



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

Manhattan/Riley County

PO Box 834, Manhattan, KS 66505; E-mail: lww.manhattanks@gmail.com; Website: lww.manhattanks.org

President's Message

Summer Reading Recommendations

By Glenda Phillips

I start my message this month with a request. Please, take time to rest and relax over the summer. Please, use some of that relaxing time for reading – reading up on the LWVK(state) and LWVUS(national) positions on various issues.

It was decided at the recent State Convention in Great Bend to use our positions this year for Advocacy and not do another study. The LWV of Kansas has many positions on vital topics which we as members should know and be ready to discuss at any time. No, we cannot memorize everything, but if we have read the positions, we can have an understanding of the issue and where the League stands on it. What is even better is that we know there have been studies done across the state on the topic before positions were taken. Subjects like water rights, coal burning plants, immigration, National Popular Vote plus many more are topics that we have studied and can advocate for at a local,

state and national level.

The League's stand is not emotionally based but factually based with background information to 'back it up.' If a topic 'trips your trigger' take some extra time to read the background information that the position is based on. If you are interested in the issue, the extra reading will be fascinating. I realize that a novel by Danielle Steel may be very relaxing, but the charge you get from exploring whatever issue peaks your interest will reinvigorate you for the fall and you will be recharged to start again.

So, take time this summer for yourself and remember why you joined the League. Pop open the home page of LWVK and LWV.org (US) and I know for a fact that you will find a topic to click on and explore. Let yourself wander through the information then write me or anyone with your ideas to educate and advocate for it. You are a creative, thoughtful crowd and you can do amazing things!

Observers Needed!

We have many dedicated Observer volunteers with years of service but we always need a few more. Our biggest need is for some League members to be on call to substitute for the regulars. Mary Beth Reese observes the city commission on the first Tuesday evening of each month and she will be away for much of the summer. If you can substitute for her now and then please call me at 539-9440. Other Boards and Commissions that occasionally need a substitute are the Health Board, Urban Area Planning Board and Board of Education. The County Commission observers manage this by trading with each other.

The City Commission also meets on the third Tuesday of each month and we do not have an

Observer. If you find watching the Commission more interesting than other Tuesday night television please call me. The Commission also meets for work sessions on the off weeks and it would be good for us to cover those sessions at least occasionally.

The reports of these meetings need to be in the hands of the Observer Coordinator by the 25th of each month and need to be short unless there is an especially controversial issue under discussion. The issues points to report should be related to League positions on issues or, as noted above, a special current and maybe controversial issue that needs clear reporting.

The League needs you so please call me, Barbara Withee, 539-9440.

LWV Action Alert on Health Care Reform

America is facing a health care crisis caused by a combination of skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves 47 million of us without any coverage. The current health care system is endangering both our economy and our health, and voters have made it clear that they want change. Business as usual is not an option.

Enter your zip code to encourage your Senators and Representative to support strong health care reform legislation.

Congress must take action to pass strong health care reform legislation that guarantees quality, safe and affordable health care to all U.S. residents. It is universal coverage that will determine the humanity of our system. The legislation must include a benefits package that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care, acute care, long-term care, and mental health care. In addition, any health care package must include prescription drug coverage and allow for pre-existing conditions.

Legislation must establish a system-wide program to coordinate information, establish best practices and provide consumers the information they need to protect themselves and their families. It is essential that comparative data on treatments, benefits packages and medical outcomes be made publicly available so that individuals can make informed health decisions and so costs can be controlled.

Cost containment measures must take place in the context of overall health care reform. We must reduce or eliminate the cost-shifting that currently exists in

health care financing and work to streamline the system. Legislation must provide effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services and allow for efficient and economical delivery of care.

To achieve this kind of comprehensive, system-wide reform will take a shared effort by citizens and Congress.

Take action today to encourage your Senators and Representatives to support strong health care reform legislation!

TAKE ACTION

1. Contact your Senators and Representatives now, by entering your zip code, and tell them to support strong health care reform legislation. Tell them that current health care system is endangering both our economy and our health, and that business as usual is not an option.
2. Send this alert to other concerned citizens - your grassroots network, your friends and coworkers. Encourage them to contact their Senators and Representatives today!

