**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**November 21, 2020**

**VIA ZOOM**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Hannah Burling, President

Barbara Calef, Second Vice President and LWVLA Co-President

Dick Mason, Action Chair

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Suzanne Ronneau, Treasurer

Judy Williams, Past President

Chris Furlanetto, Program

Janet Blair, Communications/La Palabra Editor

Meredith Machen, Education/Immigration/Special Projects

Diane Goldfarb, Voter Services

Akkana Peck, Webmaster

Laura Atkins, Director at Large

Pat Hawkins, Director at Large

Susan Haase, Director at Large

Karen Douglas, LWVCNM Co-President

Karen Wentworth, LWVCNM Co-President

Kathy Brook, LWVSNM Co-President

Eileen VanWie, LWVSNM Co-President

Becky Shankland, LWVLA Co-President

Jody Larson, Archives

**CALL TO ORDER**

Hannah called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved that the agenda, as amended, be approved. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor. Because we were not able to keep to the schedule laid out in the agenda, Hannah asked that the adjournment be extended to 4:00 p.m. This motion was made, seconded, and all voted in favor.

It was moved that the September 19, 2020, board meeting minutes be approved. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Hannah announced that our newest board member, Brittany Dutton-Leyda, is ill.

Hannah offered her congratulations and thanks to Diane and her committee for the extraordinary work they did on Vote411 during what proved to be an exciting election period. She also thanked Janet and her media group for the excellent work they did publicizing Vote411. The election itself went better than expected, thanks to our Secretary of State.

Our Spent Nuclear Fuel committee achieved a small victory. We previously hit a speed bump with the League of Women Voters of Texas, which is also working on spent nuclear fuel issues. The Texas League submitted an advocacy statement on the site in Andrews County, Texas, but they were told by LWVUS that the LWVNM had to approve it before it could be submitted. Karen Douglas and Bobbi Merryman helped identify several vulnerabilities and helped them make their argument much stronger before it was submitted timely to the NRC on November 3, 2020.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne provided the Treasurer’s Report and Income-Expense spreadsheet electronically. The checking account ending balance as of November 14, 2020, was $31,334.62. She also reported that our $10,000 Certificate of Deposit (CD) matured. Wells Fargo offered to renew at an interest rate of 0.01 percent, which would earn us $1 in a year. Because that is unacceptable, Suzanne is looking at other financial institutions that may offer a better interest rate. The maximum she has seen thus far would earn us $100 in a year. Meredith suggested TIAA, which is now open to the public. Suzanne prefers to use a local institution so she is not limited to Internet access. Furthermore, the Patriot Act limits the ability of some non-profits to easily open an account and she prefers to avoid unnecessary logistical issues. At least one other board member will be needed to sign the paperwork when a new CD is opened. The time and effort required to open a new CD may not be worth it.

Meredith asked for a breakdown of how much money was spent on Vote411 by LWVNM, Thornburg, and LWVUS, because we need to accurately calculate expenses for future elections. This discussion was continued to later in the agenda.

The Budget Committee needs to be in place four months before the convention. Hannah said we will need to actively recruit members. Karen D. believes the Budget Committee automatically includes treasurers from the four local leagues. Suzanne could only be an *ex officio* member.

**ACTION REPORT**

Dick confirmed that League Day will be held virtually, on February 18, 2021, from 10:30 to 12:30. We will have presentations on Taxes & Revenue (Amber Wallin from New Mexico Voices for Children) and on Redistricting Reform (Supreme Court Justice Edward Chavez has been invited).

On December 9, 2020, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., the Action Committee will host a Zoom Webinar on reproductive rights featuring Representative Joanne Ferrary and someone from her team along with a representative from Planned Parenthood New Mexico. A second Zoom Webinar covering taxes and funding for essential services will be held on December 16, 2020, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. This event will also feature Amber Wallin from New Mexico Voices for Children. She is a smart and engaging speaker. Because they are always asked how proposed programs would be funded, New Mexico Voices for Children has an entire department dedicated to looking at tax policy and alternative sources of revenue.

