

## AAUW Board Meeting

June 3, 2021

### Zoom Meeting

**Members present: Board** – Lula Allen, Cyd Averill, Sue Doyle, Barbara Durniak, Betty Harrel, Barbara Hesperheide, Gwen Higgins, Marcine Humphrey, Diane Jablonski, Monique Jones, Sandy Lash, Pat Luczai, Linnea Masson, Margaret Nijhuis, Vivian Rose, Mary Scalise-Annis, Celia Serotsky, and Sheila Zweifler; **Non-Voting attendees** – Bonnie Auchincloss, Mary Coiteux, Maria DeWald and Barbara VanItallie

President, **Monique Jones**, called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

The minutes for the May 6, 2021 board meeting were approved as submitted by **Margaret Nijhuis**. The minutes from the June, 2020 business meeting were amended to include the complete statement for the proposed and accepted bylaw changes.

#### President

**Monique Jones** opened with the request for questions on the proposed Strategic Plan 2020-2022. After one change the motion was made and passed to approve the Strategic Plan. The approved copy will be placed on the website for use by the board and membership. Next was the call for questions concerning the updates of the Working Rules. The motion was made and passed that they be accepted. The final copy will be placed on the website for reference by the board and membership.

The Poughkeepsie AAUW Annual meeting will be held on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The board was encouraged to attend as 10% of the membership is required for a quorum. June 7<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm will be the practice session for those taking part in the program. Changes to the bylaws will be entertained in the fall for the November business meeting. This will include the section that was not passed at the June 2020 meeting.

Delegates to the AAUW-NYS Summit will be: **Sheila Zweifler, Marcine Humphrey, Pat Luczai, Diane Jablonski, Margaret Nijhuis, Mildred Jones and Monique Jones**. It was also noted that by virtue of their state positions **Mary Lou Davis, Betty Harrel, Barbara Van Itallie and Maria DeWald** will also be delegates. All delegates were urged to attend the state bylaws discussion on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

In response to concerns expressed by a few members that national AAUW was becoming too progressive and that there were political discussions taking place in interest groups that caused some to feel uncomfortable, a letter has been drafted by Monique with the approval of **Sheila Zweifler and Mary Scalise-Annis** (see below\*). The letter was found to be very acceptable but a great deal of discussion ensued as to whom and at what time it should be sent. A motion was made and passed “the letter with the modification that this issue was only expressed by a small number of our members will appear in the September issue of the newsletter in its entirety. The letter will be sent as an email to Interest Group Coordinators and Community Initiatives Chairs to share with their members as they see fit.”

It was decided not to hold a joint board meeting but rather have members that are leaving office to get together with their replacement. It was generally a social event and in these times of social distancing that is not possible. **Pat Luczai** has been in touch with **Roz Werner** and she is willing to review our financial records.

Lastly, it was decided we cannot react each month to the latest guidelines on in-person gatherings. Therefore it was moved and passed “In the future, interest groups and initiatives are advised to follow NYS Department of Health Guidelines when planning an in-person meeting.”

#### Treasurer

**Pat Luczai**, gave the Financial Position of the branch as of June 3, 2021. Total Assets are \$72,124.03. For the current fiscal year starting July 1, 2020, Total Revenue is \$21,854.59 and Total Expenses are \$18,225.31.

### **Historian**

**Barbara Hesperheide** asked the board that as they gather materials either to pass on to their successor or to file for the year to please send anything they think needs to be archived to her. She also expressed that Monique's letter included with the dues notice was a perfect statement of our year with its trials and successes. In conclusion, she said that a copy of the film "A City on the Hudson" had been offered to the Dutchess County Historical Society.

### **Newsletter Editor**

**Cyd Averill** noted that articles for the September newsletter were due by August 10<sup>th</sup>. She also requested a copy of the letter to be included in the newsletter, as discussed above, be sent to her as well as a statement on in-person meetings.

