

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Lake Ashton Democratic Club

HFC Community Room

October 2, 2025, 6:30 PM



Attendance of Board of Directors

Ron McKie, President
Deanna Mayne, Vice-President
Carolyn Ritz, Treasurer
Howard Mayne, Secretary
Board Member Phyllis Brushaber
Board Member Paul Ritz
Board Member Charles Roland

Attendance

33 Members and 5 Guests (including the speaker).

Call to Order 6:30 pm by Ron McKie, President.

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of New Members/Attendees/Birthdays acknowledged

Minutes

The minutes of the September 4, 2025, General Meeting distributed in advance to the membership were approved by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report

The current balance is \$1388.85. Members were reminded that membership for 2025 is now due.

Speaker

The speaker was Jo Shim, President of the League of Women Voters (LWV), Polk County.

Jo began her talk by pointing out that she is an immigrant to the US, and was concerned that even green card holders may not be immune to current overzealous immigration policies.

The LWV has the mission of enrolling and empowering voters, and defending democratic principles, while remaining nonpartisan. Their stated goal is: “We want everyone to vote.” Anyone over 16 can be a voting member of LWV; men have recently become eligible for membership. The LWV is fully in favor of maintaining and supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs. The speaker mentioned that LWV can help to register new voters, but training is essential, since there are potential legal issues.

Jo described some of the initiatives the League is currently undertaking. Principal among their concerns is mid-cycle redistricting. Linked to that is the demand that voting not be made more difficult. Other topics they consider worthy of pursuing with legislators include medical benefits, restoration of voting rights for those no longer incarcerated, education, gun violence, clean energy, etc. She urged those who were interested and motivated to contact their state legislators, saying that contact information and model scripts were available. (NOTE. These were emailed to the Membership subsequent to the meeting.)

Jo also emphasized how poor the turnout is traditionally in local elections, citing 15% statewide in 2023. There are four local elections in November (including Winter Haven), and she urged those who were eligible to vote to do so.

She briefly outlined some of the recent progress (or lack thereof) made in discussion of health benefits. However, one favorable outcome does seem to be recent legislation paving the way for Dental Therapy programs in Florida. (Dental Therapists are licensed to practice basic dental procedures under the supervision of a dentist.)

In response to a question from the audience, Jo mentioned that rank choice voting is among the topics LWV will bring up in future.

Carol Gillespie (Lake Wales Commissioner) pointed out that the current Supervisor of Elections of Polk County is in favor of crowding all elections into November. This is in contrast to her predecessor, who thought that “too much.”

Carol Gillespie also gave a brief account of activities of the Lake Wales City Commission. She is concerned that the growth in building of new homes is not sustainable without improved infrastructure. She also registered her opposition to Lake Wales starting an “Arts and Entertainment District” downtown, concerned that it will lead to excessive public drinking. She reminded the membership that Commission meetings were held each Tuesday evening, and urged members to attend.

President Announcements

Ron McKie reminded the group that **Snowflakes** were ready and willing to help candidates. Snowflakes meet 6-8 pm each Tuesday. Ron reminded the Club that stamp donations for Snowflakes were always welcome. Ron also announced there will be several “**No Kings**” protests on Saturday October 18. (List below). Snowflakes will spend the evening of October 7 making signs for those who plan to attend

In addition, the membership was reminded that the Polk Democratic Party Annual Fundraising **Gala** will be held at Lake Ashton's HFC on October 25. (Cocktail hour starting at 6:00 pm.) David Jolly has been invited to attend. Tables are available for \$1000. Individual tickets are also available. Volunteers for setting up are sought. Those interested should seek out Ron or Paul. The parking issues have not been fully resolved by the DEC. The biggest fundraiser at the Gala will be the auctioning of desserts. Each table will make offers for the donated desserts. Bakers were urged to contribute.

Ron announced that he has constituted a **"Talking Points" Committee**. The Committee is charged with developing ways to effectively communicate our mission and ideals to those who are not necessarily of the same political persuasion.

Ron reminded people that the Winter Haven local elections are November 4, 2025.

Vice President Announcements

Dee thanked those who had brought refreshments for tonight's meeting.

We have reserved the HFC for the Fall Social October 28, at 5:30 pm. Guests are welcome. People should bring salads and desserts. The Club will provide beverages and pizza. Invitations will be sent out in the near future. People should RSVP to Dee ASAP, so we can plan appropriately.

Other Announcements

It was announced that St. Sophia Orthodox Church will hold a fund raiser on Saturday, October 4.

The meeting was **adjourned** at 7:31 pm.

"No Kings" Protests

There are several "No Kings" protests on Saturday, **October 18**.

Posner Village, **Davenport**, FL 33837 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Van Fleet & Broadway, **Bartow**, FL 33830 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Freedom Park, **Lakeland**, FL 33801 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm