

## Tips for Observer Corps Volunteers

Below are some suggestions for Observer Corps Volunteers to help facilitate participation; save valuable time and energy; and to address other issues or items that may arise.

### Meeting Attendance:

- *Know the time and location of meeting.* Most entities holding public meetings have websites and post meetings notices in advance. It is often a good idea to confirm the location and time shortly before a meeting as sometimes there are last minute changes. Some entities post related meetings for public information, for example, the Charleston County website has a list of all [County Meetings](#) and links to municipalities' websites as well.
- *Check to see if the Board/Council has been in Executive Session beforehand or if they plan to adjourn to an Executive Session.* Knowing this will help with time management.
- *Try to obtain the meeting agenda and meeting documents in advance.* It is often difficult to follow the meeting discussion if meeting documents are not in hand. Some entities post meeting agenda and documents on their website. If not, contacting the clerk to ask for a set may be helpful.
- *Arrive a few minutes before meeting time* in order to ensure a place to sit; obtain any agenda or meeting documents; and to make any desired contacts.
- *Wear a League of Women Voters button or nametag with "LWV" on it to the meeting.* Name tags can be obtained from Barbara Griffin.
- *If the Board/Council is in Public Session, citizens (including Observer Corps Volunteers) may ask questions. When representing the League, Observer Corps Volunteers are asked to not make statements at the meeting.*
- *Occasionally, someone in a public meeting will ask the Observer Corps Volunteer about the League's position. If asked, the Observer can state the League's position on the issue, if there is one; if not, the observer can note that the League has not taken a formal position or is still studying the issue.*
- *As a matter of process, the President of the League (or an authorized representative) may speak publicly on behalf of the League. Requests for comment received by Observer Corps Volunteers should be shared with the League President.*

- *Take notes on the session - particularly decisions or outcomes of discussions.* The meeting agenda and supporting documents are helpful in this regard.
- *Make note of any items the LWV should be alerted to, especially items the League has taken positions on or that are likely to be matters of particular public concern.*
- *Write a brief a report of significant information, in either Word or Pages format. Again, the agenda structure can be especially helpful. Electronic attachments can be included for use of those LWV members interested in more detailed information.*
- *In writing the report, the main focus should be factual and focused on discussion topics and actions taken. When the Observer Corps Volunteer includes analysis, impressions or opinions, those should be noted in a manner that distinguishes them. Easy ways to do that are such inserts as: “Note” or “Observation”.*
- *Meeting reports may be submitted in Word or Pages format to Barbara Griffin at [bkgriffin@comcast.net](mailto:bkgriffin@comcast.net). Other League members, such as fellow League committee members or others may certainly be copied.*

### **Sample Observer Corps Update**

Observer Corps Volunteers meeting updates should, at a minimum, contain the following:

- Board or Entity Name
- Date of Meeting and date report is submitted
- Name of Observer Corps Volunteer
- Agenda Items; Key Issues, if any discussed or Actions Taken
- Observation(s), if any
- Attachments, if any