

Position Accepted by Board

The wording of the new position on Jackson County Government is as follows:

JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT 1999 League Position

Concerning the overall functioning of county government, the League believes that the Board of Commissioners (BOC) as the legislative and principal policy making agency of the county should pass appropriate ordinances, approve all budget decisions and act in its quasi-judicial capacity in land use matters.

Composition:

The League supports a Board of Commissioners of 5 or more members. The commissioners should be elected either at large or by a combination of district/at large and should be elected on a non-partisan basis. The League supports considering other options to full time paid commissioners.

County Administrative Officer:

The League supports the BOC's delegation of administrative functions to a professional administrator, but reasserts the League's position that policy making shall be reserved to the BOC and that overall responsibility for all functions of the County's government ultimately rests with the Board of Commissioners.

The League believes that the position of Administrator should be incorporated in the County Charter in order to give more stability to that position. It further believes that the qualifications of that position should be established by ordinance.

Elected Department Heads:

Concerning elected department heads, the League believes that those offices which require expertise in a professional field, are not required to make policy decisions, and are not politically sensitive, should be

appointive rather than elective.

The League believes that the Office of Treasurer should be abolished with those duties assigned to the Finance Officer. That office be should be made appointive and the Charter amended to reflect these changes. The League believes that Jackson County should establish by ordinance qualifications for the office of Financial Officer.

The League believes that the offices of Assessor and Surveyor should be appointive rather than elected and that the Charter should be amended to reflect these changes. The qualifications of those offices must conform to state requirements.

Citizen Participation in Jackson County Government:

Concerning policies and procedures that facilitate citizen involvement, the League:

1. Continues to emphasize the importance of citizen involvement and citizen participation in the establishing of policy through citizen advisory groups and commissions.

2. Believes that the BOC should provide widespread notice throughout the county of all vacancies on advisory boards and commissions. The Board should establish terms of service and qualifications for such positions. It should conduct interviews and select candidates who will bring diversity and experience in their service to the County.

3. Reaffirms its belief in the importance of the Oregon Open Meetings Law. Notices and agendas for all public meetings of the BOC should be given widespread advance publicity in media throughout the county.

Charter Amendments:

The League believes that the Charter's election laws, (Charter, Chapter VII, Section 28: 1,4,5) should be amended to conform with state statutes. This would correct the current inconsistent time intervals regarding initiative and referendum.

county charter revisions to take to our two League boards for approval. We are first going to have to decide on the specifics of those revisions. We will then have to decide whether or not to act. Also, action could be simply asking the Board of Commissioners to put the proposed revisions on the ballot without going further, or we could mount a petition campaign to accomplish that, should the BOC not act.

The joint committee has held one meeting since the first of the year and will hold another in early February to prepare a recommendation for the February board meetings. If the boards decide on a charter revision campaign, a full presentation on plans will probably be scheduled for our annual meeting in April.

Meanwhile, In the interval between the December meeting and the January committee meeting, our leisurely pace was interrupted by what seemed like a blizzard of unsolicited publicity in the Medford Mail-Tribune. I had a couple of calls, two weeks apart, from Dani Dodge, and told her we had not yet reached a decision on action. I was totally astonished one morning to see the story "front page right-hand column above the fold", as I've heard the lead story in a newspaper described. Since then, there have been two more stories and an editorial, as well as commentary on public radio. Once we have digested the fact that we are making news, we can all be grateful for a community newspaper that pays attention to the issues raised

by the League of Women Voters and reports them for all to read and consider.

This is where we are as of the first of February, 2001. The joint committee will meet soon and make a recommendation to the two boards. We have arrived at the point of deciding whether or not to take action after years and years of talking and studying. Although we may not have been prepared for finding ourselves so prominently in the public arena at this point, our concern with this issue is certainly nothing new.

All members are invited to provide input into this discussion. To begin with, our board meetings are open to all of our members and any wishing to express an opinion on what the League should do about changing the form of our county government are welcome to come to Rogue Valley's February board meeting on Feb. 8th at Lilian Macon's house at noon. Please call her at 857-6646 and let her know you're coming.

(Our position in full, as well as the extensive every-member material, is on our web site: www.lwvrv.org/ Printed copies of both can be obtained by sending \$1 to LWVRV, PO Box 8555, Medford 97501.)

Join Us

Dues for half of the 2000-2001 program year are \$24.50.

_____ Yes I want to become a member of the League of Women Voters. Enclosed is a check for \$24.50.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ e-mail _____

Make Check Payable and Mail to: League of Women Voters Rogue Valley (LWVRV)
P. O. Box 8555, Medford, OR 97501