

AAUW Board Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2024
Zoom Meeting

Members present: Board – Bonnie Auchincloss, Marge Barton, Beth DeFiglio, Kathy Friedman, Betty Harrel, Barbara Hespenheide, Gwendolyn Higgins, Diane Jablonski, Linnea Masson, Kay Saderholm, Gail Sisti, Celia Serotsky, Jackie Vierno.

Non-Voting members: Mary Coiteux, Darlene Yerdon

President **Celia Serotsky** called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Secretary **Beth DeFiglio** had distributed the February Board meeting minutes. The Board approved them as distributed, but with the page numbering fixed.

President's Report

Celia Serotsky announced that six delegates are needed to the hybrid Annual Meeting of NYS June 28 and 29. Voting for by-laws changes may take place earlier. Celia also reviewed voting procedures for the Board, which include the President calling for a vote and announcing the results.

Celia announced that our branch has been awarded two stars by the National AAUW Five-Star Recognition Program, one for Communications and External Relations and one for Programs. Based on uncovering additional DEI information, she will contact the Program about earning an additional star. Celia thanked responsible Communications and Program members for their great work.

Treasurer's Report

Diane Jablonski stated that dues are lagging as usual for this time of year and the first bill for the Strategic Plan has been paid. Diane and **Betty Harrel** are pursuing an AAUW-NYS grant for \$550 for the strategic plan, with the condition that a presentation/workshop is given on our strategic plan at the June NYS meeting.

Diane noted that she sent out a draft budget for operating expenses. The budget must be finalized at the April Board meeting. She asked everyone to review the numbers for their area of responsibility, and submit comments to her no later than March 27. **Betty Harrel** asked that money be included for the annual NYS meeting to help with the President's attendance expenses.

Program

Program VPs **Kay Saderholm** and **Gail Sisti** stated that March will resume in-person meetings with a presentation by Dr. Jessica Sims, who is coming from NYC, and April's program will be a talk by Dr. Richard David about birth rates. The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association will present for May's program. **Gwen Higgins** will have a DEI/inspirational message starting in March at in-person meetings. Gail and Kay will hold a planning meeting about next year's programs sometime in the spring.

Membership

Diane Jablonski moved that the **Directory Distribution amended proposal by Darlene Yerdon (Appendix A) be approved. The Board approved unanimously.** Celia and the Board thanked Bonnie Auchincloss and Darlene Yerdon for their work and initiative on this proposal.

Membership VP **Bonnie Auchincloss** reported that **Linda Eagleton** is helping **Margaret Nijhuis** update the membership renewal and registration forms for 2024. **Darlene Yerdon** should be consulted about any changes that may affect the database. Bonnie also noted that the two new members in 2024 joined because of Leading to Reading.

Membership Treasurer

Kathy Friedman noted again the two new members in 2024, and stated that the entire National dues will be tax-deductible. (A three dollar fee was excluded in the past.)

Development Vice President

Betty Harrel discussed a previous suggestion to send out a fundraising request with Membership renewals. The Board asked Betty to proceed. The focus will be on donations to general needs for Branch operations, but members will have options to contribute directly to a specific area.

Honors & Awards

Barbara Hespenheide reported that she is gathering biographies, and **Margaret Nijhuis** will get the certificates.

Communications VP - Barbara Durniak

100th Anniversary Celebration

Celia reported that **Barbara Durniak**, **Cyd Averill**, and **Barbara Hespenheide** viewed the 1925 archives in Adriance Library. **Barbara and Cyd** are co-chairs of the Committee, and **Marge Barton**, **Celia Serotsky**, and **Beth DeFiglio** are on the committee. **Mary Coiteux** volunteered to join the committee and help with graphics if needed.

Community Service Initiatives Liaison - Mary Ann Boylan - See Appendix B.

Gwen Higgins noted that Extending Girls Horizons will hold a Culinary Arts program on March 8, which is quite popular. **Celia** announced that Days for Girls is looking for someone to take over **Judy Longacre's** organizational work. She will still be part of the group.

Interest Groups Liaison

Linnea Masson stated that the Interest groups are doing well. **JoAnne Abraskin** is moving, so Cuisine and Gourmet are looking for new leadership.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Gwen Higgins will arrange a Zoom meeting to discuss the National AAUW membership proposal.

International Relations

Jackie Vierno reported that she has sent out e-blasts about the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The Conference is March 10-March 22, and members can register and decide what events they wish to attend. She will hold a follow-up discussion on Zoom on March 26 at 2pm.

Public Policy – Patricia DeLeo

Celia reported that the AAUW-NYS chair holds monthly meetings, which **Laura Chasin** (a new member) will attend.

Nominating Committee Chair - Pat Luczai – No report

Newsletter Editor - Cyd Averill

Celia reminded members that the deadline for the newsletter is March 10.

Historian

Marge Barton stated that she would be focusing on the anniversary celebration.

Old Business

Betty Harrel moved to add the following clarifying language to the Working rules for participating in community initiatives so that it is similar to the interest group procedure.

Community Service Initiatives: Initiatives are related to the mission of the organization and benefit the community. Each initiative is planned, implemented, and evaluated by the Initiative Chair and her committee. Initiative Chairs are encouraged to partner with local like-minded non-profit agencies to avoid duplication of services and to promote efficiency. Within the branch, Initiative Chairs are encouraged to collaborate with each other to increase organizational cohesiveness.

Proposed addition: *Any potential member may take part in no more than two sessions before applying for branch membership. Since collaboration is a goal, a person participating as part of a community organization may continue to take part in the joint project.*

The motion was approved unanimously.

It was noted that the language in the Working Rules about attendance in Interest Groups should match the new language about attendance in Initiatives. Betty will look into this.

No New Business

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth DeFiglio, Secretary

Appendix A: Membership Directory Distribution Proposal (amended, February 5, 2024) from 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 by members with key contact information instead of printing the complete directory.
- An updated version (new members, changes, etc.) of the files to be sent out quarterly via email.

Discussion points:

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)
- Other Savings of time stuffing/stamping/delivery
- Updates available during the year
- Reflects current business standards

Appendix B: Community Service Report from Mary Ann Boylan

Ann Pinna – Court Watch

This is a very brief summary of our Court Watch activities since after the holidays.

Liz Graham and I continue to attend Family Court and monitor on a regular basis. Flo Mondanaro will be returning from Florida and begin monitoring again. We are in the process of training Cindy Emmer, who has attended court sessions with us and is now ready to assume full monitor status. Nancy Marrine has also attended court and will continue to do so until, with further training, she is ready to become a full member of the team. There are some other AAUW members who are interested in court monitoring, and can be considered, once they attend court a few times with veteran monitors in order to see if this is really something

they want to do. This process does take several months--- as training is a lengthy and on-going process.--- Last, but not least, Mary Lou Davis has volunteered to do our data input and has received our latest Observation Forms, post COVID, which she is now entering into the database that Margaret Nijhuis has graciously and expertly created for us. Soon, we'll be able to see an analysis of our findings and we're anxious to get a comprehensive view of court procedures and what we actually have accomplished with our observations.

Sabashnee Govender/Judy Longacre – Days for Girls

No report submitted

Peggy Kelland – Expanding Girls Horizons

No report submitted

Betty Harrel – Leading to Reading

Leading to Reading just received an AAUW-NYS program grant for \$550. The funds will be used to buy string bags and books with multi-ethnic characters for the Rural and Migrant Ministry camp.

Barbara Van Itallie – STEM

Nothing new to report