

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO
Board of Directors Meeting
November 14, 2009, 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Skeen Library, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Socorro

Members Present: Jan Bray, Olin Bray, Bonnie Burn, Barbara Calef, Kathy Campbell, Jennice Fishburn, Cheryl Haaker, Caroline Jackson, Lora Lucero, Meredith Machen, Dick Mason, Linda Moscarella, Vicki Simons

Call to Order: President Campbell called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of September 12, 2009, were accepted and will be filed with the correction of a typo.

Treasurer's Report: Cheryl Haaker reviewed the treasurer's report for May 1- October 31, 2009. The report now includes a "special events" income and expense category for unbudgeted activities such as the recent climate change workshop. PMP bills have been sent out, and the certificate of deposit was rolled into the Wells Fargo account while a decision is made about its re-investment. The PAPV \$1,000 grant check was received and deposited. In regard to the *La Palabra* budget line item, Haaker said that we are on target thus far and have used roughly 50% of the budget. Mailing costs have gone up due to an increase in the bulk mail rate.

Membership Report: Caroline Jackson reported that membership renewal letters and information about League Day were sent to all Members-at-Large (MALs) on November 5, 2009. In addition, letters were sent to inactive MALs from the last two years, inviting them to rejoin the League. Since the last Board meeting, four national members have joined the League. The latest LWVNM membership summary sheet of November 2, 2009, from the LWVUS database shows the addition of 35 members, bringing the statewide total up from 676 to 711 members. Local League membership increases are as follows: CNM from 349 to 365 members; SFC from 161 to 175 members; and GLC from 88 to 97 members. Decreases are: MALs from 19 to 18 members, and LA from 59 to 56 members.

President's Report: Campbell provided a summary from the Finance Committee's conference call of 10/6/09, to be discussed later. A letter prepared by Campbell and Lora Lucero was sent to the NM Senate Committee on Committees, urging them to consider "revenue enhancement" germane to the special legislative session. Following the session, it was decided not to endorse a message to the Governor that had been prepared by the Better Choices campaign to urge him to veto part of the bill that had been passed. The main topics in the October 22nd state presidents' conference call with LWVUS President Mary Wilson were keeping MALs involved in the League, and LWVUS' proposed emphasis for work under the national reapportionment position, which is transparency in the redistricting process. Campbell also reported on her conversations with several individuals from the Leagues of La Plata and Montezuma Counties in Colorado about air quality issues in the Four Corners area and their efforts to get an EPA staff person located in the Four Corners area. (See Four Corners topic agenda item).

Old Business

Financial Issues: The Finance Committee's meeting focused on the following topics: reserve funds, budgets, fundraising and financial policies. The committee recommended that we need to distinguish between reserve funds (money that the budget does not anticipate touching) and carry-over/surplus from the previous year(s), which can be spent. They feel that it is legitimate to use carry-over funds as income to balance the budget, but that transferring funds from reserves to balance the budget should not be done. They concluded that the failure to distinguish between reserves and carry-over is a source of budget-related issues. Campbell noted that one of the reasons for the current accumulated surplus is that in the past the advocacy budget was under-spent. There is some confusion caused by income sources and expenses not included in the budget (e.g., climate change symposium), but that result in a net of approximately zero. Specific options for budgeting were suggested by committee members. Suggestions were also made for revisions in the LWVNM financial policy.

Discussion: Extensive board member discussion focused primarily on defining a reserve fund and a surplus/carry-over fund and their functions, as well as the implications of having both. Some of the questions addressed as part of this discussion were: do you bring the reserve fund back up to the previous level after it has been spent down to some extent; who should authorize expenditures from these two funds and how should that authorization process be handled; and how can revenue sharing with local Leagues be handled as an expense? The majority of board members expressed opinions (a) supporting the existence of a reserve fund as a cushion for unanticipated expenses, (b) having an "opportunity fund" that would use carry-over/surplus funds for unforeseen activities/needs that arise during the year, and (c) having the Board directly authorize any expenditures from the two funds.

Action: Motion by Calef, seconded by Lucero, that a reserve fund be created, the amount of which will be 30% of the average of the last three year's expenditures. Vote: one member against, rest of members in favor. Motion by J. Bray, seconded by Lucero, passed that any surplus over the reserve be deposited into an "opportunity fund". **Follow-up action needed:** Finance Committee will be asked to further define the two funds and recommend policies and procedures regarding their use and authorization of expenditures; Campbell and Haaker will research and provide financial data needed to proceed with establishing a baseline for the reserve fund.

League Day Plans: Dick Mason reviewed the Action Committee's plans for League Day (January 26, 2010), which will include a focus on the League of Women Voters' 90th birthday. After a discussion of the difficulties that had arisen in having a small reception, the following action was taken: Motion by Burn, seconded by Jackson, passed, to forego the reception. Mason stated that the Action Committee is still working on speakers for League Day; Meredith Machen will help make arrangements for a LWVNM table, and board members Haaker, Mason, and Machen will be present on the 28th to allow LWVNM to also have a table that day.

Communications: Molly Seibel (LWVSFC) will provide an orientation to Capwiz at the January LWVNM board meeting, which will include a discussion of how to coordinate our communication channels with members and with the public. Lucero will work with public relations directors of local Leagues to develop a LWVNM communications committee. Haaker, J. Bray, and O. Bray shared information they gained from a seminar sponsored by the New Mexico Editorial Forum and the American Forum on understanding the potential of new

media/social media tools such as Twitter, blogs, etc. Discussion: Twitter would be used more appropriately as a source of information with people and organizations outside the League (Twitter alerts from the League to the media were mentioned as an example). Machen shared that Seibel feels that for now, we should focus on Capwiz as an avenue for messages.

New Business

Four Corners EPA Resolution: After reviewing the draft Proposal for Streamlining EPA Jurisdiction in the Four Corners Region prepared by the LWVs of Montezuma County and La Plata County (Colorado) and hearing Campbell's report of her contacts with those Leagues, the following action was taken: Action: Motion by Machen, seconded by Mason, passed that the League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports efforts by the Leagues of Women Voters of Colorado, La Plata County and Montezuma County to promote the establishment of a senior-level EPA coordinator based in the Four Corners area and reporting directly to the USEPA in Washington, D.C.

Program Planning: At its January 2010 board meeting, LWVUS will consider priorities for the coming year so suggestions need to be submitted now. Action: Motion by Calef, seconded by Mason, passed to authorize Campbell to write a letter from the LWVNM to LWVUS asking that the Fair Election Now Act be a priority in 2010. Machen expressed concern that education positions don't cover higher education and that the LWVUS doesn't have a specific national position on education. J. Bray pointed out that there hasn't been a national study on government financing and spending; Mason will provide the board with information about what is currently going on in Congress in this regard. We will watch for proposals for national studies from other Leagues and also identify program areas where concurrence might be an option. Discussion of program planning will continue at the LWVNM January 2010 board meeting.

State Voters' Guide Editor: Fishburn and Lucero volunteered to serve as co-editors for the 2010 election LWVNM *Voters' Guide*, and will work with local League presidents to create a statewide committee. Mason volunteered to serve on the committee.

Strategic Planning

Goal I, 2009-2011 Strategic Plan: Linda Moscarella reviewed "Goal I: To empower the public to participate in government", with the board identifying additional committees and members responsible for specific activities listed in the plan. This process highlighted the need to recruit an election issues chair, which is currently a vacant position. The review of other major strategic plan goals will continue at future meetings.

Use of the PAVP Grant: A specific plan for use of the \$1,000 grant is needed since the agreement is general in nature. Campbell, Moscarella, and Haaker will participate in a LWVUS Dec. 12th webinar PAVP session to gather additional information and ideas; Campbell will also contact Jo Porter of LWVCNM to ask for her ideas based on information she has already gathered about deficiencies in voter protection in NM.

Other Reports

Local Leagues: Local League Presidents J. Bray, Machen, Calef, and Burn shared information about their recent and current activities, which included the completion of a GLC

study/concurrence on needed resources and services for the mentally ill in Dona Ana County, and CNM's creation of a leadership development committee and a focus on leadership at their January 2010 unit meetings. Further details of the four local Leagues' activities will appear in the next *La Palabra*.

Fair Representation: Haaker said that the committee's current focus is on the 2010 census and writing articles for League newsletters.

Natural Resources: Lucero reported that the informal climate change coalition has morphed into a group called "Clean Energy Works." Two League members are needed to testify at the Jan. 11, 2010, Environmental Improvement Board hearing on a petition requesting the EIB to establish a new rule that would place a state cap on greenhouse emissions at 25% below 1990 emission levels by 2020 (LWVNM is a co-petitioner). Machen and J. Bray agreed to represent the LWVNM at the hearing. Lucero pointed out that the LWVNM natural resources position dates back to 1987 and is in need of updating. It was decided that Lucero will review our current position and report at the January board meeting on what needs to be updated.

Health Care, Action: Vicki Simons and Mason said that action may be needed in regard to possible cuts in Medicaid and that other action might be needed in the future, depending on the passage of pending national health care legislation.

Coalitions: 1Sky has asked LWVNM to become an "ally" and therefore appear on a list of organizations that support them and help get their news out at a national level. It was noted that LWVUS has signed onto some 1Sky letters and that action seems to be occurring at the national level. Action: Motion by O. Bray, second by Burn, passed that LWVNM not join 1Sky. It was agreed updating of the master list of coalitions in which LWVNM participates is needed.

Adjournment: The board meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. The next board meeting will be January 9, 2010, in Albuquerque. The Brays will provide information about the exact location.

Submitted by:

Jennice Fishburn
Secretary