**League of Women Voters of New Mexico**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**September 21, 2024**

**Via Zoom**

**Board Members Present**

Kathy Brook, Co-President

Barbara Calef, Second Vice-President

Judy Williams, Past President and Program Director

Dick Mason, Voting and Elections Director

Akkana Peck, Action Chair and Webmaster

Meredith Machen, Education Chair and Special Projects

Edwina Jaramillo, Voter Services Director

Karen Douglas, Nuclear Issues Director

Janet Blair, Communications Director

Starlyn Brown, LWVCNM President

Felicia Orth, LWVLA President

Jo Galván Nash, LWVSNM President

Debbie Helper, LWVSFC Liaison

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Kathy called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their positions on the LWVNM board. In the absence of a board secretary (since Rebecca Chaiken has resigned), Edwina volunteered to assist Kathy with the minutes.

**Approval of Agenda and Approval of Minutes of July 20, 2024**

Agenda: Minor changes were made to the agenda (adding a report of the Communications Committee and moving the discussion of the Coalition and Collaborations Policy to a point earlier on the agenda). Jo moved to approve the agenda as amended and Dick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

July 20, 2024 Board Minutes: Debbie Helper asked that the Action Committee section of the minutes be amended to show that she “noted that robust feedback sessions are already held by the Santa Fe County clerk” (rather than the SOS). Edwina asked for a correction to page 8, 2nd paragraph to show in the Finances section that “Kathy said that any large (c)(4) donation should be reviewed and acceptance determined by the board.” Barbara asked that the Ed Fund section be modified in the last sentence of the third paragraph to read: “The Ed Fund is not entertaining grants to non-affiliated entities.”

Dick moved to approve the minutes as amended, Meredith seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Co-President’s Report**

Kathy began by referencing LWVUS materials that she shared with board members about a week ago via email. These were focused on the upcoming election and included links concerning inoculation messaging and establishing rapid response networks at the state and local Leagues. (Inoculation messaging refers to those messages intended to prepare voters to deal with mis- and disinformation that they may encounter – such as reminding voters that it takes time in many states to count the votes.) In addition, Leagues will be receiving packets of yard signs, stickers, and plan-to- vote cards in English and Spanish to promote VOTE411. Recordings of the 2024 election webinar series can be found at <https://lwv.org/2024ElectionWebinars>.

LWVNM will be receiving $6,000 in addition to the initial allocation of $12,000 as part of the 2024-2025 Making Democracy Work (MDW) grant. This is coming to us because the applicants for the grants from LWVUS Education Fund had asked for more than was available to award, but the Ed Fund has apparently raised additional funds since then. These funds do not obligate LWVNM to do more than was originally proposed.

As requested by the board at a recent meeting, LWVNM now has a Wells Fargo business credit card (currently housed with Kathy) and the card has been used to pay for copies of the Native American Voter Guides (NAVG) for 8 of the 12 counties.

LWVNM also now has an account with Zeffy.com that can be used to sell tickets to events such as the Making Democracy Work luncheon honoring Raúl Burciaga or for receiving donations to LWVNM. Zeffy is a platform for non-profit organizations and is supported by donations rather than charges for processing payments.

There is at least one person in San Juan County interested in forming a League or a unit in that part of the state. Edwina, Kathy, and Hannah have spoken with her on Zoom and Hannah has spoken with Starlyn about the possibility of providing support to that area. Hannah will be traveling to northwest NM soon to deliver Native American Voter Guides and may be able to meet with interested people then. In addition, Judy suggested the possibility of connecting them with League members in the Durango, CO area. Dick suggested that we connect the Navajo Nation with the San Juan County people interested in forming a League.