BACKGROUND

Learn more about what the League is doing to support health care reform. Go to: <http://www.lwv.org/> and click on the action alert.

Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Local Health Care Reform Organization

Kansans wanting to be involved in health care reform can take advantage of a local Kansas organization working for a single payer option in the health care reform debate.

Founded in 2003, Kansas Health Care for All is a group of concerned citizens of Kansas advocating for universal access to quality, affordable, comprehensive health care for all Americans. They support a single payer model of health care financing as the most equitable solution.

KHCFA is affiliated with [Healthcare--Now!](#) and the [Physicians For a National Health Program](#).

They endorse House Resolution 676: The United States National Health Insurance Act, authored by Congressman John Conyers, Jr. of Michigan. HB 676 would establish an America single-payer health insurance system.

A recent survey in the Annals of Internal Medicine showed that 59 percent of U.S. physicians support national health insurance. In December 2007, The 124,000-member American College of Physicians endorsed single-payer as a pathway to U.S. health reform.

For more information on KHCFA visit their website at: <http://www.khcf.org>

Observer Reports:

USD 383 School Board

Kathy Dzewaltowski, Observer

April 15, 2009

Work session:

The board finalized questions to ask architecture firms during interviews.

Regular meeting:

The board approved 7-0 to interview seven architecture firms for the school district's construction projects.

Greg Vahrenberg, the district's bond advisor, updated the board about the current bond market and available options for selling bonds.

Board members voted 6-1 on first reading to keep student fees and textbook rental fees the same as the previous year. Nancy Knopp voted "no" because she thought student fees should be higher to keep up with the district's rising costs.

April 29, 2009

Special meeting:

The board met in executive session with the district's construction attorney and to discuss a personnel matter.

Board members had previously approved to negotiate with Manhattan Collaborative Architects for architecture services for the district's construction projects, and the board discussed negotiating simultaneously with two additional firms should an agreement not be reached with Manhattan Collaborative. Susan Marshall thought the board should have negotiated with multiple firms from the start. The board approved 6-1 to negotiate with two additional firms, with Marshall voting "no."

May 6, 2009

Work session:

Board members reviewed notes taken during interviews with the architecture firms ACI and Gould Evans and discussed the positives and negatives of both firms.

Regular meeting:

The board approved 7-0 the 2009-10 school calendar, elementary and secondary handbooks for the 2009-10 school year, and elementary social studies supplemental materials.

Board members discussed student fees and textbook rental fees. The board had previously approved 6-1 on first reading to keep fees the same as the previous year. During discussion for the second reading, the board directed administration to develop additional options for fees, including increased fees, to keep up with the district's rising costs.

The board discussed at length the curriculum used for elementary math. Elementary teachers were surveyed and commented that the current materials don't provide enough resources to meet the current math standards. The board approved 7-0 to review the curriculum and to make a recommendation for resource adoption for the 2009-10 school year. Board members commented that the district will also need to invest in professional development for teachers for new materials.

The board returned to the discussion begun in the work session about the firms ACI and Gould Evans. Board members expressed concerns about ACI's preparedness and its attention to detail. The board approved 7-0 to negotiate with Gould Evans for the MHS West Campus project.



programming priorities will be explained and the later training you would be required to complete before you could host your own program. Most of our time at these informational meetings will be devoted to discuss possibilities and hearing your program ideas. If your idea is selected for production, we'll arrange later individualized appointments for basic technical training and equipment practice, so that you can make a recording of a portion of your proposed program. The best of these recordings will be posted as podcasts on the new KONZ website, where the general public can get a sense of the programming they can expect to enjoy on the station. You can enroll on the [UFM website](#). The information meetings can be found under "Personal Interest."

Riley County Commission

Jan Kruh, Julie Merklin, Lyndal Nyberg, Joan Strickler, Observers

April 27, 2009

Commissioner Kearns reported concerns about dirty water from a concrete mix plant near the Job Corps area off Ft. Riley Blvd.

Commissioner Johnson noted the RCPD is applying for grants to add eleven staff. Commissioner Kearns expressed concern about the effect on the county's budget once the grant ends. He asked staff to get projected costs.

Commissioner Kearns also wondered about the possible wide-reaching effects of the Clean Water Act currently up for Congressional action. He wondered if the reference to "all waters" might be too comprehensive.

