<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I)</th>
<th>CALL TO ORDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(II)</td>
<td>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approval of the April 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(III)</td>
<td>DISCUSS SCENARIOS FOR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL COMPENSATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IV)</td>
<td>LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CITY CLERK STUDY REPORT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(V)</td>
<td>DISCUSS CITY CLERK’S COMPENSATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VI)</td>
<td>SET MEETING DATES AND TIMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VI)</td>
<td>PUBLIC COMMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VIII)</td>
<td>ADJOURNMENT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Call to Order:
The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Cheryl Wollin. Committee members present were Rebecca Berneck, Omar Brown, Nehanda Loiseau, and Eric (Rick) Marsh. Staff member Tasheik Kerr was also present.

Approval of Minutes
It was moved by Rick, seconded by Rebecca to approve the Minutes of the March 4, 2020 Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Review Documents and Data Requested
Cheryl recommended the Committee keep in mind that being an alderman or mayor is a volunteer position. Individuals do the job because of civic duty and contributions to the community. The position is a part-time job.

Cheryl noted the variation in responses to the time analysis surveys. She also shared that compared to comparable communities; Evanston has the highest paid aldermen. Most of the communities did not provide health insurance. The City’s portion of health insurance amounted to $158,097.41 and elected officials paid portion of health insurance amounted to $15,186.76.

Rebecca suggested further analysis of the responses to the time analysis surveys. Rick suggested giving the Council a 28% increase; however, he noted that given the budget deficit an increase might not be possible. Rick added that Evanston is well served by Council, Clerk, and Mayor.

Cheryl mentioned that she is concerned about the rising cost of health care. The 10% to 12% contributed by elected officials might not be an adequate contribution. Nehanda noted that the responses of the surveys conflicted with the notion that the job is part-time. Cheryl responded that though some of the activities performed by council members are laudable and beneficial, they are not mandated.
Omar proposed leaving the aldermen’s compensation where it is at and to reimburse the Council for other expenses related to being an alderman. Cheryl responded that the Council’s salary is to help pay for those reimbursable activities.

The Committee discussed the pandemic in addition to the City’s budget deficit and whether those issues should affect its decision. Rick mentioned that the salary is not the main issue. The issue is healthcare costs.

The Committee discussed options for achieving equity in regards to health insurance. Rebecca shared that some companies opt to pay for employee-only health insurance and have allowed those employees to add individuals at their own expense. Others have granted their employees a lump sum amount for health premiums.

Rick inquired about the goal of the meeting. Tasheik responded that it would be helpful if the Committee could propose some scenarios.

**Explore Additional Areas**

Omar proposed giving the Council the same salary increase as City employees and for staff to look into salary increases tied to inflation.

Cheryl proposed paying for individual council member’s health insurance and providing them the option to acquire additional insurance at their own cost.

Rebecca proposed taking the average of the full employee annual premium and setting that amount as a base for Council to choose from.

Omar stated that an option would be for the Committee to do nothing given the unprecedented time. Rebecca questioned whether the Committee could change the rules to have a mid-year review. Cheryl responded that the Committee could set an amount for the first two years and then another amount for the last two years.

Rebecca proposed maintaining the Council salary for the year 2021 and years 2022, 2023, and 2024 will be based on cost of living increases.

Rick noted that the Committee should consider how to make compensation equitable for each council member. The Committee agreed with Rebecca’s suggestion to maintain the Council salary for year 2021 and years 2022, 2023, and 2024 will be based on cost of living increases.

Rick questioned whether the suggestions apply to City Clerk, Mayor, and Council. The Committee agreed that the suggestions applied to the Mayor and the Council. Nehanda requested staff inquired about the calculation for cost-of-living increases.

Rick noted that the salary will not drive someone to do this work. Rich questioned whether the Committee is trying to make the position attractive or to placate the current
City Council. Cheryl responded that compare to other communities the City of Evanston has the most attractive package.

The Committee agreed that the City Clerk's compensation will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Set Meeting Dates And Times**
The Committee decided its next meeting will be held on April 23, 2020 at 7 p.m.

**Public Comment**
Alderman Rainey noted her concern regarding the inequity of compensation amongst alderman. She stated that the health benefit provided to Council is compensation. Except for Alderman Rue Simmons and herself, all of the alderman’s’ health benefit, exceed their salary. Alderman Rainey stated she wants to receive the same amount of compensation as the other aldermen. Alderman Rainey recommends the Council be given a lump sum amount.

**ADJOURNMENT**
Rick moved the meeting be adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.
Background

In the months preceding the 2017 Evanston municipal elections, it became apparent to the League of Women Voters of Evanston (LWVE) that Evanston voters are generally uninformed as to the mandated purpose and responsibilities of the City Clerk, an elected position. Those responsibilities are delineated in both a State of Illinois Statute and in the City of Evanston Code; however, in recent years, little or no effort had been made to educate the voting public on, or to encourage residents to run for, the office of City Clerk.

