



February 11, 2018

Ms. Jeannine Palermo, Chair
SBNC Administrative Committee

Ms. Wendy Gendel, Vice Chair
SBNC Administrative Committee

Dear Ms. Palermo and Ms. Gendel,

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale ("League") thanks you for your presentation at our membership meeting on January 22nd to review the School Board Nominating Committee ("SBNC") election that took place on January 9th. We commend your thoroughness and preparation regarding the election, the report you discussed at our membership meeting, and the question and answer session that followed your presentation.

Candidate recruitment is crucial in a vetted election system for the SBNC. The League recognizes that the School Board Nominating Committee Resolution ("SBNC Resolution") requires at least two candidates per vacancy to allow for a local contested election, and we commend you for finding enough candidates to run contested elections in three out of the five neighborhoods, as well as filling all 4 candidate vacancies in the Quaker Ridge neighborhood due to 2 committee member resignations. We know this was not an easy task.

Additionally, with over 177 mail-in-ballots (comprising 26% of the vote, with an additional 21 non-compliant mail-in-ballots received after the deadline) the League commends the Administrative Committee (the "AC") for their efforts to ensure that all votes in compliance are counted.

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

RECRUITMENT AND PUBLICITY

The League commends the AC for the following:

- Organizing outreach efforts towards candidate recruitment beginning in May and during the summer months; 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.

- Reaching out to residents in Scarsdale who do not yet or no longer have children in the school system for candidate recruitment, such as through village sports organizations, local pre-schools, senior groups and religious establishments.
- Reminding PTA/PTC leaders and other community organizations to make announcements about SBNC recruitment and voting in their newsletters, bulletins and meetings leading up to the election, and to publish the results of the election to their respective membership.
- Keeping accurate and complete records over the past several years regarding persons contacted to run for SBNC, including responses and contact information, and annually adding new contacts to the list on a shared live document to keep all members updated as new information is received.
- Using the SBNC website proactively, specifically in regard to:
 - the general Scarsdale community by encouraging residents to support the SBNC process, candidates, and voting, with website updates and links to other community organizations; and
 - potential SBNC candidates with timely website updates regarding the recruitment process, application, petition materials and deadlines.
- Continuing to promote service on the SBNC as a honor/privilege and the responsibility of every eligible community member.

The League recommends the AC initiate the following:

- Appointing Members at Large in order to best use community members' insight and institutional knowledge in the recruitment of candidates for School Board, as well as to diversify the selection of SBNC candidates. Additionally, due to a recurring vacancy issue with staggered appointed member representatives, the League recommends reviewing the appointment process internally, and clarifying the selection and length of terms of said appointees with SNAP & TVCC.
- Developing the use of social media as a tool for recruiting potential candidates.
- Drafting press releases, and updating the SBNC website "Press" page to include links to the most recent articles and posts about the SBNC.
- Expanding the email distribution list used for SBNC candidate recruitment, get-out-the-vote, and fundraising efforts; and using general SBNC email addresses to support continuity of institutional knowledge.

- Reaching out to additional Scarsdale community groups for SBNC awareness and candidate recruitment, such as the Scarsdale New Residents Club or other civic organizations.

VOTING PROCEDURES

The League commends the AC for the following:

- Using clear 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 Scarsdale Middle School.
- Modifying the instructions on the absentee ballot to read: "vote for up to [x] candidates".
- Adding the button on the SBNC website and the URL on the mailed brochure to allow people to "opt-in" to the email distribution list for future informational emails.

Due to events that occurred during the most recent SBNC election, *the League recommends the following be considered:*

- Communicating, in advance of the election to all involved parties, the policy for candidate notification of election results in the instance where ballot counting is not completed prior to a predetermined time on the evening of the election.
- Codifying a hierarchy of notice of election results in the following order: first all candidates are notified, second the SBNC website is updated with election results, and third the media is notified.
- Reviewing the mail-in ballot to increase voter compliance by clarifying instructions on the face of the document; one such example would be instructions regarding each voter in a household mail their individual ballot separately or "one ballot per envelope".

FUNDRAISING

The League commends the AC for:

- Continuing use of donation cards, making online appeals via the SBNC website and in press releases to the local newspaper; as well as extending this to an email appeal.
- Highlighting the "donate" request and the website address on the mailed brochure, and adding language such as "Your contributions cover the cost of printing and mailing this brochure".

The League recommends following to the AC:

- Designating a fundraising representative to oversee campaign efforts and increase its donor base.
- Keeping records of donors, send thank-you emails to every donor, and ask donors to contribute again the following year to build a base of donors whom the AC can solicit directly.

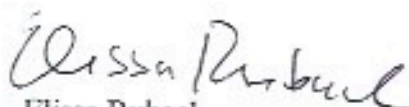
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Due to events occurring over the previous year, the League recommends consideration of the following:

- Creating a written Conflict of Interest Policy as part of the Rules of Procedure.
- Developing and distribute a Communications Policy for guidance of SBNC members to support the non-partisan process; specifically regarding confidentiality of the vetting process and individual public positions in opposition to the collective public position of the SBNC.
- Reviewing whether appointed committee members should have a more defined role.
- Creating a living document with references to issues raised and the determination of said issues at the yearly resolution meeting, including the rationale for the determination of the issues.

The League views the SBNC election as an outstanding example of civic participation. The non-partisan process and the selection of the most qualified school board candidates is an integral part of our community. The League thanks you for your diligence and hard work in recruiting so many viable candidates.

Sincerely,


Elissa Ruback
Chair, School Election System
League of Women Voters Scarsdale



Linda Doucette-Ashman & Janice Starr
Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters Scarsdale