**Board Minutes – Draft 3**

**January 18, 2025**

**11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Hybrid (In-person at the League office in Albuquerque and on Zoom)**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Hannah Burling, Co-President

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

Jody Larson, Archivist

Felicia Orth, LWVLA President

Debbie Helper, LWVSFC Liaison

Starlyn Brown, LWVCNM President

Jo Galvan Nash, LWVSNM President

**Guest**

Becky Shankland, Member of the Nominating Committee

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Kathy called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their positions on the LWVNM board. In the absence of a board secretary, Edwina and Kathy will work on the minutes.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved on a motion by Meredith and seconded by Dick.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Several changes were made to the minutes of the board meeting on November 16, 2024, including adding the last name for Mandy Vigil (in the Action Committee section), and correcting the sentence under Program regarding the Santa Fe Health Study to read “…the study will help LWVSFC update their indigent care position, which is no longer relevant”. Other small changes were proposed by Starlyn, Debbie, Jody, and Meredith. On a motion by Meredith, seconded by Jody, the minutes were approved unanimously as corrected.

Minutes of the Special Board Meeting on January 13, 2025, were approved unanimously on a motion by Barbara, seconded by Meredith.

**CO-PRESIDENTS REPORTS**

Kathy provided details on the Making Democracy Work grant. In particular, she explained that most of the funding of these grants arrives at the front end and that the final payment comes after the final report is filed. In the case of the current grant, that means that we have received all but $1,800 of the $18,250 grant. The remaining funds will arrive after we submit the final report which is due on May 9, 2025.

Kathy also provided some updates on the transformation of the dues structure. All members will receive email the week of February 3, 2025 inviting them to log into the ChapterSpot membership portal. There is now a segment (including a short video) on the League Management Site describing the membership renewal process. Barbara requested a more direct link to the material so that members do not have to scroll extensively. As a reminder, it will be important for our members to distinguish between dues and donations; dues in whatever amount will be split among the three levels of League while donations will be directed to local Leagues only. If paying by check, members will need to make two separate payments, one addressed to LWVUS for dues and one addressed to the local League for donations.

In her report Hannah noted that she has had several recent meetings with LWVUS President Dianna Wynn. Leadership succession has been a major topic, with Diana Wynn reporting that filling the president’s and treasurer’s positions is a challenge for a number of Leagues. LWV Florida provides monthly training for those interested in leadership positions and this might be an idea that we could pursue for LWVNM. They pay expenses for them to go to Lobby Day (their League day at the Legislature), and to be trained there. They have found this very useful in moving people into leadership positions. Candidate forums outside of local League areas can be a way to activate members at large, e.g., in San Juan County where they are trying to start a unit. There is also a disconnect between rural and urban populations in the state, and the problem of inactive members-at-large.

Hannah is still looking for a graphics artist to assist in updating materials. Jo indicated that she might be able to help in this area.

Kathy added some comments on the LWVUS approach to the first 100 days of the Trump administration. During the lunch break she sent out the slide describing the strategy. Dick expressed surprise that LWVUS does not seem focused on the possible elimination of the Voting Rights Act. Some states are now trying to strengthen their voting rights acts. The League has been invited by state Senator Duhigg to send amendments to the Voting Rights Act. ***Action Item***: send amendments to Dick.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

In Kim Sorensen’s absence, Kathy reviewed the Treasurer’s report that was included in the board packet. Kathy will follow up with Kim concerning some items that are probably related to the Making Democracy Work luncheon.

**RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee met on December 12, 2024, and January 2, 2025 to approve actions taken in support of arrangements (including the amounts of deposits) for the LWVNM Convention in April. The deposits were $875 for The Lodge and $1500 for the banquet at La Fonda. Dick moved to approve the actions, Barbara seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Akkana reported that the priority areas for the 2025 legislative session are Voting, Elections, and Ethics; Housing; Healthcare; and Environment (including water issues). Some members have registered as lobbyists, but reminders will be sent out to those who have not yet done so. Weekly Action meetings will begin on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. For those that want to join, the Committee will be discussing the bills already filed, and bills we expect to see, and who's advocating for what.