We still do not know how the legislative session will operate, but there will likely be a limited opportunity to testify in person. We will proceed as if it will be entirely virtual. The Advocacy Workshop, which will be held December 5, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., will cover testifying virtually. The legislative session will focus on the budget shortfall, which is not as bad as expected. Still, the legislators may be more open to diversifying our revenue sources. Dick asked that the information be disseminated to as many groups as possible to ensure broad participation.

Legislative priorities from Southern New Mexico include the Health Security Act, a list of educational priorities, broadband expansion, and green energy. Karen D. said that an important issue to CNM is climate change as that relates to green energy initiatives. Susan noted that New Mexico will need to find alternative ways to fund our schools because the future of gas and oil does not look bright. Dick agreed and will send a report on declining gas revenue projections to the board.

Dick asked the Education Committee to monitor bills, as the Natural Resources Committee does, and communicate with legislators "in the know."

Judy discussed the passage of the constitutional amendment that requires the members of the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) to be appointed by the Governor. Enabling legislation is expected during the next legislative session. SB281, which did not pass previously, laid out criteria for the nomination of PRC commissioners. Our League has a position on the PRC regarding necessary qualifications. If the bill comes up again in some form, Judy asked if we should take a position. She believes the previous bill did not include information on the funding of the PRC and will contact the original sponsor of the bill, Stephen Neville, and ask him to add in the missing element. Karen D. noted that CNM has an official observer for the PRC. Dick suggested that we form a group to identify people who would be appropriate for the nominating committee.

The Redistricting Task Force will identify recommendations for the legislature. Several legislators have been very engaged in the process. The task force will conclude its work on December 14, 2020, at which time they will have concrete recommendations, possibly including legislation, to improve the redistricting process in New Mexico. Dick believes getting redistricting reform passed will be easier in the Senate than in the House.

The webinar on redistricting held on November 16, 2020, which featured Gwyneth Doland, was recorded and Dick will post the recording on the LWVNM and Fair Districts New Mexico websites.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Diane thanked her team, including many good volunteers, who worked on Vote411. While there were pros and cons, the overall reviews have been positive. Diane and her team members met following the election and compiled a report to submit to Megan Brown, our LWVUS contact for the project. One major problem they encountered was the lack of participation by Republicans and some incumbents. In the future we need to make a concerted effort to reach these groups. Diane noted that Republicans make up the majority of those candidates who did not respond to our questionnaire. Another major problem was getting mapping information for county commission races across the state. Some county clerks ignored the requests and some wanted to charge for the information. Diane also noted problems communicating with the Secretary of State's office. The staff is working remotely and often did not respond to questions in a timely manner. Akkana noted that the group working on Vote411 had difficulty obtaining an official spreadsheet listing all of the candidates, especially for the primary election. Judy said the spreadsheet was publicly available but it contained errors including bad email addresses.

The problem getting the mapping information led Akkana to reach out to District 43 Representative Christine Chandler regarding legislation to address this issue. The legislation, which is in the process of being drafted, would require that the information be free and available to the public on the Secretary of State website. Akkana does not believe the issue will be contentious.

The Vote411 statistics provided by Megan reflected approximately 36,000 users and a total of approximately 47,000 "sessions" or "hits." Judy believes that the publicity blitz in October helped because most of these contacts occurred during that month.

Diane and her group recommend that we continue with Vote411 and she believes that online Voter Guides are in our future. The question remains, however, whether the local leagues will be doing guides for municipal elections next year. Barbara and Eileen both agreed that our participation in Vote411 should be continued and Eileen suggested that it would be nice to hear from young people as to how it might be improved. Karen W. asked who would be responsible for paying for this service going forward.

Judy noted that it is not just local Leagues that can benefit from Vote411, but also municipalities outside of our four local Leagues. Hannah suggested that several new members might be interested in being involved in this project in the future.

Janet provided a rundown on the statistics provided by Megan. The publicity cost approximately $9,100. Each of the 47,683 sessions lasted roughly seven minutes, which equates to $.19 per session. We need to decide if that was a good return on our investment, but Janet does not believe the entire expenditure was worthwhile and suggested that some of the advertising funding could be cut. She believes we need to be consistent with the use of Vote411 or we risk losing our presence in voters' minds.

Pat said that Santa Fe wants to continue with Vote411. If we do not use Vote411 for municipal elections, it will also be harder for local Leagues to issue a printed Voter Guide. Regarding the cost, she suggested that local Leagues contribute some funds towards Vote411 in the years they are going to use it.

