



## Amherst League of Women Voters

A Voice for Citizens, a Force for Change  
**e-bulletin**

December 2023

### CALENDAR

Wednesday, December 6th, 6:30 PM - LWVA Steering Committee meeting. [Email to receive location and agenda.](#)

Thursday, December 7th, 7:00 PM - Judy Brooks Conversation -Jennifer Moyston, Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Town of Amherst: *The Role of the Town of Amherst in DEI and Community Work.* [Click here to register.](#)

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Dear Members and Friends,

November came and went in a blur, with our local elections at the beginning of the month. Check out Jessica's blurb below to see some impressive numbers and our impact educating our Amherst voters. Thank you again to everyone who helped plan and implement the Voter Services events.

At the beginning of December, before you start worrying about holiday decorations and stocking up on eggnog, please join us on Zoom to hear from Jennifer Moyston about DEI initiatives in the Town of Amherst. This Zoom is part of the Judy Brooks Conversation Series.

New Years is traditionally a time for reflection and resolutions. Will you resolve to become more active in the League? And, if you are already doing all you can, will you resolve to talk to a friend and ask them to join us? We have several active committees that could use more members, including the Charter Review Committee (see below for details and timeline), the Connecticut River Watershed Committee, and the Affordable Housing Committee. [Please reach out to me for the committee contact information.](#)

Happy Holidays,

Rebecca Fricke  
Spokesperson

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**LWVA Membership Renewal Time**  
This year we've made it easy.

Click below to start.

Membership Renewal

## Voter Engagement News

Another successful voting season has ended. Thank you to everyone who helped with Voter Services activities. We reached thousands of people through our candidate forums, voter guide, and our league banner reminding residents to VOTE!

We had slightly more than 200 people at our two in-person forums, which Amherst Media recorded. They were streamed around 850 times! On the one hand, that means that of the 4,480 people who voted, we potentially reached nearly a quarter of them. Yay us! On the other hand, only 4,480 of 13,700 registered voters actually voted. So, we have work to do. Every vote matters—some of the races were very close!

If you'd like to see the breakdown of votes cast, the official results are [posted online](#) on the town's website.

We at Voter Services are going to take a bit of a rest. We will be back in action soon as the 2024 voting season picks up steam, working to get out the vote. Your power is your vote! We've got this!

Jessica Ryan

## Racial Justice Committee News

Greetings from the Racial Justice Committee (RJC)

Our next Judy Brooks Conversation Series program will be on Thursday, December 7th, at 7:00 PM. Jennifer Moyston, Assistant Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Town of Amherst and long time community activist, will speak on the topic "*The Role of the Town of Amherst in DEI and Community Work.*" Please register for this interesting event, to be held on Zoom, at [this link](#). Information on past Judy Brooks Conversations is on [our website](#).

I also wanted to provide an update on a unique LWV group, the DEI Peer Group, which meets quarterly. Members from Leagues across the Commonwealth attend the DEI Peer Group. Recently, three League members presented on ways to encourage more diversity within the Leagues. The presentations were informative, educational, and experiential. We delved into important questions, such as: What has worked and what hasn't, in trying to reach new members? Who are the targeted diverse members we want to appeal to? Overall, the consensus was to work to include more young people, non-white people, and people with disabilities.

I loved this meeting. As a peer group, we have come a long way towards trusting each other and sharing towards our mutual goals of growth and

improvement for the Leagues, both local and statewide. If you are interested in joining the DEI Peer Group, please let me know.

Marcie Sclove, Chair, Racial Justice Committee (RJC)

[Click here to email Marcie.](#)



**LWV** **JUDY BROOKS SERIES**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOWN OF AMHERST IN DEI AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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.

**THURSDAY  
07 DECEMBER 2023  
7.00 PM**

 [LWVAMHERST.ORG](http://LWVAMHERST.ORG)  
FOR ZOOM LINK

  
WITH AMHERST DEI DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AND ACTIVE COMMUNITY LEADER JENNIFER MOYSTON

**ONLINE**

  
JUDY HARRIS BROOKS (1944-2018) WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED AS AN EDUCATOR AND CIVIC LEADER WHO WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX ISSUES IN HER COMMUNITY.

## Health Care For All

On November 14th, members of the LWV Amherst and Springfield area Health Care Committees joined [Masscare](#) on Beacon Hill for a hearing in support of proposed legislation, An Act Establishing Medicare for All in Massachusetts (H1239 and S744). Activists from around the state, including from several other Leagues, packed the house. There was oral testimony presented in-person and on Zoom -- 73 signed up to speak in support, and only one person in opposition, from the insurance industry. In addition, several of us submitted written testimony. Oral testimony from the Cape Cod Area League outlined the LWV-US and LWVMA's health care positions, well aligned with the plan detailed in the current bills.