### **State & National AAUW Liaison**

**Barbara Van Itallie** urged members to attend the AAUW-NYS Summit both Friday and Saturday, June 11 and 12, and the final discussion on bylaws on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Nominating Committee Chair**

**Betty Harrel** no report

### **Public Policy Chair**

**Celia Serotsky** reported that she and **Betty Harrel** had attended two Zoom meetings with Gerry Laybourne regarding how we can support the DAY ONE Learning Communities initiative that will eventually be housed on the property of the former YMCA. The City of Poughkeepsie unanimously approved of the YMCA building's transfer to the County who will be funding the demolition of the old building and constructing the new one. There will be additional funding sought by the county through grants. Our Leading to Reading group has put together 114 packages of books for both pre-school age children and babies that Day One will distribute in August at Eastman Park. Laybourne has suggested other ways in which our organization can help and support DAY ONE. They are listing us as supporters of their initiative. We will be contacting members to help in the other ways that Gerry Laybourne mentioned. One regards craft projects and Celia will be sending an email to the membership concerning these crafts.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**Gwen Higgins** stated that their projects are going forth. The latest meeting focused on discussion of diversity in our membership. They expressed concern and discussed coalitions with local groups. The Juneteenth celebration on June 19 would give a chance for our membership to show our interest. Also Race Unity Circle is sponsoring events on June 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Other events will take place throughout the summer. The group spoke of strategies that would make our membership more diverse. They suggested gifting of membership to new college graduates and honorary memberships to prominent members of NAACP or local sororities. They suggested bringing back the business card, tri-folds and elevator speeches to help members speak about AAUW. Five young women joined AAUW this year because of the Mothers Project.

### **Interest Groups**

**Linnea Masson** reported that Cathy Kinn had resigned from Poetry & Plays as well as Bridge II (see below \*\*). Also that Barbara Van Itallie was helping to reorganize the Bridge group.

### **Community Service Initiatives Liaison**

**Vivian Rose** gave an enthusiastic update on the baby blanket and diaper drive taking place on June 7<sup>th</sup> with pick up at Panera Bread in Poughkeepsie. Baby Vision, who donated to our auction over many years, once again is giving baby clothing and items to go with the blankets and diapers. Some alternative ways of giving were suggested and will be included in the final notice to the membership. **Betty Harrel** reported that an Eagle Scout's project would build "Little Libraries" and Leading to Reading would supply the books. Vivian, who will be leaving the board, thanked everyone for the pleasure of working with them and promised to stay involved.

## **Facebook**

**Mary Coiteux** asked for news from groups meeting now between newsletters. She is working to keep all informed.

## **Communications Vice President**

**Barbara Durniak** has been in touch with **Mary King** who can provide the needed information for Poughkeepsie AAUW to retain the domain name [www.AAUWPoughkeepsie.org](http://www.AAUWPoughkeepsie.org) for a few years. **Claudette Hennessy** has a new version of Microsoft Access database that will include pictures and member forms. Applications and membership profile sheets will be scanned by **Sue Doyle** and sent to Claudette.

## **Development**

**Lula Allen** reported that \$2131.50 had been donated this year and the DCC Scholarships had not yet been awarded. Lula, who will also be leaving the board, thanked everyone and expressed her appreciation for everyone's help. She will be moving out of the immediate area but will remain a member.

## **Membership Vice Presidents**

**Sheila Zweifler** and **Mary Scalise-Annis** reported that the membership committee was still considering having an in-person Open House. This decision will be made by July 15<sup>th</sup>. They will send out an email request to members for names of prospective members. They feel they must get at the least 25 names to make the \$500 expense of holding the in-person Open House worthwhile. They will still publish the Membership Booklet but only online – not printed. The Open House will be September 9<sup>th</sup> – virtual or in-person. June 17<sup>th</sup> will be the last BYOL until October and then will be evaluated to see if needed.