Judy said that if we decide to continue with Vote411 soon, we can sign on for 2020 prices but she does not know what the cost will be. In addition to the cost of Vote411, we will also have expenses related to its promotion.

It was moved that we continue to participate in Vote411 and the cost be included as a budget item henceforth. This motion was seconded. The cost of Vote411, including the cost to promote it, was discussed extensively. Judy believes LWVNM should pay the costs related to Vote411. Diane did not intend her report to lead to a motion and she maintains that more work needs to be done, including identifying who will be having elections and how much it would cost, before we vote. Susan suggested that we bring this to some sort of conclusion today in order to get a break on the price and to continue to build awareness. Kathy asked for more information before we vote. Meredith suggested an electronic vote before the end of the year if it will save money and added that the cost of promotion will lessen over time if we use the Vote411 brand on our website and letterhead. Because the consensus was that more information is needed before a vote should be taken, the motion and the second were withdrawn. The majority agreed that the discussion will continue until no later than January 16, 2021, the date of our next meeting.

Meredith then moved that we put a placeholder in the budget including a new line item of at least $5,000 to $7,000 to pay for Vote411 going forward. She noted that it could be paid for from our checking account balance and Suzanne confirmed we have the funds to pay for this expense. This motion was not seconded.

**FUNDRAISING and ADMINISTRATION**

Hannah suggested we form a fundraising committee or group to look at funding for Vote411 from foundations and financial institutions. She and Judy have discussed fundraising for the state League; there are verbal agreements in place with local Leagues not to "poach." We will need to fundraise especially if we need to do publicity every year. She will bring more information on this topic to our January meeting.

The Nominating Committee consists of three members who are elected at the convention and two board members. One of the elected members has moved away and needs to be replaced and two board members need to be appointed. Dick suggested that we use the survey function in Constant Contact to reach out to our members to see who may be interested in serving on committees, the board, or with fundraising. Barbara agreed this was a good idea but not practical for our purposes because the appointments are needed today. Barbara nominated Meredith, this motion was seconded, and all voted in favor. Barbara also nominated Karen W., this motion was seconded, and all voted in favor. A third member also needs to be appointed and Becky suggested representation from Southern New Mexico is needed. Eileen and Kathy will inquire with their League and forward a name to Hannah to bring to the Executive Committee.

Our webinar subscription, for which we paid $151.03, is set to expire on December 9, 2020. Because we will need this function for events in January, Hannah asked that the subscription be extended through January. This motion was made, seconded, and all voted in favor.

Because we are now meeting virtually, Chris suggested we change the time of our meetings. Barbara moved that we change the time of our meetings to 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. until further notice. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor. Dick suggested our meetings permanently change to virtual to make it easier for members to participate. Barbara said our bylaws permit electronic meetings but a decision about a permanent change is not needed at this time.

Eileen said that the Annual Convention is scheduled for April 24 and April 25, 2021, but it has not yet been determined if both dates will be needed. Because of COVID, it will need to be held virtually and Southern New Mexico, the host, is in need of technical support. Hannah suggested using the survey function of Constant Contact to solicit volunteers. Barbara and Becky asked that, at some point in the future when the pandemic is under control, Southern New Mexico host an in-person, small group event because relationship-building is so important. Eileen will bring this to her board.

Barbara reviewed our Concurrence Policy and Procedures, which was last revised in 2014. Barbara found it was out of date and contained an error. An amended policy, with some language added and some language deleted, was submitted. It was moved that the amended policy be adopted. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor.

**JEDI**

At the September 2020 board meeting, the motion to approve the Women's March proposed by JEDI was delegated to the Executive Committee. On September 28, 2020, the Executive Committee voted to approve the motion. The vote on the motion is hereby ratified and recorded in the minutes of this meeting. On November 10, 2020, it was moved via email that the budget proposed by JEDI for the Women's March be approved and the motion was seconded. The email discussion became untenable and a final vote was not taken. The motion is hereby ratified and recorded in the minutes of today's meeting. On November 12, 2020, it was moved via email that if there was no objection in eight hours, the November 10 motion will be postponed until today's meeting. There was no objection. The vote to postpone the motion is hereby ratified and recorded in the minutes of today's meeting.

