

## **AAUW BENNINGTON BRANCH BOARD MEETI**

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 10 am

Via Zoom Video Conferencing in the Time of Covid-19

Present: Kathy Wagenknecht-President, Norma McShane-Treasurer, Gudrun Hutchins, Jennifer Kern, Ruth Botzow, Dawn Rodrigues, Suzanne Kirkpatrick, Judy Murphy, Mary Brady, Margaret Howland-Acting Secretary.

**Call to Order and Approval of Minutes.** President Wagenknecht called the second video-conferencing meeting to order at 10:07. Murphy moved and Hutchins seconded that the minutes of the Mary 15, 2020, meeting be approved; motion carried.

### **President's Report**

**Name change:** Major changes are proposed by the National Board of Directors, beginning with a proposal to change the organization name in June. We are not constituted as an Association, are not limited to American citizens, do not require a university degree to belong, and have male members. (Currently, the average member is 72 years old and white.)

Hutchins commented that the Association has proposed a change of name many times over the past 30 years and it has never won the membership vote, losing because of heavy voting from southern branches. Vermont attempted to change the name of the Vermont chapter and was advised that we were "non-compliant".

### **Future Meeting:**

Wagenknecht will set up a meeting of the Board in November to discuss the name change as well as other issues.

### **Videos**

Wagenknecht suggested several items that she considers worthy of attention. She will send further information on the following:

1. Kim Churches, President of AAUW National, discussing a book entitled "How to be an Anti-Racist" by Ibram Kendi. Kirkpatrick stated that the book is available at the Bennington Bookstore, and displayed on the front table.
2. A Harvard website test entitled "Implicit" that she will circulate and suggested that members take the test regarding personal biases.
3. "White Fragility" by Robin DeAngelo will be discussed tomorrow evening, Sept 17. A short discussion of this book followed.

## Branch Leaders Report

**Treasury:** Treasurer McShane reported that to date 30 or more members have not submitted their membership dues. A reminder will be sent out soon.

Other receipts:

- *Premiere event receipts:* \$120.00 - masks and books, \$20.00 – cards (Several VOTE masks remain and will be offered for sale at the picnic on Saturday at \$10.00 each.)
- *Silver Angels* - \$1000 received from Mary Feidner.
- The STATE ASSOCIATION dissolution resulted in a deposit of \$900 of which \$600 was applied to the Scholarship Fund and \$300 to the Operating Fund.

The July-Aug 2020 Treasurer's Report shows \$5393.31 available funds. McShane explained that the funds shown as "Reserve" are just that, funds being held in case of need at a later date, but are actually on deposit in our account so that TOTAL FUNDS as of end August is \$8008.31.

Kirkpatrick reported that she has and will submit minor receipts from several past venues, which had been inadvertently overlooked. She also stated that she has been reimbursed for the bill from Park-McCullough House for the Premiere event.

**Hospitality:** Kirkpatrick reported that there is little to do in advance of the picnic on Saturday. The directions to pavilion were not clear in the newsletter, and Howland will provide directions that Wagenknecht will circulate via email.

**Media and Publicity:** Murphy reported that we had excellent coverage of the Premiere event in the *Banner*. Murphy will be doing publicity for the Oct 14 Candidate Forum and Oct 20 showing of "Suppressed: The Fight to Vote." Wagenknecht stated that she feels we should ask members to watch the "Suppressed" video first on You Tube, and only have the discussion on Zoom on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Newsletter:** Rodrigues reported that she has been in touch with the Vermont Humanities Council and the Branch may be able to work with the Council to develop further programs. The Sojourner Truth program, "A Woman, Ain't I?" was cancelled in March because of COVID restrictions and has been rescheduled for November 14.

Rodrigues also reported that the calendar in the current newsletter is capable of being printed separately, as are all the pages of the newsletter.

