

Voter Engagement Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Present: Gervlyne Auguste, Linda Biemer, Sharon Exley, Margaret Goodfellow, Kyra Hickey, Carla Michalak, Darin Schmidt (cameo appearance), Jackie Stapleton, Alison Twang, Karl Wokan, Sara Wokan

Guests: Ani Loew, Nikki Waskie Laura

1. Meeting called at 3:05pm. Linda welcomed and thanked everyone for attending today's meeting.

2. Minutes from November 9, 2021 approved.

3. As a Voter Engagement Committee, we want to work towards strengthening our connections with students in local schools. Jackie Stapleton-Durham invited two educators to discuss with the committee how we can best foster that relationship and engage students civically.

- Nikki works with Pat Walsh (Social Studies education) and with all of the schools in the Broome Tioga region
- Nikki explained the Seal of Civic Readiness: Some districts are piloting this program this year. Employing projects, essays, if students are successful, they will earn a seal on their high school diploma.
- Primarily the seal program is in the high school but students could start in middle school to start earning points. Perhaps even sooner in the Elementary grades?
- The Seal for Civic Readiness is similar to the Bilingual Seal that students can currently earn.
- How can we build bridges between New Visions and the VEC? That program is similar to "pre-K" for College. Annie Loew is interested in increasing the number of students interested in the Law and Government Visions program. Students can earn 10 – 16 college credits plus professional experience by participating in a Visions program.
- Ani would like her students to get involved in Voter Registration activities in the fall. Would love to offer her students to work with the VEC on initiatives. Her students are available from 8am – 11am.
- Margaret asked is there voter registration in the schools since 16 and 17 year old students can register early.
- Teachers are open to working with us, they just need the time. They are often pressed for time to cover their curricula.
- The LWVBTC did a 6th grade presentation with the teachers. The teachers provided the framework and the LWVBTC filled in the gaps.
- Margaret also discussed in the past, the LWVBTC staffed a Voter Registration table at Susquehanna Valley High School's Talent Show.

- Observation: Now that there is an absence of standardized testing, civics and Social Studies are both glossed over in the curriculum
 - Ani explained the New Visions program in further detail stating that students need reliable transportation to get them to and from the classroom, students cannot rely on the school district. There are no financial barriers for students to participate in the New Visions programs. Students do need good writing skills but Annie works with the students early on to help them be successful. She also works on professionalism and helps them get professional attire for free if needed. Students are interviewed prior to being accepted into the program.
4. **We further discussed how the Voter Engagement committee could work together with the schools.** We discussed voter registration drives, and including the students in the Naturalization ceremonies. Can the Apalachin Alumni use their help? Gervlyne suggested that they could help sending out the scholarship info. And get involved with the Voter Registration program that is done during their College Night program. Carla offered to conduct deliberations and/or moderator trainings with the New Visions students.
 5. Everyone who attended the **New Visions Academy “Government Gallery”** were very impressed and enjoyed meeting the students.
 6. **2022 Elections - Important Dates:** Petitions out in March 1, due by April 11; Primary June 28, General Election Nov. 8

Candidates: U.S. Senate (NY Senator Schumer's seat); Congress (Claudia Tenney's seat); NYS Governor, Lt. Gov., Comptroller, Attorney General; NYS Senate and Assembly; Broome Co. Legislature, Broome Co. Sheriff

US House of Representatives, NY's number of Representatives changing from 27 to 26 due to the 2020 Census results.

As a result, the districts must be redrawn to represent population shifts. 3 seats shifting to NYC, (changing most likely from Republican to Democratic seats) with two upstate districts collapsing thus affecting the current 22nd District. (Representative Tenney)
Independent Redistricting Commission: Dereliction of duty, failed the people of NY. Something to consider for our next meeting, what debates do we want to plan for? WSKG covers 21 counties, should be interested in the House races even though the districts will be changing.

7. **Re-districting:** NYS Independent Redistricting Commission of 10 members did not agree on state redistricting, so the NYS Legislature will draw the new maps.

Broome County Legislature: the local committee of 5 county legislators, 3 Rs, 2 Ds, held several public meetings for input. Map #3 was approved by the BC legislature by a party-line vote. County Executive Jason Garnar now has to approve or veto Map #3. Comments at the January 27th Zoom public hearing with Garnar were negative.

8. **Other:**

Some members are not attending. Carla will confirm with Darin Schmidt and Doug Garnar. Gerlyne will contact NAACP to see if they would like to join us.

9. **Next meeting:** We will invite back Scott Symons, Nikki and Pat (BOCES) to continue our conversation re: our engagement with K-12 schools.

Meeting concluded at 4:30pm. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1st at 3pm via Zoom. Look for the agenda and Zoom link in your email about a week prior to the meeting.