**LEAGUE ROLES**

Dick has developed a document listing roles of local, state, and national Leagues and has received suggested changes from Barbara. The document may be useful to new members and others beyond those on the Action Committee. Because of a reference in the draft document concerning who pays for the VOTE411 license, there was considerable discussion of the topic. LWVNM rather than the LWVNM Ed Fund (aka Ed Fund) has sometimes paid for the license. Hannah noted that the MDW paid for VOTE411 this year but supports it coming out of the Ed Fund. In researching what members receive from different League levels, Starlyn found additional information on roles from LWVUS and LWVNM and she shared this by email with the board during the meeting. ***Action Item***: Once the roles document is completed, send to Akkana for posting on the LWVNM website.

Dick would like to make sure that League members understand that local Leagues may use state and national positions to advocate for issues that may be specific only to their geographic area (with approval of the state president). ***Action Item***: Dick will send two documents on advocacy to the Board for approval.

**MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK AWARD PROCESS**

Dick provided a document to begin discussion of a process including timing of nominations and venues for presenting the MDW award (such as Convention/Council or League Days in Santa Fe).

It was noted that we don’t need to make an award every year, but we need a process. Barbara thinks that the award is more appropriate for individuals than for organizations. Dick suggested that we discuss this at the next meeting. We have given an award recently, so we probably won’t have another before the 2026 session.

**BYLAWS**

Barbara has done additional work on the bylaws based on the discussion at the last board meeting. Barbara reviewed the changes she has made and received additional feedback.

Meredith moved and Felicia seconded the motion to accept the bylaws changes as discussed at this meeting. The motion carried unanimously. These will then go to the Convention for approval.

**COMPOSITION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Akkana has asked to be replaced as a member of the Executive Committee and Jody Larson has agreed to serve. Barbara made a motion to replace Akkana with Jody on the Committee; the motion was seconded by Dick and was approved unanimously.

**PROGRAM**

Judy reminded the group that all local Leagues as well as the state League are asked to participate in a national study of the federal judiciary. This will occur over the next several months, with consensus results to be submitted to LWVUS no later than April 14, 2025. Directions from LWVUS indicate that all local and state Leagues are expected to participate. Each League is expected to hold a consensus meeting. Judy indicated that it is important to hear from more people than one large meeting would allow.

The materials are not yet available for consensus meetings, but resources related to the study are on the League Management Site by searching on federal judiciary. Anyone who wishes can participate in the state meeting but it is not really intended that a member would participate in multiple meetings. Starlyn asked how we could better collaborate on this, maybe by drafting one set of materials to communicate with members about this project. Each League could then fill in the date and time for its consensus meeting. Judy has sent materials to the local Leagues as it has become available. Judy can assist in a coordinated message, but not before early February. There was a request for a Constant Contact message that each of the local Leagues could use to send to their membership to explain the process, where the links are on the study, and where they could fill in own information, etc. There is a LWVUS townhall on the judiciary study to occur on February 4, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. EST. ***Action Item***: Judy will send a Constant Contact message that all Leagues can use.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Becky Shankland, Felicia Orth, and Dick Mason are members of the Nominating Committee. They attended the board meeting. Becky reported that the Committee members were able to clarify some issues at lunch. The positions that remain open on the nominating slate are 1st Vice President, Voter Services Director, and Membership Director. Lynn Jones has been maintaining the national roster for LWVNM but has indicated that she will not continue in that role. Ideas for members to fill these open positions should be sent to Karen Wentworth (kwentworth17@comcast.net), chair of the Committee. Kathy thanked the members of the Committee for their work on the slate of candidates.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Edwina Jaramillo reviewed the summary of the debrief held by the Voter Services Committee after the November election. Response rates to our candidate questions were 33% for the 21 counties managed by LWVNM, 81% for LWVCNM, 100% for LWVLA, 94% for LWVSFC, and 82% for LWVSNM’s English responding candidates and 25% for Spanish responding candidates.