The newsletter staff is interested in printing monthly columns by members or guests, as seen in the Suffrage edition in August in which Julie Mackaman penned a biographical piece on Meneese Wall, the artist who designed the greeting cards that members have been selling this year. The Board agreed that columns of interest to the general membership would be welcome.

## Programs

1. Candidate Forum: Howland reported that the Candidate invitations to participate in the Forum are ready for mailing and will go out today. Hutchins will send the poster layout for previous Forums to Howland. Murphy will handle publicity. A brief discussion followed of the method of members of the audience asking questions, and who will handle the questioning of the candidates. Wagenknecht will moderate the entire program. AAUW Panel members will ask the questions of the Candidates. Howland stated that the committee, J. Kniffin, J. Murph, S. Mullineaux, and Howland will determine between them the distribution of questions and will do the asking or find members to handle the chore. The committee has not yet decided whether questions from the audience will be accepted, and the Board briefly investigated the Zoom function of having audience members ask questions and found it not too difficult to manage.

Brady reported on the great success of the Premiere event. The Board gave her an ovation for her idea and work on the event, which was considerable. Wagenknecht reported that Jackie Marro is creating a new video, "The Making of..." of the event.

2. Holiday Party: Wagenknecht suggested that we do a caroling program for a Holiday event rather than the usual indoor party. Some discussion followed, with general enthusiasm for the idea.
3. Murphy reported that she and Wendy Lyons will bring "Get Out the Vote" postcards to the picnic and ask for assistance in completing them. The Board agreed.

### **Scholarships**

1. Kern reported that there are significant difficulties with identifying incoming student scholarship candidates as the students are no longer on campus, therefore do not meet with advisors or interact with other students. The Board discussed running an ad in campus publications and several other possible ways to reach students, but getting the AAUW opening letter to students is still the best method. Whatever method we use will include a link to the AAUW site and the application. Kern will work with CCV administrator (very overworked as staff is now only two people) to determine the best method of finding students.
2. A further issue raised was the ability of the Branch to raise money for future scholarships with so few "in person" events.

### **Public policy and Campus Liaison**

Wagenknecht reported that Cathy McClure has resigned as Liaison for the Legal Advocacy Fund and Public Policy. Wagenknecht is eager to hear from anyone in the Branch who is interested in this position.

### **State Board**

Hutchins reported that the funds in the state AAUW treasury have been returned to the individual branches and the balance to AAUW National as described in the Minutes from the May meeting. Hutchins sent copies of the "Scratchings" books to the two remaining branches, Middlebury and Brattleboro, as examples for their writing groups.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Fundraising**

The Board discussed the issue raised above in Scholarships. Rodrigues mentioned that Old Castle Theater, now the Bennington Center for the Arts, has installed a divider between the two sides of the audience seating, and has put in place several procedures for dealing with Covid, including advance ticket sales only and an usher accompanying each patron or group to their seats to insure social distancing.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Wagenknecht is looking for a "Town Crier" to watch the web and report on items of interest to the membership, a task she has been doing but does not have time to continue due to the volume of work involved in getting out "Scratchings 3".

Adjournment: Wagenknecht adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Howland, Substitute Secretary for Julie Mackaman

*Attachments: Financial Report*

**AAUW Bennington Branch Financial Report  
2020-21**

**Summary by Account**

	<b>Opening</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Ending</b>	<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Available</b>
<i>Nat'l Dues</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		<b>\$0.00</b>
<i>Operating</i>	\$1,318.99	\$189.35	\$1,508.34	\$500.00	<b>\$1,008.34</b>
<i>Scholarship</i>	\$3,513.97	\$1,600.00	\$5,113.97	\$1,000.00	<b>\$4,113.97</b>
<i>M Carter Books</i>	\$1,366.00	\$20.00	\$1,386.00	\$1,115.00	<b>\$271.00</b>
<i>Other</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		<b>\$0.00</b>
	<b>\$6,198.96</b>	<b>\$1,809.35</b>	<b>\$8,008.31</b>	<b>\$2,615.00</b>	<b>\$5,393.31</b>