The LWVE Observer Corps recognized and discussed this issue, then recommended to the membership at our 2017 annual Local Program Planning meeting that we examine the situation over the next League year. The membership approved the recommendation, and a review committee was formed. The committee soon developed a plan that included determining whether other suburban city clerks are elected or appointed and what their responsibilities are; committee members also interviewed current and past Evanston aldermen, City of Evanston staff, and current and past Evanston City Clerks. Our work focused on the roles and responsibilities of the office of a city clerk, not on any specific clerk.

Standard League procedure dictates that at all levels – local, county, state, and national – such initiatives begin by educating the League’s membership, proceed to full discussion and reaching of consensus; and culminate in a formal position. Leagues act only in alignment with specific positions. Pertinent to our review, the League of Women Voters of Cook County adopted a formal position on elected vs. appointed Cook County officials, and on creation, consolidation, and elimination of Cook County governmental bodies or offices. In the process they identified evaluation criteria: whether the body or official makes public policy decisions, suggesting an elected position, or if the body or official has mainly administrative responsibilities, suggesting an appointed position; whether financial or procedural efficiencies or improved communications would result from a change; and whether or not the public interest is better served when voters are able to select an official through direct election.

Our review of the Evanston City Clerk’s Office at this time is not to develop a new position, but to become better informed in order to educate voters so they can make informed decisions at the polls. The LWVE will continue observing the operations of the City Clerk’s office to supplement what we have learned from surveys and interviews, and to broaden our understanding of the qualifications and experience that candidates for the office should have. If the Evanston City Council votes to hold a referendum on the question of election vs. appointment of the City Clerk, the LWVE will develop materials outlining considerations and reasons that support or oppose both positions. In the past, the League has held public meetings to present the issue addressed in the referendum and a list of pros and cons in favor of the referendum and against it. The LWVE held several meetings of this type when there was a ballot referendum regarding the merger of the Township of Evanston with the Evanston City Government.
The Review Process

The review committee first met in October of 2017 and met every 4-6 weeks after that. Eleven LWVE members participated in meetings and research activities: Suzanne Calder, Julie Dieterich, Jessica Feldman, Betty Hayford, Holly Heap, Judy Hoffman, Katie O’Neil, Al Telser, Kate Todd, Cate Whitcomb, and Cheryl Wollin.

The committee determined its first step would be to gather information about the definition and responsibilities of the Office of City Clerk. They reviewed the Illinois Statute defining the office; Evanston ordinances that reaffirmed duties designated by the State and assigned by City Council; and the description of the City Clerk’s office and duties as posted on the City of Evanston Website. Next, some committee members met with the Evanston City Clerk to inform him of the review and ask him about his priorities for the office.

The committee then developed a survey form to structure the results of telephone interviews with city clerks in ten other Illinois municipalities, primarily in Cook County. The survey asked about the duties of the city clerks, their main functions, the number of years they had been in office, whether the position was full- or part-time, and whether the clerk was appointed or elected. The purpose of this survey was to determine how the responsibilities of the office varied in different communities, and how the responsibilities of the Evanston City Clerk compared to those of the others.

Through the winter and spring, the committee gathered information about the role of the City Clerk in Evanston. They surveyed four former City Clerks to get their views on their relevant experience before becoming City Clerk; the training they received; any changes in their duties; and the transition process from one City Clerk to the next. The committee developed a questionnaire for our current elected officials (aldermen, mayor), several former elected officials, and the City Manager. This questionnaire asked about appropriate duties for the City Clerk’s office; their own uses of the Office; suggestions and ideas for training a new City Clerk; and how the City Clerk and the City Council should work together.

Information Obtained from Surveys and Interviews

City Clerks’ Duties

A key characteristic mentioned in many of our interviews, although not explicit in the State Statute or responsibilities assigned by individual municipalities, is that the responsibilities of a City Clerk are administrative, not policy-oriented. Essentially everyone we interviewed thought the basic State statutory requirements to be clear and appropriate.