In concluding, Kathy reiterated her concerns that we need to do a better job of planning how we are going to use our resources in the near and more distant future. This will be particularly important in budgeting as we coordinate with the LWVNM Ed Fund.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Kim reviewed the report, noting that the entry for office rent reflects payments for last year and that the LWVNM share of the CNM office rental increased by $200 per year. Jo raised a question about the absence of interest, given that there had been a discussion last fall about purchasing a certificate of deposit to benefit from relatively high interest rates. Responsibility for pursuing this was delegated to the Executive Committee. One reason for lack of progress was the confusion of finances between the LWVNM and the Ed Fund; in particular, LWVNM reimbursed the Ed Fund in April for expenses that were paid from the Ed Fund but should have been covered at least partially by the Making Democracy Work grant. This reimbursement reduced the balance in the LWVNM account from about $50,000 to about $30,000 currently. Of that total, the unrestricted balance is $9,450.

Kathy will follow up with the Executive Committee before the next board meeting.

It was noted that currently the Ed Fund is heavily dependent on funding from Thornburg and that we need to have more diverse funding sources. To address that, there has been a concerted effort to raise funds from a variety of sources but so far, the Ed Fund has not been successful. One solution could be to allocate part of the dues received by LWVNM to the Ed Fund. Kim indicated that the IRS looks at the diversity of funding sources over a five-year period and that two-thirds of the funding must come from public sources. Judy noted that IRS rules indicate that as long as we are making an effort to raise funds from the public, it is deemed sufficient to meet their requirements.

Starlyn suggested that we might consider using something like Quickbooks to track expenses, in particular those relating to grants. Debbie reported that SFC is using Quickbooks via TechSoup, at no charge to non-profit organizations. Kim responded that there are few monthly transactions, so she had been reluctant to move to something like Quickbooks, but with the grant accounting, it could be helpful. Dick added that it could assist with tracking carry forward amounts.

Dick cited a further complication in that funding for the NAVG was part of the Thornburg grant request. He said that we had committed to doing the NAVG before we knew wewould get funding from Thornburg. Kathy followed up, noting the commitment we made to LWVUS Ed Fund when we applied for MDW for 2024-2025. Judy indicated that at this point the funding for NAVG has come from MDW. Kim noted that the expenses for the NAVGs were not included in the report as they occurred after the report was prepared.

Moving on from NAVG, Kathy noted that she had failed to convey to Kim that the board, at its July meeting, voted to add an income line and an expense line for the Making Democracy Work luncheon. The event is intended to be self-supporting and so income and expense could be budgeted at $2,000 (based on 40 tickets at $50 each). Dick added that the maximum liability to the League if we do not make the 40-person minimum on the reservation for the space at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center is $250 – and he has committed to cover this amount if we do not reach the minimum. Also noted is that the luncheon is a separate item from the MDW grant.

Kim concluded by reviewing the balance sheet items, including the AHA fiduciary balance, which is a liability. The cash balance includes the $5,300 for the AHA project (the fiduciary account). The AHA account is being held by the League for use in non-League lobbying for increases in the alcohol tax. The bank balance as of September 16th is $34,590, but that includes the $5,300. And there is a $200 check that hasn’t cleared.

Kim proposed the purchase of a CD for future action. Dick noted the purchase of a CD was previously approved by the Executive Committee, and only the amount was in question. Kathy will follow up.

**Ratification of Decisions by the Executive Committee**

The bylaws require that the board ratify decisions made by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met on August 2 to discuss how to use the Making Democracy Work grant for 2024-2025. Kim, Felicia, and Edwina joined the discussion. The original request to LWVUS was for $20,000, including $5,000 for the Native American Voter Guides (NAVG). Actual funding received was $12,000. The Committee agreed to go forward with plans to support the NAVGs at $5,000 with the guide including candidate questions and answers as well as state and local ballot issues, and to pay Maia Pugh to proofread the NAVGs. Dick moved to ratify the August 2nd decision of the Executive Committee, Judy seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

On August 15, 2024 the Executive Committee met again and approved a transfer from LWVNM to the Ed Fund in the amount of $2,000 to compensate the Ed Fund for expenses related to printing the NAVG in 2022. Dick moved to ratify the August 15th decision of the Executive Committee, Barbara seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously. Kathy will email Kim with a request to pay the Ed Fund the $2,000.

