To coordinate with other Branch officers and chairs to plan programs, actions, and activities that serve to advance the priorities of National LAF/PP.

Background:

AAUW National LAF works to challenge sex discrimination in higher education and the workplace by providing financial resources for legal case support, and legal case travel grants. They also provide amicus signatory or statements of support, knowledge about individual rights, guidelines for finding legal assistance, and emotional support to plaintiffs.

AAUW National Public Policy (PP) advocacy priorities are determined by biennial vote of all national members to establish which federal action issues will receive priority by national staff.

Priorities for 2019 - 2021 include the following:

- 1) supporting the "the civil and human rights of all immigrants, including a fair and just path to legal status"
- 2) promoting "the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons" through an economy that provides
 - equitable employment opportunities;
 - reduction of poverty;
 - a living wage;
 - quality, affordable dependent care;
 - paid family and medical leave;
 - safe, livable, and affordable housing;
 - quality, affordable, and accessible health care for all, including reproductive health care.