

AAUW Board Meeting Minutes  
October 5, 2023  
Zoom Meeting

**Members Present: Board** – Bonnie Auchincloss, Cyd Averill, Kathy Friedman, Betty Harrel, Barbara Hesperheide, Gwen Higgins, Diane Jablonski, Pat Luczai, Linnea Masson, Kay Saderholm, Celia Serotsky, Gail Sisti, Jackie Vierno.

President **Celia Serotsky** called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

The minutes for the September board meeting had been distributed by Secretary **Beth DeFiglio**. They were approved as distributed.

**President's Report:** The process and contract for reviewing our strategic plan with Ingrid Kulick's Forward Solutions had been sent in the board packet. The committee consisting of **Cindy Emmer, Betty Harrel, Diane Jablonski, Pat Luczai, Maria DeWald**, and **Celia Serotsky** met with her in September and unanimously approved the plan to present to the board. The cost will be \$5250 paid in 3 installments. Diane Jablonski was waiting for board approval to submit a grant request to the Dyson Foundation. She can also apply for an AAUW-NYS grant for \$500 or \$1000. Although there are no guarantees, the foundation has worked closely with Ingrid in the past and is good at supporting this type of organizational process. Questions were raised about the cost but we have sufficient funds to pay for the project. Issues we're facing include decreasing membership, finding leaders, effective use of social media, and community engagement. Some programs dissipated during the pandemic, such as the Girls' Conference. It would be helpful to have a deep, more comprehensive outside look at our plan to help engage more of the community and prioritize our efforts. DEI concerns will be addressed as part of the process, especially since 20 stakeholders will be interviewed. **A motion to approve the contract with Forward Solutions for a strategic plan review was approved unanimously.** Celia announced that she would be having spinal surgery on October 20<sup>th</sup> and would be hospitalized for 2-3 nights. If any questions come up during that time, contact can be made with **Beth DeFiglio** or **Betty Harrel**. She asked for everyone's prayers and good wishes. The November business meeting will include reports by the president, treasurer, nominating committee chair, and any new business.

**Treasurer's Report:** **Diane Jablonski** reported that there was limited activity during the summer and dues are continuing to trickle in. She will check on switching to a newer CD at the credit union, including any penalties for turning over the CD, prior to the next board meeting.

**Program:** **Gail Sisti** said that programs are all set through the spring. Since the government shutdown was averted, the October speakers will be able to present their program. **Kay Saderholm** announced that the December meeting, Festive Foods, will be an opportunity for members to talk about a food which is important to their family. It can be from any holiday or celebration and small samples would be welcome. She has already reached out to numerous people including the 2 cuisine groups.

**Membership:** **Bonnie Auchincloss** said that the Open House was very successful, especially due to the many people who helped. Special thanks went to **Maria DeWald** for stepping in for Celia Serotsky, who had a family emergency. She took the president's role, gave her talk, and invited initiative chairs to speak. All the 60 non-renewals received email reminders. There are a variety of reasons for not renewing, including spending the winter away, moving away, or the dues cost. It was felt that next year paper reminders should be sent to those who don't renew after the first email reminder. On October 1<sup>st</sup>,

**Margaret Nijhuis** sent an email telling those who hadn't renewed that they would no longer be listed in the directory and would be removed from AAUW email lists. The question was raised about non-members being part of AAUW initiatives. Some are joint initiatives, like Days for Girls and Expanding Girls Horizons, while some are solely for AAUW members, like Leading to Reading, and are used as a membership tool. A copy of the email sent to non-renewals will be sent to board members. If needed, an Executive Committee discussion will be held. Questions arose about the membership directory and whether it should be printed and pictures should be included. Another option would be to send an email with the pictures attached. Bonnie Auchincloss will find out the differences in cost and information will be sent to board members. Some prefer a print version and others prefer having the information online. Last year many were hand-delivered, which saved about \$100 in postage. It was decided to keep the directory the same for this year and decide about eliminating a print version next year. If anyone wants their picture updated, they can contact **Bonnie Auchincloss** or **Pat Luczai** and they will take a new one.

**Membership Treasurer: Kathy Friedman** expressed concern about those members we lose after one year and said we need to make efforts to get them more involved. We currently have 232 members compared to 253 last February. **Gwen Higgins** is taking part in an AAUW DEI online discussion and will share any strategies to build feelings of belonging. Several new members are taking active roles, such as **Cindy Emmer** on the Strategic Planning Review Committee and **Paula Greenspan** as the Assistant Secretary.

**Development Vice President: Betty Harrel** invited everyone to make reservations for the Women in the History of Wine fundraiser on October 29<sup>th</sup>. A registration table will be at the next general meeting and guests are very welcome to attend. **Pat Luczai** is seeking volunteers, especially for set-up and clean-up.

**Honors and Awards: Barbara Hesperheide** is seeking suggestions for the named awards, Emerging Leader, and Cornerstone Award. **Cyd Averill, Barbara Van Itallie, and Mary Scalise-Annis** are serving on the awards committee.

**Communications Vice President: Barbara Durniak** sent a report about the new online form for tabling events. It is easy to use and provides very useful information for future events.

**Community Service Initiatives Liaison: attached to board reports**

**Interest Groups Liaison: Linnea Masson** said that all interest groups are going well. She will place information in The Branch about a request from Dutchess Outreach for help in their clothes closet.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Gwen Higgins** described the new structure for the DEI Committee, which will be a small core group meeting every other month. Articles will be placed in The Branch regularly on DEI topics and a 5-minute presentation will start each of our regular program meetings, except for October. She is also seeking a tech savvy person who can help with the website and welcomes anyone who would like to be in the core group.

**International Relations:** Jackie Vierno will focus on the International Women's Day and UN Conference which will be March 10-24. She sent out informational emails about international events this past summer.

**Public Policy: no report**

**Nominating Committee Chair:** Pat Luczai has selected **Mary Lou Davis, Blanche Bergman, Maria DeWald,** and **Betty Harrel** to serve on her committee. Election of the committee will take place at the November general meeting. Positions to fill this year include President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Communications Vice President. **Barbara Durniak,** Communications VP, is completing her second term.

**Newsletter Editor:** Cyd Averill said she needs lots of articles by October 10<sup>th</sup> for the November Branch. An article on the upcoming officers will be in the newsletter after the election of the Nominating Committee in November.

**Historian: no report**

**Old Business: none**

**New Business:** Celia Serotsky announced that AAUW was invited to the Day One Early Learning Center visit by Dr. Jill Biden. AAUW has been involved with the program over the past several years, including making screen backgrounds, knitting hats and fidget squares, providing books and dolls, and developing a workshop on job-seeking skills. **Marty Madori** and **Betty Harrel** will attend. A new home is needed for the sound system. **Celia Serotsky** offered to keep it with her other president's materials.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Betty Harrel** for **Beth DeFiglio,** Secretary