At the same meeting, the Executive Committee agreed to allocate $5,000 from the MDW grant for 2024-2025 for advertising relating to the election and $2,000 in support of local Leagues. Dick moved to ratify the decision of the Executive Committee, Jo seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. In the course of the discussion there were questions about how funds would be divided among the local Leagues and whether there was funding for those local Leagues who would be printing additional voter guides for the NAVG project. These issues have not been resolved, but Kathy thought now would be a good time for board input. There was a suggestion to either divide the funds equally among the four local Leagues, or based on membership. Jo indicated it was important to get the money distributed promptly. Judy noted that money will be needed for LWVSFC and LWVCNM for overruns for the NAVGs.

Janet asked whether the $5,000 from MDW was an additional $5,000, bringing the total to $10,000 that could be used for social media. Kathy responded that the $5,000 from MDW is the funding that she is aware of. She also reported today that we will receive an additional $6,000 from MDW and the board could decide to spend part of this to raise the funding for social media.

There was discussion of how the MDW funding can be used. Kathy agreed to research the issue during the lunch break. Dick is interested in sources of advocacy/lobbying funds. Can the $6,000 from MDW be used for lobbying? During the break, Kathy sent out information to the Board confirming that the MDW funds cannot be used for either direct or grassroots lobbying. Included were definitions of these latter two terms.

Some members of the Executive Committee (Judy, Barbara, and Kathy) recently met with the Communications Committee and the two vendors under consideration to work with us on social media that would encourage voters to go to VOTE411. Following that meeting, Judy moved to approve a contract with Elliott Marketing for social media services in the amount of $5,000 with 60% of the funding to be focused on voters 18-39 years old and 40% on voters 40 and older. In an electronic vote the Executive Committee voted unanimously in support. Judy moved to ratify the decision of the Executive Committee, with Barbara seconding the motion. The board voted unanimously to ratify the decision. During the discussion, Dick asked that there be a reporting function as part of the contract so that we would have some indication of the effectiveness of this effort. Janet stated that some of the impact could be measured by the number of hits to VOTE411.

**Communications Committee Report**

Janet reported on the meetings of the Communications Committee focused on selection of a firm to assist us with a social media plan to encourage the public to use VOTE411 to learn about the issues and the candidates in the general election. The Committee recommended working with Elliott Marketing, which plans to use Facebook and Instagram postings and possibly other social media platforms and focus on 25 cities and towns around the state. They expect to reach about 15,000 people daily via advertisements with two impressions per day and to conduct the campaign for the 30 days prior to the election for roughly 900,000 impressions total. The posts will be on topics such as make a voting plan, make sure you vote, make sure to get registered, and go to VOTE411. Starlyn asked how these communities would be targeted and was told that it involves geo-fencing techniques (i.e., areas are “fenced” using zip code boundaries or Facebook memberships). Since CNM is doing its own messaging, she asked for coordination with the state’s efforts so that the messaging is consistent. Janet indicated that the messages will be cleared by LWVNM prior to being posted and that Starlyn can participate in that process. Since LWVUS materials have been shared with Kathy Elliott, Dick asked that we ensure that the postings are appropriate to NM. In the past there were some national materials that included reference to photo ID that could be confusing to NM voters (who are not required to provide an ID when voting). Janet replied that the Communications Committee and Starlyn will be looking at the package of messages before anything is placed. One of the messages we have asked for would remind voters about constitutional amendments and bonds.

**Coalition and Collaboration Policy**

Following a recent discussion about the relationship between coalitions and collaborations with other organizations, Barbara proposed an amendment to the existing coalition guidelines (adopted in 2008), changing the title to “Coalition and Collaboration Guidelines” and adding a guideline as follows:

10. Collaboration for LWVNM is a more informal way of participating in a specific project that will advance the League’s mission. A member wishing to use the League’s name in a collaboration with another group or groups must have written permission from at least two members of the Executive Committee.