A video of the hearing and a photo gallery of the pre-hearing rally on the State House steps, along with excellent advice for drafting effective testimony, [can be found here](#).

Barbara Pearson

[Email Barbara with questions or comments.](#)

## Town Charter Review Committee

The LWVA Charter Review Committee seeks members to join the committee, to study potential amendments to the Home Rule Charter amendments, based on the League's good government principles.

As many of you know, at the League's 2022 annual meeting, members voted to conduct a review of the Amherst Home Rule Charter, in anticipation of the town-required review in 2024, and thus created the Charter Review Task Force. As its first task, the Charter Review team conducted a Charter Review survey. (See the resulting [Power Point slides](#) and a [presentation](#) by Task Force Chair Phyllis Lehrer.)

The Task Force concluded that many survey respondents are not fully satisfied with how the Amherst government is functioning. It also found that among the 13 Massachusetts towns that use Amherst's form of government, it is a common practice to amend Home Rule Charters. (See [Northampton process final report](#).)

The next step as noted in our report is for the Task Force to determine whether amendments or revisions of specific provisions to the Charter are warranted, based on the LWVA's good government principles. The Committee will also observe the Town's Charter Review process, and update the Steering Committee on new developments. We will provide a report, potentially including recommended amendments tied to the LWVA good government principles, and will note issues raised by officials and the public at the upcoming municipal meetings on this subject.

In August, the Town Council created a [charge for the 2024 Town Council Charter Review Committee](#). In Council discussion, it was agreed that the next Council should appoint the members and that its committee would probably not start its work until July 2024.

The timeline for the LWVA Charter Review Committee is the following:

- **November - December 2023:** Conduct research on the Charter Review & Amendment processes and procedures
- **January - March 2024:** Study 15-35 potential charter review amendments or revision topics, as listed in the Charter Review Committee's "long survey." The study will consist of reporting on why an amendment to the Home Rule Charter may be warranted.
- **April 2024:** Present report to LWV membership.
- **May or June 2024:** LWV membership meeting consensus vote on Charter Review amendment recommendations.

Once the town's Charter Review Committee is seated, the LWVA Charter Review Committee will:

- Provide an explanation of LWV good government principles to the municipal committee;
- Publish any LWV recommendations for amendments; and
- Provide presence at municipal committee meetings.

Darcy Dumont

[Click here to email Darcy.](#)

## 2023-2024 Civic Action Grants

### The LWV Amherst is now accepting applications for 2023-2024 Civic Action Grants

Up to \$2,500 is awarded for projects that are directly related to the League's priority programs. Read [here](#) for how to apply. Contact [Rebecca Fricke](#) for more information or questions.

#### Update on Girl Scout Civic Engagement Badge made possible with a Civic Action grant from the LWVA

Dana Carnegie, Communications Director of the Girl Scouts of Central and Western MA, wrote the following: *"Troops are participating! Best part, in the survey they take after completing the patch requirements, they are overwhelmingly, as a result of participating, marking Definitely to "I understand the ways to vote in Massachusetts. I feel like a better informed citizen to encourage others to vote, and I am excited for the day I am old enough to vote."*



## LWVA Book Group Schedule

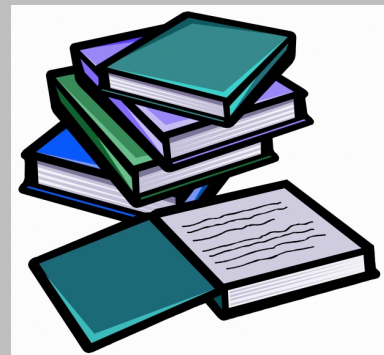
The LWV Book Group will meet the second Wednesday of the month at 1:30 PM at Applewood, 1 Spencer Drive, Amherst. The building is handicapped accessible.

Here are the schedule and books:

Jan 2024 - *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, Anthony Doerr

Feb - *How the Word is Passed*, Clint Smith

March - *American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good*, Colin Woodard



For information, call Phyllis Lehrer 253-5179 or [email her.](#)

## FORWARD THIS MESSAGE!

This monthly message is for anyone interested in the League, not just members. If you know someone who might be interested, forward this message and invite them to subscribe themselves, using the link below.

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Susan Lowery, Membership  
Jessica Ryan, Voter Engagement  
David Shanabrook, Treasurer  
[Click here for email links.](#)

### e-BULLETIN STAFF

*The Editor of the LWVAmherst e-Bulletin, Rebecca Fricke can be contacted [here](#). Link checker is Kay Fite and Proofreader is Rebecca Curzon.*

LWV Amherst



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