

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR CONVENTION

Information for Delegates

The sovereign body of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is the state Convention, which is composed of delegates from each local League and members of the state board. A delegate should be informed about the issues to be considered and be aware of the opinions of League constituents in regard to them. The delegate is free to form independent judgments as a result of knowledge gained from Convention deliberations. In other words, a delegate comes to Convention "informed but not instructed." The member chosen to attend Convention must be prepared to interpret Convention decisions to the membership over the next two years. It is the delegate's responsibility to report to the local League not only the official actions of the Convention but also the "flavor" of the Convention.

It is important that delegates stay until the Convention is adjourned!

READ this Convention Workbook. Study the proposed Convention rules, which set Convention procedures not covered in the bylaws. Convention rules are adopted by a two-thirds vote on the first day and may be altered at any time during the Convention by a two-thirds vote. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* will control the general conduct of the meeting. See *Parliamentary Motions Guide* in this workbook. A majority vote of those present and voting adopts the Order of Business. It may be altered by a two-thirds vote at any time thereafter.

Local Leagues assign delegates by submitting the Delegate Form. Upon arrival at Convention, delegates must register for the Convention in person. The official badge must be worn during the entire Convention; there is no admission to the Convention hall without it.

One delegate slot may be used by two members of the same League, one for each plenary session (Friday and Saturday). The two names and corresponding days should be noted on the Delegate Form. Both members will receive a nametag and convention book.

A substitute delegate or an alternative observer from the same local League (in the event the registered member cannot attend), must bring a letter of authorization from the local League president to present to the Credentials Committee so that registration may be accomplished and the name on the pre-typed badge changed. Pick up the envelope of the person originally registered first, and then go to the credentials table.

A local League may obtain up to two additional delegate slots from a different League(s). It is the responsibility of the League requesting slot(s) to obtain the consent of the donor League and inform LWVMA. The delegate should bring a printed copy of the email to Convention for the credentials committee. Step-by-step instructions were described in the May 3 League Leader Update.

Be on time for all events. The first plenary meeting will start on Friday at 4:00 p.m. promptly. Once the Convention is called to order, latecomers may have to wait to be seated.

Election of officers, directors, and members of the Nominating Committee will take place on Saturday, May 18. After the report of the Nominating Committee has been read, Friday, May 17, nominations from the floor are in order providing the prior consent of the nominee has been obtained. If balloting is necessary, the polls will be open for voting at 11:45 a.m. Saturday until 2:00 p.m. Otherwise, election of officers, directors,

and members of the Nominating Committee will take place Saturday, May 18.

During the plenary meetings, matters requiring the attention of state board members should be sent (in writing) to the page.

In the decision on program, please notice that a vote to consider a not-recommended item is not the same as a vote to adopt it. It merely means that at this time you feel the item has sufficient value so that the Convention should be allowed to debate its merits. If you vote against consideration, it means that at this time you do not feel the item has sufficient merit to take up the attention of the delegates at Convention.

Votes are first taken by voice or standing votes. When the results cannot be determined by the chair, delegates will cast

their votes by submitting a card to the usher (green for YES, red for NO).

Only announcements relating directly to the program or the welfare of delegates will be made from the platform or shown on the projector within the Convention hall.

Delegates are encouraged to bring lobbying material with them. Delegates must distribute their own material outside the

Convention hall. Only materials issued by the Convention office may be distributed within the hall.

Delegates may take pictures at any time during Convention unless the picture-taking process becomes disruptive.

PROCEDURAL NOTES

Parliamentary Procedure

The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to expedite, not impede, the conduct of business. It insures that a minority has a fair chance to be heard and to influence the group. Any matter to be brought before a group for its decision, or to the chair for information or a ruling, is done so by a "motion." Once an issue has been raised by a motion, it must be resolved before the Convention is over. It need not be resolved immediately or in the form originally proposed. It can even be lost, but it cannot be forgotten. A great deal of time may be taken up by the processes of resolution. Therefore, it is important that delegates use their common sense and a "feel" for the temper of the meeting not to waste Convention time by unsuitable motions, by prolonged debate, or by needless points of order or information. The aim is to arrive effectively and democratically at conclusions that are reasonably acceptable to the total body.