Felicia moved to approve the changes, Dick seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

**Action Committee**

Akkana reported that the Action Steering Committee is finalizing the calendar in preparation for the 2025 legislative session and noted that the Legislative reception will be on 2/5/2024 and League Day on 2/6/2024. Dick noted that members of the Action Steering Committee are now participating in monthly Zoom sessions with LWV advocacy chairs across the country.

Dick has pursued getting authorization for LWVNM to provide nonpartisan election watchers at polling places. We need to let the Secretary of State know who LWVNM is proposing as watchers and the volunteers will need to be trained by local county clerks. Interested members can contact him.

Fair Districts New Mexico and its partners are hosting an event on September 26 in Albuquerque to recognize legislative candidates who have pledged support for democratic reforms, including an independent redistricting commission. The event will highlight the results of a survey of candidates conducted during the summer by a coalition of four non-profits.

**Advocacy Budget Adjustment**

Dick reported that $5,000 was spent on a lobbyist to work on redistricting issues at the last legislative session. Funding came from the remainder of the Thornburg III grant and from an individual donation in support of lobbying for redistricting. (There is currently $1,156 in the LWVNM budget remaining from the restricted donation.) Dick would like to have $5,000 budgeted for lobbying for the 2025 session since he expects that there will be considerable behind-the-scenes work required to move forward with an independent redistricting commission. Kathy suggested that he put together a written proposal for the November board meeting. The budget already has an item for “Program Support/Advocacy” in the amount of $2,000 and the $1,156 referenced above is dedicated to redistricting. Based on that information, Dick is requesting an additional $2,000 in this line.

**Deadline for La Palabra**

Barbara asked that materials for the fall La Palabra be submitted to her by September 26. Local League representatives should let her know whether to use the reports to this board meeting or whether they want to make modifications.

**Program**

Judy had nothing new to report.

**Nuclear Issues**

Karen’s written report provided updates on consent-based storage of spent nuclear fuels (SNF) with three states exploring the possibilities. In addition, she described an opportunity for interested members to observe tests of transportation safety with spent nuclear fuels – since a number of members expressed concern about this issue when we sought unsuccessfully to adopt a position on SNF. The comment period has been extended to October 30th. Interested members can contact Karen about participating.

**Voter Services**

Edwina reported that we are very close to completing work on VOTE411 and printing of voter guides by the local Leagues. She is concerned about the accuracy of some of the GIS files, an issue that was discussed with the SOS office in January, but problems remain. VOTE411 for New Mexico will go live on October 1 but will not be announced until October 4, to allow time to identify any problems. Edwina thanked CNM for assistance in providing materials on the pros and cons of the constitutional amendments and she informed the group that information on state constitutional amendments and GO bonds is available in Spanish as well as English.

The Native American Voter Guides were produced by our contractor, Mark Coomes, for eight counties and the guides were proofed by local Leagues. The printing cost for the eight counties was $2,741 and the charges for Mark’s work are $1,665.

Dick suggested taking the issues related to GIS files to the Attorney General since his office is responsible for enforcing the law.

Judy noted that although the SOS has to follow the law, the SOS has informed that the law doesn’t say what we think. Judy indicated that Mark has been wonderful to work with and that GIS remains a puzzle. Hannah worked on getting a law passed concerning the availability of accurate GIS files and the SOS then contracted with UNM to make the files accessible. Akkana said that UNM’s files are incomplete and that the counties and SOS seem to be using something else. We have not been successful at getting a meeting with the SOS. Meredith added that it is not acceptable to wait until after the election for resolution of this issue.

