

AAUW Board Meeting Minutes
February 1, 2024
Zoom Meeting

Members present: Board – Bonnie Auchincloss, Cyd Averill, Mary Ann Boylan, Beth DeFiglio, Barbara Durniak, Kathy Friedman, Betty Harrel, Barbara Hespenheide, Gwendolyn Higgins, Diane Jablonski, Pat Luczai, Kay Saderholm, Gail Sisti, Celia Serotsky

Guest: Darlene Yerdon

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

Secretary **Beth DeFiglio** had distributed the December Board meeting minutes. The Board approved them as distributed.

President's Report

Celia Serotsky announced that there is a United Way event at Locust Grove on February 28 titled "Celebration of Women's Impact in the Community". She asked whether anyone wished to organize the donation to Grace Smith House in May. **Sue Doyle** has done this in the past, and **Mary Ann Boylan** and **Pat Luczai** volunteered to either assist or take it over. Celia noted that she and **Bonnie Auchincloss** attended an AAUW-NYS meeting about the AAUW amendment change. Information is being distributed about the amendment.

Cyd Averill moved that the Board fund two women to attend the NCCWSL conference, as requested by Marcine Humphrey. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

Celia will speak to the Poughkeepsie-Arlington Rotary Club, and will take rack cards and handouts.

Both the Annual Meeting Committee and the Strategic Plan Committee met in January. The Consultant hired for the Strategic Plan will interview about 20 people, both in AAUW and in the community, and then collate the results. Celia has sent introductory e-mails to the people.

Treasurer's Report

Diane Jablonski noted that we received the Dyson Grant for \$4200, and she paid the consultant \$1500 per the contract. She also noted that the Poughkeepsie Branch normally donates \$3000 to National, but members only donated \$1280 in 2023. **Betty Harrel moved that the Branch donate an additional \$1720 to National, which was approved.**

Program

Program VPs **Kay Saderholm** and **Gail Sisti** reported that the following programs are planned:

February (Zoom) – Slavery, Antislavery, and the Underground Railroad

March (in person) – Dr. Jessica Sims will speak on "Existential Captivation"

April (in person) – Richard David on reproductive rights

It was also decided that an additional HDMI converter should be purchased in case a speaker's computer cannot connect to the church's projector.

Membership

Membership VP **Bonnie Auchincloss** reported that all directories have been sent out. As of January, there are 234 total members.

Membership Treasurer

Kathy Friedman stated that there was one new member and one renewal in December. Number of total new members is 23, non-renewals are 29, and 3 members came back. Celia noted that she has to send the mail addresses of any members without email to AAUW-NYS for the amendment vote.

Development Vice President

Betty Harrel stated that the request to send our donation to national was covered in the treasurer's report.

Honors & Awards

Chair **Barbara Hesperheide** reported that one of this year's honorees, Darlene Yerdon, has asked not to receive the award. The amount of money sent to National will be determined later.

Three members have agreed to serve as judges for the Dutchess County Regional Science Fair at Dutchess Community College on April 6. These members are **Bonnie Auchincloss, Claudette Hennessy and Amy Matts**. One seventh and one eighth grade girl will receive Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW STEM Awards.

Communications VP

Barbara Durniak asked about renewing the Zoom account and applying for the state grant. **Diane Jablonski** will take care of both.

Barbara noted that we might want to digitize photos for the 100th Anniversary celebration. The Poughkeepsie library has a digitization service (\$4 for 100 photos) but response time varies. Barbara will try to get a sense of how many photos are in the archives. **Diane Jablonski** suggested that a separate line item for the 100th Anniversary should be put in the upcoming budget.

Community Service Initiatives Liaison - Mary Ann Boylan

Leading to Reading (Betty Harrel)

2024 is the 20th anniversary of Leading to Reading. We have distributed over 52,000 new books and countless used books during that time. In our planning meeting, we will be discussing ways to highlight and celebrate our accomplishments.

STEM (Barbara Van Itallie)

There are two new Math Buddies this school year. **Vivien Simpson** is at the Clinton School and **Mary Ann Williams** is Barbara's sub at the Krieger School. We work with Literacy Connections for background checks and placements.