The commission approved the contract for document resource storage with the county so as to cover all costs for the first year. In the future such costs should be built into department budgets. The storage facility is at 414 S Fourth St in what used to be an old bomb shelter.

At the press conference the commission presented a proclamation to Pawnee Mental Health declaring May as Mental Health Month. Cheryl Collins invited people to explore the 1880s at the Wolf House on Sunday, May 3, from 2 to 5 pm.

Treasurer Eileen King said the second half of taxes are due May 11. An automatic notification reminder system is now available. Persons wanting to be reminded of tax due dates can receive email reminders by signing up for the system at rileycounty.gov.

The Director of Planning and Development, Monty Wedel said the final Vision2025 meeting will be held in Manhattan. The commission asked that one additional meeting be scheduled in Keats at the request of a resident there.

Commissioner Kearns reported that, following a meeting of the 17 regional counties, Riley and Pottawatomie County commissioners held their own meeting. They discussed the possibility of jointly funding the construction of a bridge over the Big Blue River sometime in the future. They also considered cooperating on developing a transit system between Wamego and Manhattan. They will look into doing joint training for Pottawatomie and Riley employees by bringing state officials to train on new federal and state

requirements.

Concern was raised over costs of cleaning maintenance at the county shop site. Currently, Holmes Cleaning Company is charging \$60,000 a year to clean the offices.

April 30, 2009

Public Works Director discussed road maintenance and reported that the county is currently not keeping up on overlays and chip seals and that several areas require complete reconstruction. Other than that, the commission dealt with routine administration.

May 4, 2009

The meeting began with an informal discussion of the Vision 2025 meetings. A resident living near Wildcat Creek has suggested the area should not be subject to the 80 to 160 acre restriction since it is reasonable to expect development to occur there as the city expands. Commissioner McCulloh suggested the area be studied by the Urban Area Planning Board. There seemed to be general agreement that, since development can be expected to take place in the area due to its proximity to Manhattan, it should be viewed in a different way than general agricultural land.

A motion was passed to increase the bids for new ambulances from two to three vehicles. One ambulance with 129,000 miles on it has broken down and will be costly to repair. It was decided it would be foolish to put a great amount of money into such an old vehicle.

Commissioners discussed an offer to the county to purchase some property in the Fairmont area at a very low cost. Counselor Clancy Holeman discussed the legal complications involving property which has been bought and sold for years but under the wrong legal description. He believes the property might be subject to extensive litigation. Commissioner Johnson suggested using eminent domain. Holeman said that might be a possibility but the price would probably be considerably higher to reflect current market values. The property is adjacent county land and would allow needed expansion of athletic fields and facilities. It was agreed the title problem must be resolved prior to any action on the part of the county.

A proclamation for National Nurses Week was signed to honor nurses serving in Riley County.

Riley County Commission, continued...

Anne Smith reported the aTa bus system will have a total budget of more than \$800,000 in state and federal funds. Federal economic stimulus dollars have made it possible to expand services.

Riley County's 2009 total appraised valuation for real estate is \$4,581 million, a 1.23% increase over last year. That figure includes \$87 million in new construction. Approximately 25% of the properties in the county are tax exempt. That includes state offices and Kansas State University as well as other exempt property.

May 14, 2009

The commission approved another change order for the Marlatt Avenue reconstruction, with a resulting contract price of just over \$1.6 million.

Emergency Management Director Pat Collins discussed the addition of three fire stations. Existing funds will be used as much possible, and financing will be kept to a minimum. The commission approved action to solicit telephone bids for construction loan.

May 18, 2009

Commissioners decided to send a letter to Senators Roberts and Brownback about proposed clean water regulations. Kearns and Johnson were concerned about the proposal to remove "navigable" from the definition of waters to be included. They felt that it then could regulate drainage ditches, etc, and would be disadvantageous to farmers. McCulloh disagreed. The motion passed 2 to 1.

Assistant Public Works Director Rod Meredith gave an update on park projects. Improvements at Rocky Ford's outdoor recreational area are proceeding on stairs, landing, parking lot, and signage. Ogden Park is getting topsoil for its ball field. Fairmont Park's restrooms are halfway done – one of the two is completed. It was suggested that the county publish a brochure about its many parks and their amenities.