## **Membership Treasurer**

**Sue Doyle** announced that 139 renewals had been received and a few lapsed members had returned. She felt all was going well.

## **Program Vice Presidents**

**Sandy Lash** thanked everyone for their help over the 4 years she has served as co-Vice President of Programming. She emphasizes the graceful if not always expedient way in which problems were solved. **Marcine Humphrey** reminded everyone of the programming meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **Old business**

**Sue Doyle** asked if it was possible for AAUW to donate money to the DC Historical Society. It was noted that this was not a practice of our organization.

## **New business**

**Margaret Nijhuis** told the group that a calendar of summer events was on the website and if others are planned to let her know and they will be added.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Margaret Nijhuis**, Secretary

**\*\*From: Cathleen Kinn <Cathy@kinn.org>**

To: Monique Jones <myj712@aol.com>

Sent: Sun, May 30, 2021 12:23 am

Dear Monique and Members of the Board:

I have just notified the members of Bridge II that I will no longer be their Interest Group Coordinator, though I will remain active in the group and will continue teaching. This is a major milestone for me, because it is the first time in 35 of my 36 years of membership in AAUW that I will not serve as a leader. I will of course continue active membership; my health is excellent, but I turn 86 this week and can no longer keep as many balls going at the same time as I used to. AAUW members do not work for compensation or recognition, but I have always objected to seeing older active members and their work just fade away.

For that reason, I would like to share proudly and celebrate my achievements with you:

My first job was that of censorship chair and as a result every school in Dutchess County has a means of dealing with censorship challenges. The board accepted my idea of the formation of a diversity group in the early 90's, but we just didn't have the wherewithal to make it work.

I served on the board as:

- Membership VP
- Interest Group Coordinator
- Publicity Chair

If you have anything to thank me for, it is for not accepting any of the invitations I received to serve as president. AAUW is a collaborative organization and I am a high-functioning loner, so I don't work well with others. ☺ Please, in the future, continue to make room for people like me.

I have founded four Interest Groups

- Soleil
- Bridge II
- Poetry & Play Readings (for Peggy Hansen)
- Ediss

I understand that I am not unique in our organization, nor am I alone in saying that I have received back so much more than I put in. To be able to say that I am so grateful and so proud to be part of an organization that accomplishes so much for women and girls and to work with women like you, is the best way to spend a life.

Cathy Kinn

Shock and Awe: I was at a state convention early on and heard one of our scholarship recipients explain her work to us. I had no idea what she was talking about – and I had never heard a woman speak like that.

**\*Letter to membership**



Dear Members,

One of the hallmarks of our branch is the wide range of activities, cultivated over the years by our membership, that afford those with similar hobbies, skills, or interests the opportunity to engage with one another while enjoying a favorite pastime. The broad array of interest groups as well as our varied community service initiatives not only strengthen our organization but being a part of them fosters a sense of connection that helps individuals feel like *members*.

With this in mind, it has recently come to our attention that casual conversations taking place during interest group meetings have been politically partisan in nature and are making some member participants feel uncomfortable.

While this may not be widespread, we wanted to pre-empt any future issues by sending a reminder that our membership is ideologically diverse and our gatherings are intended to be welcoming and inclusive spaces for all who wish to participate. One of the core values of our organization is nonpartisanship, and this should not only hold true in our advocacy work but also in the way we interface with one another.

Additionally, while we support respectful dialogue between members, interest group offerings with defined leisurely purposes are not appropriate settings for the thoughtful discussion of similarly sensitive topics if they are unrelated to the group's prescribed objective. Whereas when a group's mission is to discuss and act on such topics, we are in no way discouraging such discussion.

So, as we go forward, we ask for you to be considerate of the above-mentioned issues and to do your part to create an environment that embraces all.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Questions may be directed to us at [board.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com](mailto:board.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com).

Healthy regards,

Monique Jones  
President

Mary Scalise-Annis  
Membership co-Vice President

Sheila Zweifler  
Membership co-Vice President