

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HINGHAM
LOCAL PROGRAM
2010**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- I. The Hingham League recognizes the need for a charter in Hingham and will assist in placing the question on the ballot. (March 1971)
- II. As a means to provide more effective administration of town government responsive to the needs of the people, the LWV will:
 - A. Support the hiring of a full time professional town administrator whose duties and qualifications shall include:
 - 1. Preparation of the budget and the budget message;
 - 2. Provide central purchasing;
 - 3. Education or experience in municipal administration.
 - B. Support a budget prepared by the executive branch of town government while retaining the present system of voting at town meeting on the appropriation recommended by the Advisory Committee.
 - C. Support a public budget hearing with all the town boards, committees, and departments represented.
 - D. Support inclusion of a form of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law in a charter. (November 1972)

TOWN PLANNING

- I. Support measures to maintain an orderly growth in the town while preserving its character by planning for:
 - A. Well-distributed open spaces;
 - B. Attractive recreational facilities;
 - C. Preservation of its historic character;
 - D. Sufficient light industry proportional to residential growth to maintain a stabilized tax rate. (October 1969)

TOWN MEETING

To encourage informed, active citizen participation in Town government, The League of Women Voters of Hingham (LWVH) supports measures and opportunities to increase educational practices and facilitate more inclusive Town Meeting processes.

Toward that end, we propose the following including but not limited to:

- I. Warrant: The LWVH supports disseminating the content of the ōworking warrantö upon the closing date of the warrant each year to help voters follow articles through various boardsøvetting processes. This includes but is not limited to

making the working warrant a public document and having full disclosure of all articles being considered.

- II. Town Meeting: The LWVH supports measures to improve the efficiency of Town Meeting and an equitable speaking process which includes but is not limited to:
 - A. Eliminating a Town Meeting quorum thereby allowing a timely start.
 - B. After a welcome to all voters, an introduction by the Town Moderator of all officials on the dais and recognition of the Advisory Committee as a whole.
 - C. Establishing a set procedural process on the floor of Town Meeting where voters can either make statements or ask questions in a timely manner. (i.e. ó having designated microphones for speakers including procedural and informational questions or clarifications)
 - D. Reducing the speaking time to less than 10 minutes the first time and less than 5 minutes the second time.

- III. Town Meeting Information & Resources: The LWVH supports measures to publicize and post pertinent Town Meeting information to keep the public well informed. This includes but is not limited to:
 - A. A Town Meeting link on the Hingham Town Website Homepage that provides a section on the full spectrum of information needed to educate voters in Town Meeting practices and procedures; a flow chart of how to submit an article from inception through acceptance as Warrant Article; and information regarding the date, time and location of Town Meeting.
 - B. Posting Town Meeting information on the LWVH website to supplement the Town's website if necessary. (2009)

- IV. Support of Town Meeting procedures which will:
 - A. Insure completion of the warrant by encouraging adjourning the meeting when necessary;
 - B. Curtail lengthy presentations of special committees;
 - C. Discourage moving articles forward;
 - D. Consider the motion for the previous question out of order until both sides have been heard. (1965)

ENVIRONMENT

- I. Sustainability: To promote the health, productivity and safety of those living, working and learning within the Town, the League of Women Voters of Hingham adopts the goal of making Hingham a sustainable community. Toward that end in both the public and private spheres we will support measures including but not limited to:
 - A. Adoption of a guiding Town philosophy that calls for sustainable building and practice,
 - B. Long-term planning to align Town bylaws, policies and practice appropriately to achieve this goal,

- C. Establishment of sustainability goals and performance standards for major new construction and renovation projects in Hingham
 - D. Use of life cycle costing analysis in project planning for all major municipal capital improvement projects,
 - E. Integration of sustainable design and engineering concepts and collaboration early in the planning process for municipal improvements,
 - F. Stewardship of public resources,
 - G. Adoption of optimized energy performance standards and guidelines and energy conservation and renewable energy strategies,
 - H. Use of environmentally preferable materials in both construction and maintenance,
 - I. Reduction and/or recycling of solid waste,
 - J. Provision of appropriate training for Town employees. (2006)
- II. Environmental Health: Support of regional solutions to the problem of solid waste disposal and of adequate planning for the sanitary landfill in Hingham until a regional solution is found. (December and February 1968)

REGIONAL PLANNING

- I. Support of a local regional planning agency which provides for local community participation and is responsible for planning the physical and socio-economic improvement of the Greater Boston Area. (November 1961; updated December 1967)

EDUCATION

- 1. Support means which will improve communications between the School Committee, school administration, Facilities Study Committee and the public.
 - A. School Committee
 - 1. Support changes in the publication of the agenda which would allow time for consideration of proposed policy changes;
 - 2. Support increased interaction between School Committee members and teachers;
 - 3. Support increased time spent on policy matters.
 - B. School Administration
 - 1. Support more open discussion of decision-making policies between the School Committee and the school administration;
 - 2. Support measures which would keep the public informed about new laws concerning education.
 - C. Facilities Study Committee
 - 1. Support measures which would encourage a more vital role for future planning;