Edwina can put together a list of VOTE411 GIS files that do not match the NMRGIS files (housed at UNM, under contract with the SOS to be the GIS repository. Kathy will work with Edwina over the next few days, once the list is produced, in anticipation of a meeting with the SOS. Dick noted that the SOS has said that we shouldn’t bother to go through her staff but to text her directly. Dick will send the SOS’s cell number to Kathy and Edwina.

Local Concerns Relating to the Election: Jo asked about responsibilities for distributing the NAVG. Judy responded that she had mailed guides to Luna County last time and that someone who works with Mescalero had delivered those guides. Dick has a contact who might assist with distribution to the Navajo Nation

Rapid Response: Kathy reported the desire of LWVUS that all Leagues have a rapid response plan for dealing with problems surrounding the election. LWVNM will soon be assigned a staff member from LWVUS as a contact point for major problems. The idea is that local Leagues will channel issues to the state League, which can then contact LWVUS staff as needed.

Dick also shared that Lindsey Bachman is the point person on misinformation issues for the Secretary of State’s office. Rather than reporting issues to her, League members should report issues to act@lwvnm.org and Dick will provide the information to Lindsey.

**Student Memberships**

Starlyn reported that LWVUS is not backing off the new dues structure or the implementation date of January or February 2025. The CNM board has been discussing the handling of student memberships as we approach the launch date for the new membership structure. Currently our Leagues are not assessing dues for student members, but there will be no student membership under the new national dues structure. That means that student members will be expected to join by paying at least $20 annually. She asked whether state and local Leagues would subsidize these memberships. A source of funds in New Mexico is the diversity/rising leaders funding provided by Meredith, where local Leagues could be reimbursed. One of the challenges, other than funding of the subsidy, is the mechanics of implementing a subsidy since it is generally expected that dues will be paid online. An option would be to reimburse student members for their payment of dues (at least to the minimum required level of $20). Dick commented on recently speaking to some UNM graduate students and the benefit of offering student memberships at no charge. He sees requiring payment up-front for students as a barrier even with the promise of reimbursement later. Local Leagues might want to discuss this issue with their boards and the state League can take action as we learn more about how this could work. It was noted that the minimum dues payment is comparable to the price of a meal, so that the payment may not be a significant barrier for students. Kathy noted this topic would be on an agenda for future discussion.

**Board Vacancy**

Board secretary Rebecca Chaiken is traveling today, but she has resigned from her position on the board as a result of a planned move to Minnesota. In response to Kathy’s request for suggestions for a replacement for Rebecca, it was suggested that we send out a Constant Contact and solicit interest in serving on the board (for the benefit of the Nominating Committee in addition to addressing the current vacancy). Kathy will follow up on this matter soon.

**2025 Convention Planning**

The 2025 Convention is scheduled for the last weekend in April, but the board has not yet identified a location. Jo’s sister’s hotel in Santa Fe cannot accommodate a large group meeting. Judy’s research indicates that either CNM or Santa Fe is in line to host the event. Judy has checked rates at El Sendero ($150-170) and La Fonda ($270). Holding the banquet at La Fonda would cost at least $75 per person. The church where LWVSFC meets might be available on Saturday but maybe not on Sunday. In Albuquerque, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center might be an option and there is a Holiday Inn Express close by. The last convention in Albuquerque was 2015 and in Santa Fe 2017.

Dick moved to request that the LWVNM 2025 convention be held in Santa Fe and Meredith seconded. The motion passed with one abstention. Judy will carry the message back to LWVSFC. Hotel Santa Fe was also suggested as a possible location since it has a non-profit rate. Meredith will also check on some options.

Nominating Committee: Three members of the Nominating Committee were elected at the last convention – Karen Wentworth, Eileen VanWie, and Becky Shankland. Felicia and Dick volunteered to serve in the board positions on the committee.

Follow-up after the meeting: From the bylaws

*The nominating committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be members of the state board. The chair and two members, who shall not be members of the state board, shall be elected by the Convention. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the current nominating committee. The other members of the committee shall be appointed by the state board*….