Three representatives of JEDI were present to further discuss the proposed Women's March. Irene Epp noted that in addition to organizing the Women's March, JEDI is planning to reach out to all four local leagues. Santa Fe allowed them to pilot their presentations with them. They participated in CNM's annual meeting, during which CNM appointed member Donna Sandoval to be a liaison with JEDI. Meetings with Southern New Mexico and Los Alamos are pending. JEDI also thanked Dick for agreeing to talk about legislative policy and advocacy work.

Rebecca Álvarez and Katie Christianson are JEDI members responsible for logistics and outreach, respectively. They reviewed the plans for the Women's March, which they assure has been thought through carefully and is well organized. They hope this event will help heal the current divide in our country. Although the event will be a car parade, they have decided to continue to use the term "march" because that is what the event has been historically and they hope to continue the event on a yearly basis. They also intend to have the event live-streamed on social media.

Several members of the board expressed concerns regarding the budget, safety issues, and the lack of inclusiveness. To some, the $2,400 budget for a one-hour car parade does not seem reasonable and it does not include any resources from other groups that may participate. The JEDI members explained that they did not ask for funding from these other groups and the event was purposely created with a flat hierarchy. Another concern about the budget was the potential exposure to additional costs billed to us by the Santa Fe Police Department if the event causes any disruptions. Katie has agreed to reach out to the police department to see if there is a cap, but we were also assured that our liability insurance would cover up to $1 million in losses. The JEDI group does not believe safety will be an issue because each participant will be required to agree to act in a non-partisan manner and there will be no face-to-face interaction. Despite this, some board members believe the timing of the event, after such a contentious election, creates a bad impression. Because the event takes place in Santa Fe and is billed as a Santa Fe event, several members felt it was not inclusive of the whole state. JEDI explained that they are offering technical support to outlying areas that may wish to hold their own event. In addition, Santa Fe is used to identify where the march is taking place but their messaging is statewide.

It was moved that LWVNM support the proposed event and budget, and this motion was seconded. The motion passed after 13 members voted in favor and 4 were opposed.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Janet reviewed the publicity details from Vote411. She said that the radio spots were the most expensive part of the outreach campaign. We paid approximately $6,000 for the radio advertising and only reached 700 to 800 people in this manner. In the future, they will consider focusing on print ads and Facebook. Facebook had its own issues because they rarely approved the ads we submitted. Eileen noted that her League's publicity person suggested the opposite - that radio expenses be expanded and print costs reduced.

We discussed a warning from LWVUS that some Leagues have been contacted by third-party firms claiming the Leagues are violating image licenses. They have been threatened with legal action if some payment is not made. Janet does not believe we have exposure to this because we are covered by fair use copyright law (specifically Section 107 of the Copyright Act). Akkana expressed concern, however, because fair use is decided in court cases, which could expose us to legal fees.

**PROGRAM**

At the September board meeting, the board approved a change in item #6 in the Election Procedures position. Shortly after the meeting, Eileen proposed that the board revisit the September decision. Barbara supported Eileen's request because the board had not given the members adequate time to consider the concurrence as required by the Concurrence Policy. Our parliamentarian, Jan Strand, confirmed the board could reconsider the vote. "*As long as no action has been taken on the issue after the vote, a motion can be made at the November meeting to Reconsider the vote on the motion. The issue would not be listed on the agenda but it is advised that the board members be made aware that a member will make the motion. The motion to Reconsider will need to be seconded and voted on. When the decision is to reconsider the vote, then debate/discussion can go into the details of the original motion to concur. Then the vote is again taken on the original issue. This gives members additional information to consider before the vote.*" It was moved that we reconsider the vote taken at the September meeting. This motion was seconded, and all but one member voted in favor.

The previous wording of bullet #6 reads: "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports: an all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election." The revised wording adopted on September 17, 2020, reads: "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports: an all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election, so that (a) Voters who are not enrolled in a major political party may vote on one ballot per primary without having to enroll in that particular political party; and (b) Voters enrolled in a major political party can vote only on the ballot of their party." Each local League brought the issue to their board and/or their members. The Santa Fe board voted to keep the original language because the new language proposed was overly limiting and did not add anything substantive. CNM voted 7 to 2 to adopt the new language. Southern New Mexico approved the new language. The Los Alamos board did not take a vote but the consensus of the board was to approve the new language.

