

## AAUW Board Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2024

### Zoom Meeting

**Members present: Board** – Bonnie Auchincloss, Cyd Averill, Beth DeFiglio, Barbara Durniak, Betty Harrel, Barbara Hesperheide, Gwendolyn Higgins, Diane Jablonski, Pat Luczaj, Celia Serotsky

President **Celia Serotsky** called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

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

#### President's Report

**Celia Serotsky** announced that **Celia Serotsky, Diane Jablonski, and Barbara Van Itallie** would attend the Annual Meeting of AAUW-NYS June 28 and 29. Three more delegates are needed. **Beth DeFiglio** volunteered. It will be a hybrid meeting, but location is unknown.

Celia also reminded members about the Strategic Plan Retreat on Saturday, April 6, at Vineyard Commons. She thanked **Diane Jablonski** for obtaining the venue and securing refreshments. Further discussion during the meeting revealed that the day's program would include **Ingrid Kulick** reviewing her interviews and leading a working session for actionable items. The Board will receive a report.

Celia attended a webinar about the membership proposal from National AAUW, and sent out an e-blast with salient points. **Gwen Higgins and Betty Harrel** also attended.

#### Treasurer's Report

**Diane Jablonski** noted that dues are lagging, as expected, and she made the last payment to the Strategic Plan Consultant. Overall, finances are in good shape.

**Diane moved that the proposed 2024-2025 budget be approved and be presented at the Annual Meeting in June. The motion was unanimously approved.**

Diane also reported that she and **Betty Harrel** have decided to rescind the request to AAUW-NYS for a Strategic Planning grant of \$550 due to constantly changing requirements and run-around. **Celia** thanked **Diane and Betty** for their four months of work pursuing this.

**Program - Kay Saderholm and Gail Sisti** – No report

#### Membership

Membership VP **Bonnie Auchincloss** reported that **Margaret Nijhuis** will send out renewal e-mails on May 1 to members whose renewal date is July 1. **Kathy Friedman** will inform Margaret which members have a renewal date different from July 1, and Margaret will send those emails at the appropriate time.

#### Membership Treasurer

**Kathy Friedman** submitted a written report that there are no new members this month, and our membership remains at 235. Celia noted that National has informed her that our membership is 242.

#### Development Vice President

**Betty Harrel** presented a proposed letter to be sent out with membership renewals. (See Appendix A) The Board approved the letter, although Extending Girls Horizons may be added if **Peggy Kelland** feels that funds are needed. So far, funding has come from the Girl Scouts and no funds from AAUW have been used.

Diane Jablonski noted that she sent the \$600 check for the second Dutchess Community College scholarship. She also noted that since **Jackie Goffe-McNish** is no longer part of the DCC Foundation, it's unclear how the scholarship winner will be chosen.

## **Honors & Awards**

**Barbara Hespenheide** reported that **Bonnie Auchincloss, Vicki Greenberg and Amy Matts** will be judging the Dutchess County College Science Fair this Saturday, April 6. They will give out AAUW S T E M Awards to one 7<sup>th</sup> and one 8<sup>th</sup> grade girl.

All biographies are in for the May Branch article about our Named Honoree Awards and Emerging Leader. These will also be in the program for the Annual Meeting on June 13. **Beth DeFiglio** is our Emerging Leader. Honorees are **Sandy Goldberg, Peggy Kelland, Linnea Masson, Margaret Nijhuis and Ann Pinna**. The Cornerstone Award has been ordered and will also be presented at the Annual Meeting. It was noted that last year's biography for **Pat Luczai** contained errors and it would be a good idea to have the awardee proofread the article before it appears in The Branch.

## **Communications VP**

**Barbara Durniak** would like to post AAUW activities that are open to the public to online community calendars. She distributed an initial list to the Board and asked members to identify others. **Diane Jablonski** suggested she include Ulster County calendars. Barbara hopes to find a new member to take on this task.

## **Community Service Initiatives Liaison**

**Mary Ann Boylan** submitted the following report:

Leading to Reading has been distributing family reading kits to a number of the Astor Pre-School programs. The Stewart Foundation awarded a Holiday Match grant to Leading to Reading, in which any funds donated by customers between Thanksgiving and Christmas are matched.

Court Watch, Days for Girls, Expanding Girls Horizons, STEM – No report

## **Interest Groups Liaison – Linnea Masson**

Nothing to report except Cuisine and Gourmet Out and About will have a change in leadership since JoAnne Abraskin has moved.

## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

**Gwen Higgins** has been attending meetings of DEI chairs from across the country. She will present a message at the next program meeting.

**International Relations – Jackie Vierno** – No report

**Public Policy – Patricia DeLeo** – No report

## **Nominating Committee Chair**

**Pat Luczai** reported that the Committee is closing in on a slate of officers.

## **Newsletter Editor –**

**Cyd Averill** reminded members that the deadline for the May newsletter is April 10.

**Historian - Marge Barton** – No report

## **Old Business**

**Betty Harrel moved to change the description of Interest Groups on page 6, (part VI. Program) in the Working Rules, to match the participation rules of Community Service Initiatives.**

### **Proposed description:**

Interest Groups: Groups are built around a focus of interest, e.g. reading, hiking, games. Members of a group meet regularly to share and socialize. Members are encouraged to join as many interest groups as they wish. Any potential member may take part in no more than 2 sessions before applying for branch membership. Meeting dates and times are posted on the online calendar on the branch website. Group coordinators are encouraged

to consult the calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts. New interest groups can be formed at any time with a minimum of three participants and the approval of the Board.

**The motion was unanimously approved.**

### **New Business**

**Gwen Higgins** discussed the following Membership Survey that was suggested by DEI chairs and distributed to the Board:

1. In the past two years, has your branch actively recruited new members? (how)
2. How many new members have been recruited in the last membership cycle?
3. What is the current demographic of the membership? Of the leadership?
4. What is the retention rate of the membership? What are some reasons for members leaving?
5. What has been working in creating an inclusive membership?
6. What types of meetings has your branch organized in the past two years?
7. What is your target audience? What is the goal of your programs?
8. How is diversity incorporated in your calendar of events?
9. What strategies have you devised to reach a broader audience?

(added by Gwen)

1. What would you like to see the branch do better?
2. Is having a more diverse membership important to you? How would it change the nature of the branch?
3. What do think the branch could do better?
4. What ideas do you have that might improve the branch?
5. What do you think the branch will look like in 10 years? What do you hope? What do you fear?

Gwen will replace question #3 that she added with “How are you furthering the mission of AAUW? The Board decided to table discussion for now and see whether these topics are brought up during the Strategic Plan Review.

**Pat Luczai** suggested that the June Board meeting be a joint, in-person meeting between old and new officers. Reaction was favorable, but no specific plans were made.

### **No Announcements**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Beth DeFiglio**, Secretary

### **Appendix A:** Proposed development letter from **Betty Harrel**



**Poughkeepsie Branch of the American Association of University Women, Inc.**  
A Nonprofit Organization 501(C)(3)  
<https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>

Dear Member,

Eighteen interest groups ranging from books, food, games, biking, traveling, hiking and the arts. Six community action initiatives helping to improve our community in victim rights, literacy, STEAM and confidence building, and women's health. Scholarships and fellowships on the local and national level. A wide variety of program meetings covering local, national, and international issues. Special events highlighting women who have made a difference. Access to advocacy and research on the state and national level.

All of these and more are opportunities provided through your AAUW membership. The board has not enacted local dues increases in over 10 years so that costs are as low as possible. Fundraisers have been kept to a minimum so members are able to take part in many events.

Your help is needed! To continue our role as a vibrant community force, the support of our members is crucial. When you renew your membership, consider making a donation to our branch. A donation for the "greatest need" will allow funds to be used for all our programs and projects. Funds may also be designated for specific programs, such as our community initiatives, the Irene Keyes Scholarship Fund, or scholarships and fellowships.

Your support is truly appreciated!

Betty Harrel  
Development Vice President

Donations are payable to Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW., Inc. They may be sent to:  
Diane Jablonski, 5312 Merlot Drive, Highland, NY 12528  
To use a credit card, go to <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like my donation to go to:

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ____ Greatest need                | \$_____ (for use by the branch as needed)      |
| ____ Scholarships and Fellowships | \$_____  |
| ____ Irene Keyes Scholarship Fund | \$_____  |
| ____ Community Initiatives        | \$_____ (for any of the initiatives as needed) |
| ____ Court Watch                  | \$_____  |
| ____ Days for Girls               | \$_____  |
| ____ Leading to Reading           | \$_____  |