A working knowledge of basic parliamentary procedure will greatly enhance the effectiveness of the delegate. Consult *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* or *Simplified Parliamentary Procedure*. (Your president probably has a copy.)

The Convention parliamentarian is willing to assist any delegate. She will also be available in the Convention hall fifteen minutes before each meeting or by appointment when the Convention is not in plenary session.

Parliamentary Motions Guide, included in this workbook, lists the motions that you may make to accomplish what you wish to do.

Motions and Microphones

A delegate wishing to address the Convention should go to a microphone, wait for recognition, and then state their name and League.

From time to time the chair may designate pro and con microphones. Be alert to which is which and line up at the proper one.

A long motion must be written in duplicate on forms available from the ushers. It is essential that the mover's name and League be included. Give both copies to an usher immediately so the usher can take one copy to the chair and one copy to the operator of the projector. You may have the usher bring the motion to the chair at any time before you make the motion.

Q&A Sessions on Budget and Program

On Friday, May 17, Q & A sessions on the budget and state program will be held from 8:45 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. At this time there will be ample opportunity for members to ask questions and make suggestions about the scope of the items and the possibilities for action.

Pre-Convention Procedure for Non-recommended Items

Non-recommended items must be proposed at the first plenary session of Convention, which will convene at 4:15 pm on Friday, May 17.

Caucuses and Other Ways to Support Non-recommended Items

League members who wish to work for a non-recommended item should consult with their board, note the other Leagues on the list of non-recommended items and

formulate a strategy. Members might contact other interested Leagues and plan a caucus before Convention starts or on Friday evening of Convention and notify all Leagues of the caucus.

Caucuses are a tradition of Convention, and meeting rooms may be reserved for caucuses held on Friday, May 17 from 8:45 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (See registration table for caucus room reservation form.) Topics and locations of caucuses will be listed on the Convention announcements board. State board members and state program specialists may be invited to participate in a caucus; they may not participate in a caucus unless their attendance is requested.

If a member feels strongly about an item, the member should attend a caucus and help prepare an effective strategy for getting it adopted. A caucus is a place to promote interest in an item, to clarify its scope, and to plan a presentation. A caucus may also be used to promote any other business properly before the Convention. The goal of the caucus is to put the expressions of attitudes, interests, and aims into a broadly persuasive form that will appeal to the Convention. Much planning takes place beforehand, over meals and in corridors and

delegates' rooms, but it is at the caucus meeting that the plans gel and points are marshaled. Here is where an enthusiastic speaker who projects well is selected to present the item.

Some tips for running a good caucus

- Have a well-structured proposal for item focus and scope
- Be prepared to discuss modifications
- Use only about half your caucus time developing a consensus around it, then develop a list of strong and weak points and answers to possible objections. Decide who should speak to these different points
- Strive for balance, coverage, and brevity
- Have speakers meet again Friday evening or Saturday morning before the plenary session to make sure all is in place

Other suggestions are to talk up the item informally whenever the occasion arises, to assign someone to make up and distribute a fact sheet, and to provide for lapel badges. Imagination and a firm foundation can do wonders.

PROPOSED RULES OF CONVENTION

(Rules shall be adopted at the first meeting.)

1. Admission to the Convention shall be limited to persons displaying official badges, which shall be worn at all meetings of the Convention.
2. Local League delegates, state board delegates, and observers shall be identified by designated name tags. They may enter the Convention hall after the Convention has started, but shall not be seated during an address.
3. Only local League delegates and state board delegates may vote.
4. If the vote cannot be determined by voice vote or by rising, the vote shall be counted using green (YES) and red (NO) cards.
5. Only local League delegates, state board delegates, and those authorized by the chair may address the assembly. During debate on a motion, no delegate may speak more than once to that motion until all others who wish to speak have done so. After the original presentation, debate shall be limited to two minutes for each speaker.
6. When addressing the Convention, a speaker shall use a microphone and announce name and League.
7. Any motion or amendment to a motion of substantial length (or, if requested by the chair, any other motion) shall be written in duplicate on forms provided by the usher.
8. No announcements from the floor shall be made which do not relate to the business of Convention or the welfare of the members.
9. Substitution of a delegate shall be approved by the Credentials Committee only upon receipt of written authorization from the local League president.
10. Alternate observers shall be approved by the Credentials Committee only upon receipt of written authorization from the local League president.
11. Procedure for adoption of program:

Definition of Program: "The program of the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts shall consist of those state governmental issues chosen by the convention for concerted study and action or concurrence" (LWVMA Bylaws Article XI, Sec. 2.)
Recommended items shall be moved for adoption by a state board member who may then make a statement of not more than five minutes. Not recommended items may be moved for consideration and presented in a statement of not more than five minutes in the exact wording submitted to the state board at least three months prior to the opening of Convention, or in a wording which, although not exactly the same, has been approved by the Program Strategy Committee prior to the Call to Order of the Convention as within the subject content of an item submitted to the state board at least three months prior to the opening of Convention.

This motion is not debatable and no questions shall be allowed, except

that, at this time, a state board member shall give the official negative, in not more than three minutes, if requested to do so by a delegate. A vote shall be taken on consideration of each not-recommended item. An item that receives a majority vote for consideration is automatically moved for adoption at the appropriate time for such items without a further notion.

When it is time for debate on program, recommended items that have been moved for adoption shall be debated. After debate on the recommended items, not recommended items that have been voted for consideration shall be debated. When debate on all the items has been completed, votes shall be taken first on the recommended items in the order in which they were presented. A two-thirds vote shall be required to adopt a not-recommended item.

12. Procedure for adoption of resolutions, if any proposed:

A resolution may be offered by a local League or state board or through a delegate's petition (**10** signatures required). It shall be in writing and identified by the League (or delegates' names and Leagues) and shall be read to the Convention by the sponsor at a time specified in the Order of Business (please refer to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* for form of resolution or ask Convention parliamentarian for assistance). The resolution shall be sent immediately to the Resolutions Committee without debate or question. The Resolutions Committee shall be responsible for determining whether a resolution is appropriate for consideration by the Convention, eliminating duplications, and putting resolutions in proper form. The Resolutions Committee may rewrite a resolution substantially but only with the sponsor's consent. Editorial changes do not require the sponsor's permission or approval. Resolutions shall be debated and voted upon by the delegate body at a time specified in the Order of Business.

PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS GUIDE

Adapted from Town Meeting Time and www.jimslaughter.com/zipfiles/roberts10thpobox.pdf

The motions are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	MAY INTERRUPT?	SECOND REQUIRED?	DEBATABLE?	AMENDABLE?	VOTE?
Privileged motions						
End the meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn to another time	I move to adjourn to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Find out if there's a quorum	I rise to a point of no quorum	No	No	No	No	None
Set the time to/at which to adjourn	I move to adjourn to/at...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
Subsidiary motions						
Lay motion aside temporarily	I move that this be laid on the table	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close debate	I move the previous question	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Postpone motion to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer motion to committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify wording of a motion	I move to amend (or substitute)...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

YOU WANT TO:	YOU SAY:	MAY INTERRUPT?	2 ND REQUIRED?	DEBATABLE?	AMENDABLE?	VOTE?
Incidental motions – same rank as motion out of which they arise.						
Enforce rules	I rise to a point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
Submit matter to the meeting	I appeal from the ruling of the chair	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Divide the motion	I move to divide the question	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Separate consideration	I move for separate consideration...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Fix the method of voting	I move to vote on this motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Nominate someone to a committee	I nominate...	No	No	No	No	Plurality
Withdraw or modify a your own motion	I move to withdraw/ modify my motion...	No	No	No	No	Majority
Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules to ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3*
Main motions – no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.						
Make a main motion	I move...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Various
Reconsider or rescind a motion **	I move to reconsider/ rescind the vote ...	No	Yes	**	No	Majority
Take matter from the table	I move to take from the table ...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Advance an article	I move to advance article ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority

* Unanimous if rule protects minorities; out of order if rule protects absentees.

** Same rank and debatable to same extent as motion being reconsidered.