2. Support continued review of needs in the school;
 3. Support replacement of committee members as soon as possible when a position is vacated.
- D. Citizens Committee
1. Support increased use of the Citizens Committee as an advisory board to the School Committee;
 2. Support changes in the structure of the Committee, which would increase its effectiveness. (1974)
- E. Elementary Education
1. Support equal opportunity among elementary schools with regard to personnel, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and facilities; (1974 & 1975)
 2. Reaffirm the need for active interaction between parents and schools.
- F. Secondary Education
1. Support the ratio, 250 to 1, recommended by the Massachusetts Association of Guidance for the Hingham secondary school guidance staff;
 2. Support improvements in sports opportunities, especially intramural, at the junior high schools;
 3. Support strict enforcement of the discipline codes, as stated in the student handbooks. (1976)
- G. The League supports the Hingham Education Foundation, a partnership of community interests committed to enriching the quality of public education. Funds raised by the foundation will be used to enhance public education and not to replace or supplant funding for the public schools. (1992)
- II. The League of Women Voters of Hingham recognizes that some school reorganization may be necessary due to fiscal constraints.
- A. On the subject of grade groupings, the LWVH:
1. Strongly supports moving the ninth grade to the high school as soon as possible;
 2. Supports the physical, academic, and social separation of fifth and sixth from seventh and eighth grades if housed in same building;
 3. Encourages educators, whenever program integration is under consideration, to carefully consider the advantages and disadvantages before allowing any overlap of the programs to prevent any integration from occurring without careful planning.
- B. There is a significant difference in philosophy between a middle school and a traditional junior high school. If a change to a middle school were to be considered, the LWVH supports:
1. Consideration of parents' opinions and the educational philosophy of the community;
 2. Ample time for planning;
 3. Full consideration of costs;
 4. Teacher training.
- C. When major changes pertaining to closing schools, grade groupings, pupil/teacher ratios, and student reassignments are anticipated, the LWVH supports:

1. Providing ample lead time for a thorough discussion and response to parental and community concerns;
2. Providing full information as early as possible about the alternatives and their implications;
3. Open communication between school administration and the community;
4. The League strongly urges parents to take advantage of existing opportunities to be informed. (1984)

RECREATION

- I. Support measures to provide accessible and properly maintained recreational facilities to meet the current and future needs of the town by encouraging:
 - A. Total utilization of existing facilities;
 - B. Reservation of suitable open spaces;
 - C. Coordination among town departments, committees, and commissions so concerned.
- II. Support the hiring of a full time professional recreation coordinator whose qualifications will include education or experience in community recreation. If a full time recreation coordinator is approved, we do not see the need for continuing the position of summer recreation director.
- III. Support the provision of part time clerical help for the Recreation Commission in the event that a full time recreation coordinator is not provided. If a recreation coordinator is hired, that person should be able to assume full time clerical responsibilities.
- IV. While indoor facilities appeared to be adequate, the League supports the improvement of maintenance of outdoor facilities. The League believes immediate consideration should be given to the coordination of all town maintenance activities.
- V. Prior to consideration of construction of new facilities, the League would like to see existing facilities fully utilized and adequately maintained.
- VI. The League of Women Voters supports the goal of making recreation programs as self-sustaining as possible through the institution of a user fee system. The League continues to support the use of local taxes and would favor increased use of state and federal funding as available. (March 1978)

RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

- I. The Hingham League recognizes the need for an informed, coordinated response to events resulting from an accident at the fixed-site nuclear power facility, specifically Pilgrim 1. We support:
 - A. Measures to insure that public officials are aware of their roles;
 - B. Measures to foster coordination of individual public agency responses;
 - C. Measures to increase public awareness of the nature of nuclear power facilities and potential emergency situations. (1983)

DRUG AND ALCOHOL EDUCATION

- I. The Hingham League of Women Voters supports the principal of quality education of young people concerning alcohol and drug abuse and reasonable measures to implement this principle. (1985)

HOUSING

- I. The Hingham League of Women Voters supports equality of opportunity of access to housing. (1969)
- II. In reviewing the housing for special needs groups (i.e. the elderly, handicapped, emotionally disabled, and economically disadvantaged) in Hingham, the LWVH determined that the least addressed need for housing assistance to be that of the economically disadvantaged. To reduce this acute housing crisis of Hingham's neediest citizens, the LWVH endorses the following program:
 - A. Full implementation of the Fair Housing Policy of the town of Hingham as set forth by the Board of Selectmen in July 1983;
 - B. The local community as a whole should attempt to provide housing for Hingham's residents with special needs, especially those paying more than 35% of their income for housing costs;
 - C. All levels of government should encourage private individuals, institutions, and businesses to address the housing needs of this target group;
 - D. State and federal government should provide funding for housing with production and rent subsidies;
 - E. State and federal government should provide housing when it is not being produced by any other sectors in the community. (1986)

IMPACT OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ON HINGHAM

- I. In order to protect the Hingham water supply from contamination, the Hingham League of Women Voters believes the town should:
 - A. Increase public education;
 - B. Limit land usage in sensitive areas by zoning changes;
 - C. Increase and consistently monitor existing regulations.
- II. Although some existing septic systems pose problems, there is concern that an increase in sewerage might encourage development of presently undevelopable land in Hingham.
- III. The Hingham League supports education on septic systems and proper maintenance by the Board of Health.
- IV. In order to make citizens aware of the crucial solid waste disposal problems our town faces, the Hingham League should publicize the cost of maintaining, expanding or closing the landfill, as well as ways to decrease landfill use.

- V. The Long Range Waste Disposal and Recycling Committee should look into new technology including clean incineration and resource recovery (making energy or fuel), giving those alternatives high priority before considering landfill expansion.
- VI. The town of Hingham should educate citizens in order to reduce the solid waste stream. To this end, the town could:
 - A. Provide incentives to construction contractors to break down their waste into recyclable and/or baleable form;
 - B. Encourage the town to undertake recycling;
 - C. Encourage the public schools to use as few disposable products as possible, especially in the cafeterias;
 - D. Encourage the use of wet garbage pickup services;
 - E. Initiate curbside pickup for specific recyclables;
 - F. Encourage the public to return bottles and cans for deposits.
- VII. In order to address Hingham's future development and growth while protecting our water supply and dealing effectively with our waste problems, the town must have adequate professional paid staff empowered with sufficient authority to accomplish their responsibilities effectively. (1988)