



May 2, 2012

## **STATEMENT CONCERNING SCARSDALE'S NONPARTISAN SYSTEM FOR THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR VILLAGE OFFICE**

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (the "League") has a long history of evaluating and commenting on Scarsdale's nonpartisan village election system. In addition to issuing comments on the annual Citizens Nominating Committee ("CNC") election, the League also periodically studies, evaluates and reports on Scarsdale's nonpartisan election system in general. The League issued its last report and consensus statement on the nonpartisan election system in 1996.

### **Goals of the Study and Methodology**

In May 2011 the League established an ad hoc committee ("the Committee") to study the operation of and review the League's position on Scarsdale's nonpartisan village election system. In its research, the Committee utilized League files, New York State election law, press coverage of the 2011 election, governing documents of the village and school nonpartisan systems and the Town and Village Civic Club ("TVCC"), and current reports and publications about other municipal nonpartisan election systems in New York and other states. Interviews were also conducted with village officials and past Procedure Committee and CNC chairs. The study included:

- A comparison of partisan versus nonpartisan election systems
- A review of the history of Scarsdale's nonpartisan election system
- A review of how Scarsdale's current village election system functions
- A review of the role of the TVCC in Scarsdale's village election system
- An examination of nonpartisan systems in other municipalities
- A comparison between Scarsdale's school board election system and its village election system

The Committee's findings are summarized in its *Report on Scarsdale's Nonpartisan Village Election System* (the "Report") attached to this Statement. The Report is also available on the League's website, [www.lwvs.org](http://www.lwvs.org).

On April 23, 2012, the Committee held a public meeting to present its findings. Immediately following the presentation, the League held a consensus meeting of its members to address two main questions:

1. Does the League continue to affirm its position of supporting a nonpartisan election system for the selection of the village board and mayoral candidates?
2. Does the League recommend modifications to Scarsdale's current village election system?

## **Statement**

**The League continues to affirm its position of supporting a nonpartisan election system for the selection of the village board and mayoral candidates in Scarsdale. A nonpartisan system seeks to select candidates without regard to political affiliation.**

The League also addressed the following issues relating to Scarsdale's nonpartisan village election system:

### 1. **Leadership**

- **Citizens Nominating Committee (CNC) – The League recommends that the Procedure Committee propose an amendment to the Non-Partisan Resolution (the “Resolution”) providing that the CNC elect the chair and vice chair of the following year’s CNC from its outgoing class of voting members.** Currently, the Resolution requires that the President and the First Vice President of the TVCC serve as nonvoting members of the CNC, with the President serving as chair (or, in his or her absence, the Vice President serving as chair) of the CNC. The League notes that these individuals need not have served previously on the CNC.
- **Procedure Committee – The League did not come to consensus on altering the leadership or composition of the Procedure Committee. Therefore, the League is unable to reaffirm its prior positions regarding the makeup of the Procedure Committee.** Currently, the Resolution provides that the TVCC appoint the chair, vice chair and ten voting members to the Procedure Committee (appointees need not be members of the TVCC). These appointees constitute approximately 48 percent of the voting seats on the Procedure Committee.

2. **Finances - The League recommends that the Procedure Committee propose an amendment to the Resolution that codifies how the Procedure Committee and CNC fund their expenses. The League reaffirms its position that such expenses should be financed through public contributions.** Currently, there is no mention in the Resolution of how Scarsdale's nonpartisan system is financed.

3. **Nominations** - **The League supports the CNC's nomination of a single candidate for each village office vacancy.** The League notes that New York State election law allows for independent candidates to run for village office in the March elections.

Additionally, with respect to two other prior League positions:

1. **The League reaffirms its position that CNC deliberations on candidates for village office should remain confidential.**
2. **The League recommends that the CNC should NOT publicize the names of potential nominees for village office. This position differs from the League's 1996 position on the issue.**

Respectfully submitted:

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