

February 12, 2017

Ms. Alison Singer, Chair
SBNC Administrative Committee

Ms. Jeannine Palermo, Vice Chair
SBNC Administrative Committee

Dear Ms. Singer and Ms. Palermo,

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (the “League”) thanks you for taking the time to participate in our membership meeting on January 23rd to review the School Board Nominating Committee (“SBNC”) election that took place on January 10th. We commend your thoroughness and preparation regarding the election and the report you both presented at our membership meeting.

Recruitment of candidates is the core issue at stake in a vetted election system for the school board nominating committee. The League commends you for finding enough candidates to run contested elections in four out of the five neighborhoods. We know this was not an easy task. The League recognizes that the School Board Nominating Committee Resolution (the “SBNC Resolution”) requires at least two candidates per vacancy to allow for a local contested election, and we appreciate the active participation and engagement of the Administrative Committee (hereinafter, “the AC”) this past year in recruiting SBNC candidates, including weekly conference calls and assigning tasks to be completed by the following meeting.

The following statement documents the results of the League’s consensus meeting immediately following your presentation, and serves to commend many AC practices already in place and to highlight certain recommendations for future SBNC elections.

Recruitment and Publicity

The League commends the AC for and recommends continuing the following practices:

- Organizing outreach efforts towards candidate recruitment beginning in May and during the summer months; the League recommends using the publicity surrounding the Board of Education election in May not only to announce in area media the results of the Board of Education election, but also to raise community awareness and understanding of the SBNC process.
- Sending a request to SNAP and the TVCC in the spring for each to appoint one new representative to the AC, to fill any appointee vacancies (as required in the SBNC Resolution), and to provide clear information to all appointees regarding the staggered,

- multi-year term length for these community organization representatives;
- Reaching out to populations in Scarsdale who do not yet or no longer have children in the school system for candidate recruitment, including through other community organizations such as village sports organizations, local pre-schools, seniors groups and religious establishments; the League suggests also finding a way to reach “empty nesters” who are not senior citizens;
- Reminding PTA/PTC leaders and other community organizations to make announcements about SBNC recruitment and voting in their newsletters and bulletins and at all meetings leading up to the election, and to publish the results of the election to their membership;
- Keeping accurate and complete records over the past several years of who has been contacted and asked to run for SBNC, their responses and contact information, as well as adding new contacts to the list each year;
- Attempting to create a video public service announcement about the non-partisan process; although the AC’s attempts were not successful this year, the League encourages you to try again;
- Using the SBNC website and the communication networks of other community organizations to encourage residents to support the SBNC process and candidates by voting in the election;
- Using social media as a tool for recruiting SBNC candidates;
- Continuing timely website updates regarding the recruiting process;
- Developing a campaign to re-brand service on the SBNC as an honor/privilege and the responsibility of every eligible community member. Specifically, we commend the AC chairs for the article that appeared in *The Scarsdale Inquirer* about the role of SBNC, which ultimately led to two citizens submitting their candidacies. The League recommends that the AC continues to use local media in the following ways:
 - In the early fall as recruitment begins in earnest, submit an article to area media with quotes from former SBNC members talking positively about the experience;
 - In January after the SBNC election, submit a photo of the incoming SBNC class to area media with quotes from a few new SBNC members about looking forward to fulfilling their civic duty and contributing positively to the community; and
 - In May, show appreciation to those who do serve, especially SBNC chairs, via public thank-yous.

The League recommends initiating the following practices:

- Updating the website “Press” page to include links to the most recent articles and posts about the SBNC;
- Collaborating with the Scarsdale Procedure Committee to discuss:
 - holding a public meeting to increase awareness of the non-partisan system in Scarsdale along with information contained in the new-resident packet distributed at Village Hall;
 - recruitment and sharing names of potential candidates for CNC and SBNC; and
 - ways SBNC might be more successful with its finance drive;
- Developing an email distribution list to use for SBNC candidate recruitment, get-out-the-vote and fundraising efforts;
- Creating and maintaining a generic AC e-mail and associated cloud-based storage account

(such as GMail and Google Drive) containing information which can easily be accessed by future AC chairs.

Voting Procedures

The League reviewed and discussed the balloting process during the recent SBNC election and makes the following commendations and recommendations:

- The League commends the AC for its handling of the tie in Quaker Ridge, and recommends memorializing its process so future AC chairs can follow that example, particularly regarding validating a ballot for eligibility.
- The League commends the AC for continuing timely website updates regarding the voting process and results of the election;
- The League commends the AC for its use of signage in this year's election; "Vote Here" and "Voter Parking" signs were well-placed and very helpful, especially for new residents or those who were otherwise unfamiliar with the Middle School;
- The League commends the changes made to the brochure:
 - good use of space made the brochure more easily readable;
 - listing the neighborhood of AC and Joint Committee members;
- The League recommends that the AC consider developing an email address distribution list to use for get-out-the-vote efforts, as described above;
- The League recommends that the AC consider adding a "How To Vote" page to the SBNC website that gives step-by-step instructions, with deadlines, for how to vote, both in-person and by mail;
- The League reminds the AC to modify the instructions on the absentee ballot to read "Vote for *up to* (x) candidates"; and
- The League recommends that the AC add a button on the website and a URL on the brochure to allow people to "opt-in" to the email distribution list for future informational emails.

Fundraising

Maintaining the current SBNC election process requires sufficient monies to run upcoming elections. The League discussed recommendations on fundraising appeals as follows:

- The League commends the AC for its donation cards, making online appeals via the SBNC website and in press releases to the local newspaper, and recommends extending this to an email appeal;
- The League recommends that the AC designate a fundraising representative to oversee campaign efforts and increase its donor base;
- The League recommends that the AC consider keeping records of who donates, send thank-you emails to every donor, and ask them to donate again the following year to build a base of contributors whom the AC can solicit directly;
- The League recommends that the AC consider asking for email addresses from online donors to help build the email distribution list; and
- The League recommends that the AC highlight the "donate" request and the website

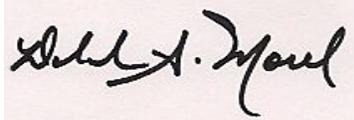
address on the brochure, and add language such as, "Your contributions cover the cost of printing and mailing this brochure."

The League views the SBNC election as an outstanding example of civic participation in our community. As volunteerism seems to have declined in recent years, it is more important than ever to provide public orientation towards the goal of ultimately selecting the public school board candidates. The League thanks you for your labor-intensive efforts to recruit viable candidates.

Sincerely,



Dana Matsushita
Chair, School Election System
League of Women Voters Scarsdale



Deb Morel
President
League of Women Voters Scarsdale