Bylaws Review: Barbara and Akkana have offered to review the bylaws, including the work previously done by Ann Le Page. Kathy requested that attention be given to the role of the Executive Committee (i.e., what sorts of decisions should be handled by the Executive Committee and what decisions should involve the full board).

Budget Committee: The committee must be appointed at least four months in advance of the Convention. Kathy will seek volunteers through a Constant Contact.

**LWVNM Ed Fund**

Kim reported that there has been no income to the Ed Fund during the current fiscal year, but that the $60,000 from the new Thornburg grant will appear on the next report. The expenses of $4,809 have mainly been for redistricting.

She further reported that there is a $14,260 fund balance in the Thornburg V grant; Voices for Children, $8,000; New Mexico Listens $2,000; and the unrestricted fund balance is $1,727. Additionally, Kathy noted the $2,000 in reimbursement forthcoming from LWVNM.

Starlyn asked the status of $1,250 in funding by the Ed Fund in support of the trail marker dedication in Albuquerque. Meredith said that she had sent information to Jeanne Logsdon about the reimbursement procedure, but Kim has not seen a request for reimbursement. The reimbursement has already been approved; it is just a matter of submitting the request to Hannah and Kim. Meredith indicated that she sent the reimbursement form to the board during the meeting.

There was also a question about whether the reimbursement form for the Ed Fund had been finalized. According to Meredith, the form has been finalized and was only awaiting the Ed Fund logo.

**Expanded Funding for Election-Related Social Media**

Following Kathy’s report from her lunch break research on the uses of the Making Democracy Work funds from LWVUS Ed Fund, a motion was made by Janet and seconded by Dick to expand funding for social media by $2,000 – bringing the total funding from MDW to $7,000. The additional $2000 would be provided from the additional $6,000 that LWVNM is to receive for MDW.

There was extensive discussion. Dick raised the question of whether some of the new $6,000 for MDW could be set aside to pay for the VOTE411 license for next year. Starlyn asked when we would next need to purchase a license for VOTE411 and what the cost would be. The annual cost was stated as $5,000.

Kathy reported that Hannah had indicated that we had at least $5,000 that could be spent on social media. Kathy took that to refer to the $5,000 from MDW but it may have referred to some Ed Fund sources. Jo asked whether the additional funds from LWVUS Ed Fund were earmarked in any way. Kathy responded that LWVUS was not requiring additional explanation of our use of the funds but it seems that we should look first at what we had planned to do with the $20,000 we requested initially.

Meredith suggested providing support for printed guides. Jo wanted to amend the motion so that half of the new money goes to enhanced social media and the other half is split evenly among the local Leagues.

Kathy said we would make a better decision about the $6,000 if we had information about the Ed Fund resources and commitments. She asked that the motion be withdrawn and that we reconvene after Hannah’s return to sort this out. Janet withdrew her motion under protest noting that we are missing a window of opportunity and hoping that this could be resolved before VOTE411 goes live. Kathy will let Hannah know that a meeting is needed.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made: the Ed Fund Board would need to meet soon about this and Hannah does not return until September 25; maybe the Thornburg V grant budget can be revised; Meredith supported dedicating resources to the printed voter guides: the League board can’t act on funding from the Ed Fund.

Janet reinstated her motion to expand funding for social media by $2,000, Dick seconded the motion and it passed with one abstention. Janet indicated that we would need to ask Kathy Elliott about how she recommends using additional funding.

**November Board Meeting**

Dick moved to meet in Socorro 11 am – 3 pm. and Jo seconded the motion. The intent is to meet in a room on the NM Tech campus with capacity for hybrid. Starlyn has reserved a room from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m. and will confirm our interest in meeting there. The motion passed with one vote in opposition. Meredith will be out of state and Edwina may not be able to attend in person.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Written by Kathy Brook (9/23/2024)

Edited by Edwina Jaramillo (10/3/2024)

Edited by Barbara Calef (10/4/2024)