

ODWNA Association Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Place: Third Christian Reformed Church, 2400 Winchell Ave, Kalamazoo, MI

Board Members:

Present: Diana Morton-Thompson, Vice President; Rachel Bennett, Treasurer; Christopher Bovid, Secretary; Peter Kushner, Past President; Barb Miller; Christine Chadderdon; Stephanie Watkins, Paul Scott; Chris Shook, President

In Attendance: Approximately 32 people (includes Board members)



- I. Meeting called to order by Diana Morton-Thompson, Vice-President; 7:01 PM
 - A. Announcements:
 - i. Thank you to Third Christian Reformed Church for the use of their space for this meeting.
- II. MINUTES – February 21, 2024 (Chris Bovid, Secretary)
 - A. Minutes from the February 21, 2024 ODWNA meeting are posted on the ODWNA website and some printed copies available for review in the back of the room. Please email the Board of Directors with any questions.
- III. TREASURER’S REPORT - (Rachel Bennett, Treasurer)
 - A. Copies of the ODWNA Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet through February 29, 2024 are available for review in the back of the sanctuary.
 - B. ODWNA Checking Account Balance as of 2/29/2024 was \$8,083.49.
- IV. PUBLIC SAFETY: Officer Bagley
 - A. Things have been quiet except for a few isolated incidents
 - B. With nicer weather and tax season people will be raiding mailboxes
 - C. Car thefts are still a problem, usually by juveniles. If you are going to run your vehicle in the morning to warm it up, please make sure the vehicle is locked.
 - D. Q: When cars unlawfully pass other cars on Winchell Avenue (or Oakland, etc.), is there anything that can Traffic violations have to be committed in an officer’s presence in order to issue a ticket.
 - E. Q: Request to check in with the Community Policing Officer (Officer Crooks) that covers Hillcrest part of the Oakland Drive-Winchell Neighborhood to obtain information from that part of the neighborhood.
 - F. Q: Are there common characteristics of people that are committing mailbox/package thefts? In Officer Bagley’s experience, it is all kinds of people, all ages, all walks of life. Normally it picks up around the time people get their tax refunds.
- V. BUSINESS ITEMS
 - A. Ad-Hoc Committee updates (Stephanie Watkins, ODWNA At-Large Director)
 - I. The City’s “Neighborhood Betterment Project” is open for applications. Projects must be resident-led and connected to the ODWN Neighborhood Plan in some way.
 - II. Regarding the “Adopt-A-Drain” stormwater project, it is in the beginning stages. If anyone knows of particular storm drains that consistently get plugged, please notify the board so that volunteer teams can be targeted for those with priority.
 - B. Woods Lake Association (Chris Bovid)
 - i. No new information to report.
 - ii. Any questions may be directed to Chris Bovid at cbovid@gmail.com as president of the Woods Lake Association.
- VI. FEATURED SPEAKER – ODWNA SPEAKER SERIES: Bard Dircks and Chris Kuthe, Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area: Looking Back and Moving Forward with the LWKA – LWV Town Hall – Michigan’s New Voting Rights
 - A. Introduction by Christine Chadderdon
 - B. The League itself was the result of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The League knew that people would need education. Kalamazoo did not start its League until about 6 months after the 19th Amendment was passed.
 - C. In the 1930’s the League invited the national leader of the League and had a big rally in Bronson Park. The people that helped organize it included Caroline Hubbard Kleinstuck. The League was not formally non-partisan and as they continued working interest was loss.
 - D. It was brought back by Mayor Hamm in the 50’s. Mary Brown was instrumental in representing the League at the Supreme Court level for desegregation.
 - E. The local League has approximately 240 members, men and women, and more are welcome!
 - F. The organization is non-partisan and does not support candidates or parties but does support stances on issues.
 - i. Studies are done in order to help form league positions.
 - ii. If a local League disagrees with a national League position then the local League just doesn’t take steps to promote that position.
 - iii. Chris Kuthe referred to posters at the front of the church regarding voting rights.