According to a document prepared (apparently 60 years ago) by Thomas A. Matthews, J. D., legal consultant to the Illinois Municipal League, “Generally, the duties of Municipal Clerk may be organized under the following heading: Recording of the proceedings of the governing body; notice to newly elected or appointed officers; and filing Oath and Bonds; custody and certificates to municipal documents; supervision over financial records; making of specific reports; duties in connection with election; attestation of signatures and certificates to matters of public record; representing the municipality in the service of process or correspondence; and non-municipal functions such as the issuance of State Hunting and Fishing licenses and acting as Registrar of Vital Statistics.” (For the complete document, navigate to www.lib.niu.edu/1958/im580108.html.)
Information Gathered from Other Municipal Clerks

- Clerks reported similar responsibilities consistent with Illinois statute. Core responsibilities include:
  - provide notice, attend, and prepare minutes of meetings of City Council, and convey resolutions and communications from meetings; keep the corporate seal, and maintain records belonging to the municipality; serve as the local election official; act as FOIA Officer.
- Four of the ten municipalities we contacted had appointed clerks; six had elected clerks.
- An overlapping but non-identical group of four of the ten were part time.
- Nine of the ten had one or more additional employees in the clerk’s office. In most cases the employees did most of the work of the office.
- There was a wide range of time in the job — from one to 38 years.
- Most had no specific training for the job and learned on the job. A few relied on Websites (the Municipal Clerks of Illinois or the Illinois Association of Clerks and Recorders although this latter Website seems to refer to court clerks and county recorders.)

Information Obtained from Former and the Current Evanston City Clerks

We asked four questions of each of our past four City Clerks:

1. Prior to being elected to office, did you have previous experience working in or with the City Clerk’s office?
2. Once elected, how were you trained for the position?
3. Did you help train your successor?
4. Did you have duties in addition to those mandated by the State Statutes, County Clerk’s Office, or City Code? If so, did you initiate them, or were they delegated by the City Manager, Council, and/or County Clerk’s Office?

One of the four had extensive experience working for the City and in the City Clerk’s office. Two had not worked for the City in any capacity but had been very active in civic, League, and/or political activities in Evanston. One had no experience similar to that of the other three.

All were trained by office staff and various members of the City’s administrative staff; all were assisted by regional or State Municipal Clerk associations; and all made a concerted effort to study the State statues, the Evanston Municipal Code, and other sources.

Three did not train their successors. One was followed in office by someone who had worked for her as a Deputy Clerk for eight years.

All had additional responsibilities that came from Section 7 of the Evanston City Code, the Council, the City Manager, or other persons not specified (a function “was always in the Clerk’s office.”)

Since the committee began its work, members of the committee met with Clerk Devon Reid on two occasions. First in Fall, 2017, and again in Summer, 2018. On both occasions the Clerk was generous with his time and eager to explain the work and priorities of his office. By mid-2018, Mr. Reid had a full-time Deputy Clerk, and three interns. He is interested in submitting grant proposals to external agencies to obtain funding to support the interns and his proposed outreach activities.

We explained the League study, and the Clerk outlined his goals. He explained that as an elected official he is entitled to bring his personal perspective to the office. He believes an elected clerk can provide "checks and balances" to the rest of City government. One of his goals is to increase the participation of Evanston citizens in City government. He also has ideas that would expand the role of the Clerk’s Office.
He has initiated a series of community meetings and other practices to inform citizens about different issues related to government. The Clerk is strongly committed to strengthening transparency and accountability in Evanston government. He plans to provide (unspecified) data that may not presently be easily found on the City web site. He has worked to improve the process for requesting and publicizing FOIA requests. The staff is digitizing records in the Office; paper copies of these records will be kept after the digitization process is complete. Clerk Reid agreed that a smooth transition process would be desirable for incoming clerks; he noted that his transition was not as smooth as he would have liked.

**Comments of Current and Past Evanston Aldermen and Other Officials**

In opening our discussions with Evanston officials, we made it clear that we were not trying to evaluate the current City Clerk, but, rather, matters relating to the position of a city clerk, in general. However, nearly all respondents spoke about the current City Clerk in addition to answering the more general questions we were interested in. We asked each of the aldermen the same five questions:

1. Are the Illinois statutory Clerk responsibilities adequate? Are any further responsibilities given to the Clerk by the City appropriate?
2. Have you contacted, or do you contact, the clerk for information? If so, for what and about how often?
3. Do you have an opinion of whether the Evanston City Clerk should be an elected or an appointed position?
4. What are your thoughts regarding the working relationship between the clerk and the Council? Should the Council have any specific oversight responsibilities of the clerk?
5. What are your thoughts about training for a newly elected clerk?

All said they felt the State statutes were appropriate; but it is possible that some of the aldermen were not fully conversant with them. Two aldermen feel the Clerk should be given more responsibilities. Two feel certain responsibilities were unfairly taken away from the current Clerk. Most look for information on line or consult the relevant City department for information.

Most aldermen do not object to having the Clerk being elected. On the other hand, most see advantages to having the City Clerk be an appointed position. There is a general sense that having an elected Clerk reinforces the idea of independence, transparency, and accountability. Those aldermen who think appointing a City Clerk might be a good idea pointed out that an appointed Clerk would be more likely to have the right qualifications and experience and could take on various tasks within the City administration, as needed.

The aldermen tended to say that City Council should take a stronger oversight role to monitor the City Clerk. But since the Clerk is an elected position, several say the voters are ultimately in charge by being able to vote a new Clerk into office at the next election.

