



Shop Talk

*A publication of
the League of
Women Voters of
Elmhurst.*



Electricity Aggregation Gains Traction

League offers assistance in educating voters

The City of Elmhurst is pursuing the possibility of “electric aggregation” as a way to reduce the costs of electricity to residents. From the report of the Finance, Council Affairs, & Administrative Services Committee dated 11/29/11:

“Electric aggregation is a program that allows local governments to bundle, or aggregate, residential and small commercial retail electric accounts and seek bids for a cheaper source of power. Currently, ComEd customers receive electricity at a price set by the Illinois Power Agency, a governmental body that secures electricity on the wholesale market on behalf of ComEd. By bundling residential and small commercial accounts, a municipality can go into the open market to seek a lower rate for electric power than the rate secured by ComEd. ComEd will still distribute the power (regardless of the source of power) through its distribution system, and ComEd remains responsible for billing customers for all electricity, regardless of the electric supplier.

“Two options are available for electric aggregation: an opt-in program and an opt-out program. The opt-in aggregation requires the individual to enroll in the program before being included in the aggregation pool of customers. Opt-out aggregation automatically includes each household, or small commercial retail electric account, in the aggregated pool unless the individual or business affirmatively “opts out”, or decides not to participate.

“The first step in the opt-out program implementation process is to place a referendum question on the March 20, 2012, ballot. State statute provides very specific language for the referendum question as follows: *Shall the City of Elmhurst have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers who have not opted out of such a program?* The last day for local governing boards to adopt an ordinance to allow public questions on the March 20, 2012 ballot is January 3, 2012. “

(continued)

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(Aggregation, con't)

Because there is a limit of three referendum questions on the ballot, the Finance Committee recommended that the City Council suspend the rules so that Ordinance 0-52-2011 approving the referendum question could be considered at the 12-5 meeting. The council gave their approval to aggregation question at the meeting.

Representatives of the LWVE (President Susan Rose and Program Chair Sue Williams) and the Cool Cities Coalition (Co-Chairs Lisa Gerhold & Barbara Longergan) attended the Committee meeting on November 29 to support placing this question before the voters. Rose advised Committee members that the League will work to educate voters about the issue if placed on the ballot in March.

The interest of the League in this issue springs from our ongoing participation in the Cool Cities Coalition and their work in reaching the goals of cleaner, renewable energy sources. The Oak Park Cool Cities Coalition believes that a similar policy in their town may result in a cheaper energy rate and possibly a cleaner power supply. We will stay connected to this issue and bring as much information as possible to members so that they can be informed when they go



Cool Cities has been discussing Community Choice Aggregation. Oak Park became the first municipality in Illinois to choose an all-green power program for its residents and small business operators who participate in their new community electricity aggregation program. Oak Park has approved a two-year contract to supply electricity and credits from 100-percent green sources like wind and solar. It is estimated that local customers will save 25 percent over the current state-approved electricity provider.

To be a part of the conversation, please come to a Cool Cities meeting.

2012 Meetings are scheduled January 3, February 7, March 6, April 3, May 1, July 3 and August 7.

Candidate Forum Scheduled in February

Save the date for our next candidate forum. Sunday February 12th 1-5 pm at Elmhurst College, Frick Center. Participants have not yet been determined. Check our website for updates.

-Sue Whitworth

Stay Informed

School Board meeting information: <http://www.boarddocs.com/il/elmhurst/Board.nsf/Public>

Park Board agendas and minutes: <http://www.epd.org/parkboard.asp>

Elmhurst City Council agendas and minutes: <http://www.elmhurst.org/index.aspx?NID=370>

City, school district and other community-focused videos can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/elmhursttv>

LWV observer reports: <http://www.lwvelmhurst.org/observerreports.asp>

A letter from the President

Hello All,

November was a busy month as the League worked on the national study issue of the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education. On November 10, Dr. Charles Johns, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Mr. Christopher Whelton, Assistant Superintendent for Finance presented a forum for the public on the Common Core Standards the local school funding picture. This was an informative meeting for all who attended and were interested in hearing about the adoption of Common Core Standards at District #205 as well as how larger economic and political trends are affecting school financing in the Elmhurst area. A big thank you too Dr. Johns, Mr. Welton, and all those who attended.

This public program was held in the Frick Center at Elmhurst College. We thank the college for their help in hosting this event and we look forward to continuing with periodic events at the college. We are hoping that we will be able to host the **Candidate Forum on February 15, 1- 4 PM** at the College this year and look forward to developing a stronger relationship there.

We would also like to welcome new member Martha Wegener and a membership renewal from Bill Gooch at Community Bank. We look forward to their new and continuing contributions to the League.

I want to personally wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday with your friends and loved ones and to thank League members for their dedication this past year.