Days for Girls, Court Watch – No report

Gwen Higgins reported that the February meeting of Extending Girls Horizons will be First Aid, and March will be Cuisine. Volunteers are always needed, and she thanked members who have participated. The Board clarified that the program can use the Branch's A/V equipment, and Gwen could contact **Bonnie Auchincloss** for the computer, projector, and/or screen, and **Marcine Humphrey** currently has the speakers.

Interest Groups Liaison – Linnea Masson

All groups are functioning, with attendance, understandably, down in the winter.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Gwen Higgins noted that the proposed membership amendment has been discussed a lot in DEI meetings she's attended. The Board backed her proposal to coordinate a general membership Zoom meeting to present and discuss the pros and cons.

International Relations – Jackie Vierno

Celia noted that chair **Jackie Vierno** has sent out communications about International Women's Day.

Public Policy – Patricia DeLeo – No report

Nominating Committee

Chair **Pat Luczai** stated that the committee assembled a list of potential candidates and has already filled one position.

Newsletter Editor

Cyd Averill reminded members of the February 10th date for March newsletter articles.

Historian - Marge Barton – No report

Old Business – None

New Business

Betty Harrel presented her proposal to clarify Initiative membership guidelines (Appendix A at the end of the minutes). The Board agreed that mixed messages are being given and clarification in the Working Rules is needed. Betty will write up a formal statement to be voted upon next month.

Darlene Yerdon, co-Database Manager, read her policy proposal for the Membership Directory (Appendix B). The Board agreed with the main ideas of e-mailing to each member a PDF of the Directory and a separate contact sheet, and thanked Darlene for her work on the Directory and this particular issue. However, the Board asked her to amend the proposal to eliminate charges for a printed Directory and to print the Directory only on an exception basis. The amended proposal will be distributed for a vote at the March meeting.

Announcements

Barbara Durniak announced that Michelle Horton will discuss her new book and her efforts to free her sister, Nikki Addimando, at Vassar College on February 15. With the Board's agreement, Barbara will publicize this to the membership.

Gwen Higgins noted that the Race Unity Circle will discuss "Bias Views" at Christ Episcopal Church in Poughkeepsie on February 21, after viewing the movie *American Fiction* at a prior date.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth DeFiglio, Secretary

Appendix A: Initiative membership guidelines by **Betty Harrel**

Currently our guidelines say someone can attend 2 interest group meetings and then must join to continue. There are no guidelines for initiatives but some are told that they can take part in an initiative without joining and others that they must join AAUW to take part. Mixed messages are being given.

Issues:

1. Initiatives are a membership tool. They are an important part of our branch image.
Example: 2 prospective members plan to join AAUW so they can take part in Leading to Reading.
2. For some grants (AAUW-NYS) a requirement is to show how the project serves as a membership tool.
3. Some members would drop AAUW membership if they could continue working on an initiative. Unfair to those who do pay their dues.
4. Initiatives are often collaborative (Days for Girls, Expanding Girls' Horizons) and joint efforts should be encouraged.

Proposal:

1. Individuals may take part in two initiative sessions and then must join (same as interest groups)
2. Community collaborators representing other groups (such as the Sewing Guild) may continue to work on the joint project.

Appendix B: AAUW Membership Directory Distribution Proposal by Darlene Yerdon

Objective: to reduce AAUW's carbon footprint, save money and save time.

Proposal:

- Email a PDF file of the directory to each member instead of printing and mailing a hard copy.
- Create a "Member Contact List" (i.e. a phone book) pdf file that contains only names, phone numbers and email addresses. This would also be emailed to members. It would be a smaller file that could be printed with key contact information instead of printing the complete directory.
- Hard Copies printed and given to officers, committee/interest group/initiative chairs, appointed board members as well as members without email.
- Hard copies will be provided for a fee (i.e. \$3 to cover expenses) if a member requests a hard copy.
- An updated version (new members, changes, etc.) of the files can be sent out quarterly via email.

Security:

- A disclaimer notice will be included when the directory is emailed (i.e. stating for member use only, not for distribution). If a member is going to misuse the directory, they will do it with a hard copy or a soft copy.
- Directory and Member Contact List would NOT be posted on the AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch website.

Benefits:

- Environmentally friendly
- Monetary Savings (estimate of \$400-\$500)
- Time stuffing/stamping/delivery
- Updates available during the year
- Reflects current business standards.

Concerns:

- Charging members for a printed copy
- Security risks