

## **PUBLIC POLICY REPORT**

**Linda Greenlee - 1/25/11**

In anticipation that many county boards and commissions might be making appointments for 2011 in January, I sent an e-mails in early December to auditor's offices in counties AAUW branches were located. Out of the thirty plus e-mail I sent, I received twelve responses. The purpose of these e-mails was to see find out how counties were moving forward in bringing gender balance to their boards and commissions. I asked the following questions:

- Do you have openings on Boards or Commission in your county for 2011?
- What is the application process for a position?
- Are there any qualifications required?
- How long is the term?

Here are some of the responses I received:

“Most of the 2011 openings have been filled. Typical ‘application process’ is to talk with your county Supervisors and make them aware of your interest.” – **Benjamin Steines, Winneskiek County Auditor**

“No openings. However, the Auditor’s Office is always looking for Precinct Election Workers, particularly with computer skills. These are part-time temporary position paid working with voter registration, voting, and elections. – **Tom Slockett, C.E.R.A., Johnson County Auditor**

“The Board went over the process to apply for any of the Boards the county appoints to in order to assure gender balance. There is legislation that requires counties to try to have gender balance on appointive boards, commissions, committees and councils. The bill requires a fair and unbiased method of selecting the best qualified applicants for memberships on boards and commissions. This has been added to the County website and committee applications are always available at the County Auditor’s office.” – **Laura Kopsa, Tama County Auditor**

There are several Linn County boards and commissions that have terms expiring in 2011. Often those whose terms are expiring are asked if they would like to be reappointed. More information about all Linn County boards and commission, including description of duties, meeting times, length of terms (some are up to 5 years), and the application process can be found here:

[http://www.lincounty.org/content.asp?Page\\_Id=789&Dept\\_Id=7](http://www.lincounty.org/content.asp?Page_Id=789&Dept_Id=7) ,” – **Joel Miller, C.E.R.A., Linn County Auditor**

“The one position open is our County Conservation Board. This particular position is voted upon by the Board of Supervisors. We are aware of the gender balance regulations and we are working to achieve this.” – **Amber Garman, Kosssuth County Auditor**

“There are no openings currently for 2011. If there are any resignations, the notice is posted on our bulletin board and normally is advertised in the local newspapers.” – **Susan Lloyd, Buena Vista County Auditor**

“There are openings on boards for 2011. The Board of Supervisors has been announcing these at their regular board meetings with instructions on how to apply for the positions. The qualifications vary depending on the position as does the term.” – **Kim Schaa, Hamilton County Auditor**

It is clear to me that gender balance on boards and commissions is not just going to happen because a law has been passed. AAUW can play a key role in opening the door for women. Awareness needs to be raised, and this might be accomplished by getting women educated on what boards and commissions do, and what requirements must be met such as qualifications (if any), application process, and commitment timeline. As suggested at last spring’s annual AAUW meeting, each branch might invite its County Board of Supervisors and Administrators to a meeting to explain how boards and commissions developed over the years and how these serve the county.” A request could be made to the local newspaper to do a follow-up story on what has been the result of the passing of the gender balance law. Even a letter to the editor could be a good way of stimulating conversation on this issue.

On January 20<sup>th</sup>, an AAUW webinar on in-district advocacy was presented by Samuel Lehman. Unfortunately, my computer didn’t cooperate, but I was able to listen to his presentation. The power point presentation covered the six “Ps” for advocacy: Patient, Persistence, Preparation, Passion, Planning, and Personal Follow-up. I thought it was very well done and would like to see it shared at our annual spring meeting or made available for a branch program.

I am presently working with St. Ambrose University here in Davenport, Iowa to plan a showing of “Iron Jawed Angels” with a post-film discussion about 50/50 in 2020, to be led by Maggie Tinsman. This will be scheduled for a Saturday and hopefully we can get the eastern AAUW branches to attend. I know that the 50/50 in 2020 group would really like AAUW to be the front runner in encouraging women all ages of women to get involved with politics.