It was moved that the new language be adopted, and the motion was seconded. Barbara reviewed the impact of the Sapien amendment to SB4 that said anyone could vote in a primary election if s/he registers as a Republican or Democrat. That is the law at the moment, but it is likely that a new bill will be proposed during the next legislative session. If the language in a future bill aligns with the proposed new language, we could support it rather than the Sapien amendment. Dick agreed and stated that without the new language we would have to support the Sapien amendment. Following this discussion, 17 members voted in favor of the language change and 2 were opposed.

**ARCHIVES**

Hannah thanked the group in charge of revising our Archives Policy and Procedure (Jody, Barbara, Chris, Meredith, and Akkana). Jody explained that the electronic records portion of the policy is still a work in progress and she is in need of volunteers with expertise in archiving e-documents. Akkana added that we specifically need someone with cloud storage experience. The group divided the document categories to align with UNM's categories so the documents are less likely to be rearranged. Suzanne reviewed the sections on financial, tax, and insurance documents and her input was incorporated into the new policy. Jody asked the board to approve the new policy, as presented, with an electronic document portion to the policy to be approved at a later date. This motion was made and seconded. Chris made a friendly amendment to change the term "historian" to "program chair" and this was accepted. All voted in favor.

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The proposed revision of the Education Position is for information and clarification only at this time. Meredith, Eileen, and their group reorganized what was a patchwork quilt into a very cohesive position. They will submit a final version to the board in January. There are really only two new elements: one that relates to our court advocacy for continued oversight of Yazzie-Martinez; and one that provides more electronic support for teachers and students. They changed the emphasis on assessments to continuous improvement in learning and emphasized that it should not be used in a punitive manner but to provide feedback to teachers and students. The document is accompanied by key terms in education created by Eileen. The position also includes support for an advisory Education Commission, rather than an elected board, which would give input into choosing the Secretary of Education and making policy decisions. Eileen noted that the section on charter schools is essentially unchanged from the current position, but the committee concluded it was important to define what is meant by a "high quality education system."

Judy said the document we received should have had additions and deletions highlighted so we can understand what they are, with an explanation of where the support for the changes comes from. Our positions are always based on studies we have undertaken or concurrences with other Leagues. Dick agreed that some of the changes appear to be substantial and he wondered if we would need concurrence from another state or a study. Chris is concerned that because they did a wholesale rewrite of our position, the process used does not comply with our bylaws, which require the committee to include background information as well as pros/cons. Barbara suggested the group take the position and annotate it to show what has changed and why. Jody compared our current position and the draft revision line by line and she echoes the concerns already expressed, although it is clear that some changes were in response to the Yazzie decision. Jody is puzzled that the excellent community involvement section is missing from the draft revision. She suggested the group do a Zoom meeting with each local league, similar to a consensus meeting. Becky thanked the group for their work and suggested the final product can serve as an educational tool. Eileen noted that they did not do an exhaustive study of other Leagues and their positions on education, but many they did review have not changed in a long time. Our situation in New Mexico is unique.

**SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL COMMITTEE**

Karen D. submitted her written report and, due to time constraints, did not review it with the group. She noted, however, that for those on the committee and board following the issue, she distributed an NRC inspection report of the Palo Verde nuclear plant in Arizona, which discussed some violations with fuel storage. The level of the NRC inspection will impress those who read through the report and readers may be dismayed that some of the utility personnel overlooked some essential calculations they should have taken. She suspects that legislation that was proposed last year to deal with such issues will be reintroduced during the coming legislative session.

Karen suggests meeting with key players with a follow up with her committee documents. She will ask for a draft of any proposed legislation.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

Submitted in writing and will be included in the next edition of *La Palabra*.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Everyone was reminded that the *La Palabra* deadline is December 12, 2020.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 16, 2021, via Zoom.

The subsequent meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2021, via Zoom.

The Annual Convention is scheduled for April 24 and 25, 2021, via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (November 25, 2020)

Edited by Barbara Calef (November 26, 2020)