Treasurer Eileen King discussed ongoing modernization in her department. Looking at the new system she sees a need to tie records together. To this end they will use the drivers' licenses number as a reference.

She added that sometime in the future, as part of Homeland Security, people will eventually have to use their full legal name on titles and drivers' licenses. For

this to happen, people will have to bring their birth certificates for a driver's license and for people who have taken their spouse's name, the marriage license will also be required.

Bids were opened for three new ambulances. A decision on the bids was postponed pending staff evaluation.

May 28, 2009

Commissioner Kearns announced a land use study to ill look at the existing downtown area in Manhattan and to determine how it fits into the overall redevelopment plan. It is considered important that the current downtown remain vital. Additional parking areas are a priority concern.

County Attorney Barry Wilkerson gave a case update. He anticipates that criminal cases will continue at the previous level of about 1,200 for the year. Juvenile cases could run between 125 and 190. Usually about 3,000 traffic cases are heard. There are increases in cases involving mental illness; while drug use plays a growing role in some cases. Binge drinking is on the rise, and intoxicated young people in Aggieville often create dangerous situations.

Commissioner Kearns mentioned the closing of state prisons and wondered how this will impact the county. He added that the state cuts programs to save money, which results in sending the costs and responsibilities to local governments. Commissioner Johnson said a major expense for the system is the revolving door, i.e., jail time for repeat offenders.

Director of Community Corrections Shelly Williams reported that the Joint Corrections Advisory Board has recommended funding be discontinued for the Ogden Youth Center. United Way has already voted not to fund the center through 2009 and 2010. Apparently few young people participate in the program, and there have been longtime problems with recordkeeping and accountability. The commissioners suggested the program director talk to the Boys and Girls Club's director to see if Ogden youth can be served in Manhattan. The commissioners decided to discontinue providing funds for the Ogden Center.

Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board

Barbara Withee, Observer

May 4, 2009

Members present: Jerry Reynard, Chairperson; Linda Morse; Mike Hill; Bill Meredith; and Nikki Miller

Members absent: Stephanie Rolley and Mike Kratochvil

During the work session the legal department briefed the board members on the legislative and quasi-judicial roles of the Planning Board, open meeting laws and conflict of interest issues.

Rob Ott, City Engineer presented an overview and update of various public works projects in the city during 2009 as well as projects under design by city staff and/or consultants. They included transportation, storm water, sanitary sewer and water projects. Following are just a few of the proposed projects and those in the planning stage:

1. The Marlatt waterway from Seth Child and Kimball to Casement Road
2. Water drainage problem affecting the Tecumseh Road and Quivera. This is drainage from areas to the north and west, including Bramlage parking area.
3. The Eureka Road area and a tributary study to deal with flooding from drainage from Fort Riley.

4. Recycling of water from the new children's splash park to be used for watering City Park.
5. Lengthening the left turn lane at Anderson and 17th Street.
6. Widening Bluemont to five lanes at Juliette with turning lanes from both directions.
7. Realigning Marlatt at US 24 with a traffic signal at that corner and an underground pedestrian crossing.
8. Fourth and Bluemont roundabout.
9. Squaring the intersection of McCall Road and US
10. McCall will eventually become five lanes.
11. West Anderson Avenue upgrades.
12. Right turn lane off Claffin Road entering Seth Child Road-KS113.
13. Resurface Fort Riley Boulevard from Westwood west to Clarion Hotel.

A number of other projects not mentioned above relate to improvements to the water and sewer systems, the south 4th street improvements, changes necessary in planning for NBAF, water treatment expansion and study of the levee along the Kansas and Blue Rivers which is no longer adequate.

Riley County - Manhattan Board of Health

Mary Ann Flemming, Observer

The Board accepted the bid from Mike Rogers at Varney's to once again conduct the yearly audit. The fee is unchanged.

The procedure for following up on H1N1 flu cases was reviewed; it is a very detailed process but results in making contact with all persons likely to be exposed. Mr. Murphy stated that at this point plans were to continue with the production of seasonal vaccine for the 2009-2010 season, but then switch to H1N1 vaccine production. It is not possible to do both. This indicates a need for two vaccinations beginning early in fall. Currently both seasonal and H1N1 case numbers are declining, but the fear is that H1N1 will resurface in fall. There is currently no protocol regarding who should get the vaccine first.