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- iv. While current prisoners have no right to vote, those awaiting trial or those who have served their time can vote.
- v. Homeless individuals can vote.
- G. Overview of New Voting Rights with Proposal 2
 - i. Early Voting
 - 1. All Michigan voters may now vote early in every statewide and federal elections.
 - 2. At least nine consecutive days, beginning on the second Saturday before the election and ending on the Sunday before the election
 - 3. At least eight hours a day
 - 4. Early voting will take place at an early voting site, which will operate similar to the pools on Election Day.
 - 5. The locations, days, and hours of each early voting site will be different in each community.
 - 6. It doesn't matter which precinct you are in, you can go to any of the four sites in Kalamazoo and show your ID and vote.
 - ii. Early Voting vs Absentee Voting
 - 1. Request a ballot by email, mail, fax, or in-person You can also submit an application to join the Permanent Mail Ballot List. If you join that list, you will receive a ballot by mail before each election without having to submit a new application each time.
 - 2. Complete your ballot wherever you'd like
 - 3. Return the ballot to your city or township clerk either in-person, in a secure ballot drop box, or by mail. Or, you can take your completed ballot to your early voting site or polling place, check in with the poll workers, and insert it directly into the tabulator.
 - 4. Now the application comes with a stamp on it as Prop 2 requires the State to provide postage.
 - 5. Q: Can one apply for mail online or does it need to be a physical application? Can apply for a permanent absentee ballot online or just one time at [Michigan.gov/vote](https://michigan.gov/vote) and the information goes directly to your clerk's office.
 - iii. Permanent Mail Ballot List
 - 1. Snow birds provide a challenge now as if voters are in a different states, the City Clerk's office will send the ballot to your address but election mail DOES NOT GET FORWARDED and gets returned to the City Clerk. The City Clerk's office keeps a special 'snow birds' list so if voters contact them and notify them as to where their winter address will be, the Clerk will send mail there.
 - 2. Q: Shouldn't all First Class Mail be forwarded even if it is a ballot? It is a fraud prevention measure to not forward ballots.
 - iv. Issues with Absentee Ballots or Applications
 - 1. Absentee Ballot and Application Tracking
 - 2. Voters can track the status of their absentee ballot application and absentee ballot at mi.gov/vote
 - v. Deadline: Absentee Ballots to Clerk by 8:00 PM on Election Day for most voters.
 - vi. Drop Boxes:
 - 1. Available for voters to return completed absentee ballot applications and voted absentee ballots
 - 2. Must be secure, locked and bolted down and designed to prevent the removal of absentee ballots and applications, except by authorized election officials; some are subject to video surveillance
 - 3. Every city and township must have at least one secure drop box; larger cities and townships must have at least one drop box for every 15,000 registered voters
 - 4. The closest one to the ODWN is at the Public Safety Station on Parkview Avenue. DO NOT put your ballot in a Portage drop box.
 - 5. Locatinos: clerks must place drop boxes in areas that are convenient and accessible.
 - 6. Drop boxes must be available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
 - 7. Locations can be found at Michigan's Voter Information Center (mi.gov/vote).
 - vii. The LWV website is VOTE411.org
 - viii. Photo ID Requirements
 - 1. Voters will be asked to show a photo ID when they arrive to vote. If they have an acceptable photo ID, they must show it.
 - 2. Voters who do not have an acceptable photo ID will need to fill out an affidavit and fill out a regular ballot if you are on the voter roll. If you are not in the e-book then you would have to fill out a provisional ballot.
 - ix. 2024 Election Dates:
 - 1. February 27 – Presidential Primary
 - 2. August 6 – Statewide Primary Election
 - 3. November 5 – Statewide General Election
 - x. Aimee Bedard from the City Clerk's office discussed additional details regarding City Clerk tabulation checks and balances.

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- H. Q&A:
- i. Deadline to register to vote and vote is up to 8:00 PM (so long as they are there) on Election Day
 - ii. WMU Students can register at the satellite office at the Fetzer Center at WMU
 - iii. Comment that people work very hard to keep the process fair and impartial. Becoming a poll workers is a great way to learn about the process and gain appreciation for it.
 - iv. The League is involved in trying to help keep elections secure. There are “public accuracy tests” performed. Data is fed into the tabulators, including incorrect data, ballots from wrong precinct, etc., trying to get the tabulators to accept wrong data. After the election there is a board of canvassers to determine if the election was free and fair.
 - v. Have there been examples where the LWV or other legitimate organizations have found nefarious election activities? Locally Chris is not aware of anything. There is a phone number that when the count is observed after the election and there is an issue, it goes to the Secretary of State or someone who can immediately respond. There is always an identified Democrat and Republican working together on those.
 - vi. What does being a member of the LWV involve? There are ways to join (LWVKA.org – “Join” icon). There are so many ways to be a member. Can pay dues and be done with it and get information to use or set aside; can get involved with voter registration events, candidate forums, mock elections in the high school; follow the LWV on Facebook or Instagram).
 - vii. Are there any proposals this year that would make changes in voting? Chris and Bard are not aware of any.
 - viii. There are a lot of ways to be involved.
 - ix. The City of Kalamazoo City Clerk’s office is always in need of more Republican workers.
 - x. The voter guide that the LWV puts out is amazing and it helps the Clerk’s Office if people have their questions answered by LWV resources.
 - xi. The LWV workers are all-volunteer. Poll workers are paid approximately \$15-16 per hour, including training.
- VII. Constitution Review Committee Update (Chris Shook, ODWNA President)
- A. The Board had a very long session with a parliamentarian (Todd Ellis) and attorney (Chris Bovid) and reviewed proposed changes to the Constitution. At the next Board meeting that will be finally reviewed and then presented to the membership for consideration.
- VIII. OLD BUSINESS / NEW BUSINESS
- A. Donna Keller announces that she is hosting a social gathering at her house on Sunday, May 5, 2024, co-hosted by Winchell Native Plant Enthusiasts. Hopefully the wild flowers will be blooming.
 - B. ODWNA is participating in Kalamazoo Bike Week and the Bike Show at Bronson Park. We will do a bike ride up Oakland Drive and the new protected bike lane on Michigan Avenue. Ms. Shirley Freeman will do story book reading. More information on the website and the eNews.
- IX. Chris Shook, ODWNA President, thanked Bard and Chris for their presentation and all those who attended and adjourned the meeting at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher Bovid, ODWNA Secretary