Happy Holidays to all,

Susan Rose

Program Information

Mark your Calendars



- ♦ **January 19** - Redistricting: Where we are in the LWVIL's Court Case and What does the Current Map Look Like? LWVIL President, Jan Dorner, will be our guest speaker.
 - ♦ **January 28** - LWVIL Issues Briefing and Workshops, Saturday, January 28, 2012 in Chicago. Watch for the schedule of events and registration form in the upcoming issue of the LWVIL Voter.
 - ♦ **February 12** - Candidate Forum, 1-5 pm at Elmhurst College
 - ♦ **March 15** - Budgets and the Financial Crisis with a Local Focus.
 - ♦ **April 19** - What are TIFs and Why do We Need Them?
 - ♦ **May TBD** - Annual Meeting
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LWV Elmhurst Education Study Consensus

The LWVE participated in the LWVUS study on the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education. On November 10, Dr. Charles Johns, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and Mr. Christopher Whelton, Assistant Superintendent for Finance presented a forum for the public on the Common Core Standards and the local school funding picture. On November 17, LWVE members were invited to a consensus meeting in which the questions for study were discussed and consensus reached on a number to the questions. The study questions with consensus responses submitted to the LWVUS are indicated below in bold.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
 - Much too
 - Small
 - too small
 - about right**
 - too large
 - much too large

Comment: The role is considered too great when talking about restrictions, too small when it comes to funding.
2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (**Ranked as below**)
 - a. To ensure that all students preK-12 receive a quality education.
 - b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - d. To monitor state efforts for funding
 - e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.
 - Strongly agree**
 - Agree
 - No consensus
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one) **No consensus was reached on this question**
 - a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
 - b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
 - c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above

5. Should there be a **national assessment aligned** with the common cores standards?

Yes

No

If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)

a. Voluntary

b. Mandated

c. Mandated, if fully funded

If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)

a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.

b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test*, or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.

c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically

6. National standards should lead to: (choose one) **No consensus reached on this question**

a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.

b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.

c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.

d. No national curriculum.

7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (**Ranked as below**)

a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.

b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.

c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.

d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.

e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.

8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)

a. Data should be "norm referenced" (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.

b. Data should be "criterion referenced" and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, & students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.

c. Data should be used to determine "cut" scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.

9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):

a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels

b. Reward schools that achieve high scores

c. Rank teachers based on student test score data

d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores

e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

- a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
- b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants**
- c. Competitive grants only
- d. No federal funding

11. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)

- a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
- b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
- c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
- d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.**
- e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Ranked as below)

- a. high quality teaching/learning**
- b. adequate and current learning materials**
- c. clean and well maintained physical facilities**
- d. food and health care**
- e. safe and secure neighborhoods
- f. secure housing

Comment: Schools should not be responsible for e & f.

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered "categorical" rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

Strongly agree

Agree

No consensus

Disagree

Strongly disagree

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children? **(There was no consensus on this question; there was disagreement about supporting educational needs of children who are at risk vs. children who are in need.)**

Strongly agree

Agree

No consensus

Disagree

Strongly disagree



(consensus, con't)

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g.Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

a. **Strongly Agree** Agree No consensus
Disagree Strongly Disagree

- b. This funding should be extended to :
 - All children
 - Only those with special needs
 - Special needs first**

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City of Elmhurst and Elmhurst Park District Partner to Offer Holiday Light Recycling



From now through February 1, holiday lights will be collected in designated bins at Wagner Community Center, Courts Plus and City Hall.

DuPage Scarce and Elgin recycling are offering this program to all interested communities.

US League of Women Voters to Set Legislative Priorities

In January, 2012 the National LWV Board of Directors will be setting the League Legislative Priorities for the upcoming year, an annual responsibility. The Board is soliciting suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities from members. If you are interested in making suggestions to the Board, please consider the goals and criteria as listed below. While the LWVUS has numerous positions under which we might take action, the Board must prioritize and consider those issues where we might be able to make a difference.

The goals for setting priorities to guide the LWV advocacy work are to: (1) Enhance the League's effectiveness by concentrating resources on priority issues; (2) Build the League's credibility & visibility by projecting a focused and consistent image; (3) Ensure that the League has sufficient issue and political expertise to act knowledgeably; and (4) Enable the League to manage resources effectively.

If you would like to make suggestions for LWVUS advocacy priorities, please email Advocacy Committee Chair Judy Duffy: jduffy1wv@aol.com. Please indicate whether the suggestions are from an individual member, a committee, board or membership meeting. Suggestions must be received by January 15.

Wreath and Christmas Tree Reuse/ Recycling

When you're taking down decorations this year, don't trash your wreath or tree. The Willowbrook Wildlife Center will be collecting wreaths and Christmas trees after the holidays. Bring your greens to the Glen Ellyn center and they will make good use of them for animal habitats. Be sure to remove all ornaments, lights, ribbons, etc. They can only use greens that are natural and free of any unnatural material.

Willowbrook Wildlife Center
525 S. Park Blvd.
Glen Ellyn



-DuPage SCARCE

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- ◆ Educating the community about aggregation

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