**Stop the
special interests!**
*Donate to the League
of Women Voters today*



Manhattan City Commission

Barbara Withee, Observer

April 21, 2009

This was the reorganization meeting of the Commission with Bob Strawn sworn in as Mayor and Bruce Snead as Mayor Pro-Tem to serve until April 2010.

The city swimming pool design was the major item of business and was well reported in the Manhattan Mercury. Three options were presented to the Board with one option including many special features and a 25 meter pool, a second plan with fewer amenities and a 50 meter pool and a third option that was something of a hybrid. Many citizens were present and most spoke to the Commission, mainly in regard to the size of the pool (25 meter versus 50 meter), inclusion of water toys and special features for children, Flow Rider feature and the future of the historic log cabin just to the north of the present pool.

After the Board discussion Commissioner Pepperd moved to approve Option 2.1, the 50 meter swimming pool aquatic park and all amenities included as presented, seconded by Mayor Strawn. Several commissioners expressed support for the 3.1 option that

included building a 25 meter pool. Commissioner Sherow voiced support for a hybrid plan that would include the Flow rider and a 50 meter pool, reducing some of the other amenities and suggesting that these could be programmed for additions in the future, particularly as Manhattan's population increases. The new splash park opening this summer will offset the loss of some of the amenities in the larger plan.

The motion failed 2-3 with Snead, Sherow and Morris-Hardeman voting against.

Commissioner Sherow moved to approve Option 2.3 with a full 50 meter pool/aquatic center and a Wave Rider with additional amenities to be added as the city can afford them. The main argument was that to replace the larger pool we have had with the smaller 25 meter one in our growing community doesn't seem reasonable. Commissioner Morris-Hardeman seconded the motion. The Commission approved this motion 5-0.

The only other item of business was the 5-0 vote to approve the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Master Plan Update Final Report. The meeting adjourned at 11:42 p.m.

Riley County Law Board

Bob Kruh, Observer

Present: Casper, Johnson, Kearns, Morris-Hardeman, Snead (presiding)

The meeting opened with the swearing in of Jayme Morris-Hardeman, newly appointed by outgoing Mayor Hatesohl.

A promotion ceremony recognized three police officers, whose families participated in placement of new insignia on their uniforms. In addition, Director Schoen announced special citations of Officer Brian Sheaves, who was instrumental in preventing a recent suicide attempt, and Officer Sam Hamilton, who risked his life to rescue an occupant of a burning building in Zeandale.

In crime reports there was an increase in violent offenses – rape, robbery, and aggravated assault – in the first quarter of 2009. But traffic citations were down

noticeably – 1,590 non-accident tickets compared to 2,003 last year. Far and away, speeding was the most prominent violation. Overall, the major cause of accidents is the failure to pay attention to driving, with failure to yield right of way as the second most frequent.

With the legal publication date at hand, Director Schoen presented a preferred budget recommendation for 2010. It includes increases for a 13.5% jump in health insurance premiums and eleven additional corrections officers starting in the last quarter. Corrections officers are essential for jail security, and more will be needed to staff the jail's expansion. Personnel costs account for 87% of the budget and are difficult to reduce -- and the immediate proposal was for \$15,115,715, an increase of 6.8% over last year. Similarly, however, there is not much latitude in the non-personnel operating budget to make substantial cuts without jeopardizing police effectiveness.

MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
PO Box 834, Manhattan KS 66505
e-mail: lww.manhattanks@gmail.com
web site: <http://lww.manhattanks.org>

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWSLETTER June 2009

League Calendar

Keeping up with the League

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| June 4 | Edith Stunkel Good Government Award Reception 7pm Manhattan Arts Center |
| June 9 | Lunch With League Noon Manhattan Public Library Local Topics |
| June 23 | LWV M/RC Board Meeting - 6:30pm Radina's |
| July 14 | Lunch With League, Noon, Manhattan Public Library Anne Smith, aTa Bus Executive Director |
| July 28 | LWV M/RC Board Meeting - 6:30pm Radina's |