There is wide agreement that better training for newly elected Clerks is needed. However, most who commented on this point did not have specific suggestions as to how this should be accomplished. Those who favor having an appointed Clerk say we would be assured the person would know what the job entails and would have the necessary supervision, skills, experience, and background; members of the City staff would be designated to provide training.

The same five questions were raised with one former alderman, the current and former Evanston mayors, and Evanston’s City Manager. Their comments were consistent with those of the current aldermen.

**Summary of Our Research**
The objective of our research on the Office of Municipal Clerk was to take a careful look at the responsibilities of the Office determined by state and local statute, by local custom and circumstances, and by determination of individual clerks. We talked to past and present clerks to learn how they understand and discharge their duties and how they were trained for the position. The four former Evanston clerks we interviewed came to the office from different backgrounds and became knowledgeable about the office, its responsibilities and their role in working with the City administration and the Council. Several of them became leaders in regional or state-wide Municipal Clerk associations.

The basic duties for the Clerk in Evanston and elsewhere include: provide notice, attend, and prepare minutes of meetings of City Council, and convey resolutions and communications from meetings, keep the corporate seal and maintain records belonging to the municipality, serve as the local election official, act as FOIA Officer. These duties are derived from the State statute, the Evanston City code, actions of the City Council that are not codified, instructions from the City Manager, or from actions of the Clerk her/himself.

In the course of our research, we became aware that we as League members, the voting public, and some elected officials in general, know relatively little of the Office of City Clerk, its requirements, its activities, how residents might use it, and how it can or should work with other elements of Evanston City government. The group of clerks we interviewed included both elected and appointed officials. There were no consistent differences in approaches to the job or the range of responsibilities between elected and appointed clerks. Neither elected nor appointed clerks had strong or extensive views on the relative advantages of election or appointment to the office.

In addition to the question of appointed vs. elected, the research also raises the question of whether the actual duties of the City Clerk constitute a full-time position. Most of the enumerated duties are done elsewhere within city staff. Most of the information and records that used to be stored in the Clerk's Office, and conveyed to the public upon request, are now available on line or from other City offices. Many of the other Clerks we interviewed described their work as fully integrated in the City administration.

After closely reviewing the information we gathered, we recognized that the importance of the following question: should the City of Evanston continue to have an elected city clerk, or might it be better to have an appointed city clerk?

Indeed, at a Council meeting in June, 2018, a senior alderman proposed that the City have a referendum on the November, 2018 ballot so that Evanston voters could determine whether to continue electing the Clerk or move to an appointed Clerk. Illinois law allows home rule communities, such as Evanston, to make this change. The matter was discussed at a subsequent Rules Committee meeting. It was not considered for the 2018 election, but may be revived.

**Issues Affecting the Choice of an Elected or Appointed City Clerk**

In the course of our interviews, reading, and discussion, it became clear that the role of a city clerk is administrative rather than policy-oriented. A consistent argument in favor of an elected clerk is that an elected official is independent of other elements of city government and is accountable to the voters and not to another official. Conventional wisdom says that an elected clerk can provide "checks and balances" to an elected Mayor or elected aldermen. However, this may have been more relevant in earlier times than the present, since Council meetings are widely observed and available on television or online. The City web-site provides access to minutes, reports, budgets and other documents, and City specific records can be obtained through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests which can be provided by
other City offices. The administrative nature of the Clerk’s responsibilities suggests that closer integration into City government through appointment could lead to more efficient City operations. Current Illinois reform groups are calling for consolidation or elimination of the large number of elected officials in Illinois to improve efficiency and reduce the costs of government.

The following comments apply to continuing to have an elected city clerk:

- How can the League help the citizens of Evanston become better informed about the role of the city clerk before they step into the poll booth?
- How can the League help voters decide whether candidates for the Office of City Clerk are properly qualified and experienced?
- Are the advantages of having an elected city clerk great enough to continue keeping the position an elected one?
- How can the City of Evanston establish a more consistent process to ensure proper training for new city clerks?

The following comments apply to having an appointed city clerk:

- Who would appoint the city clerk?
- Are the advantages of having an appointed city clerk great enough to switch to having the position become an appointed one?
- Are there responsibilities an appointed clerk would have that might create a conflict of interest? For example, presently there is an Evanston Municipal Officers Electoral Board that has three members: the Mayor, the City Clerk, and the most senior member of City Council. Changing to an appointed clerk may require changing the composition of this Board. There may be other current city clerk roles that would need modification.
- Are there issues relating to elections that would be problematic if we had an appointed clerk? (NB: We interviewed quite a few appointed clerks who said they carry out election-related duties with no problems. The Cook County Clerk administers elections and works with both appointed and elected clerks.)