Two things stood out in the debrief: there is a need for better integration between the Communications Committee and Voter Services Committee so that members of the Voter Services Committee are aware of the content of social media posts and can share the posts with their own contacts; and 2) local elections outside the standard dates for general elections are easily missed. There needs to be a process to ensure that these elections are included in VOTE411. For example, elections for soil and water conservation districts have especially been a challenge. Only one or two people on the Voter Services Committee are looking at these elections.

According to Dick, there is proposed legislation to move all elections into the standard election dates except for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy, where tribal sovereignty issues call for an exception. We will see whether the state has the authority to do this. Dick’s understanding is that local water districts were given a window to adjust to the standard election schedule.

Jo asked for clarification on whether there would be an online VOTE411 voter guide for local elections in odd-numbered years. Judy reported that we did our best to cover local elections in 2023 but there are issues about the creation of maps, etc. for these districts.

There is also a need for LWVNM to meet with the Secretary of State (SoS) to follow up on discussions with county clerks in local League areas about ensuring that we have complete and accurate GIS files for all jurisdictions. The League has found some of the GIS files to be inaccurate or missing. Three Leagues have met with their county clerks to learn more about the process of collecting and transmitting the GIS data to the Secretary of State. Two of the LWVCNM counties don’t seem to have knowledge of GIS data. Kathy has not yet been able to arrange a meeting with the Doña Ana County Clerk. Discussions with the SoS should also include those local elections that fall outside the standard dates. ***Action Item***: Kathy and Edwina to meet with the Doña Ana County Clerk prior to a proposed meeting with the SoS.

Representative Cates has a bill calling on counties to do this work, but there is no appropriation in the bill to address the resource needs of small counties.

**VOTE411**: Edwina explained that in the future she will be able to work on some aspects of Voter Services (such as communicating with candidates) but will not be able to continue as Voter Services Director, coordinating the whole project. Mark Coomes, who has worked under contract with LWVNM, is willing to work with us, depending on how we choose to proceed. Mark has been largely responsible for all the “back end” of VOTE411 for most of the local Leagues, including entering race descriptions, ensuring race order, etc. During 2024, publication of the printed Native American Voter Guides was a significant part of the work that Mark completed on his own. He was not engaged in the GIS research that was done in 2024, as that was done by Tom Krajci, a member of LWVSNM. Mark also was not involved in making calls to candidates or sending out letters.

In response to a question from Jo, Judy explained that coverage of the entire state was deemed to be important so the state board decided to cover counties outside of local League areas beginning in 2018. Then in 2022 we hired a contractor to assist.

A question was raised about covering fewer counties to make the project more manageable. This could be done by focusing on counties with relatively large populations outside local League areas. Judy indicated that the number of counties is not a major issue; once you have the race lists, it is a matter of managing spreadsheets.

Another approach to manageability would be to reduce/eliminate follow-up calls to candidates and rely only on automated emails or social media to encourage participation by candidates.

Hannah asked whether we need to pull together a document addressing these issues for the March meeting. ***Action Item***: Hannah will text the SoS on Tuesday and ask for an appointment to discuss the GIS issues.

During the meeting, Starlyn forwarded the Voter Services Director position description to board members.

***Action Items***: Kathy asked board members to look at the job description and the issues that we have discussed today and provide feedback to all board members. Edwina will provide a list of those 12 counties covered by local Leagues (or the 21 not covered).

We can try to meet about this topic again before March.

Starlyn recommended that we go forward with renewal of the VOTE411 license. The cost to us for VOTE411 for the four local Leagues and the state is $5,000. A motion by Meredith and seconded by Jo to renew the license for VOTE411 passed unanimously.

Part of the challenge of the Voter Services Director position is coordination between the state and local Leagues, organizing the monthly committee meetings with agendas and minutes, and communications with the contractor concerning issues that are tasks that Edwina noted can take a significant amount of time.

A question was raised about the timing of our payment for VOTE411 in 2024, but the answer was not immediately available.

**LWVNM EDUCATION FUND**

The Ed Fund Board has met once since the last LWVNM Board meeting. During that meeting funding was approved for LWVCNM voter guide printing costs and the resignation of Kim Sorensen as the treasurer was accepted. The Ed Fund continues to search for a treasurer. Plans are under way for a strategic planning session. Jody has been working on the budget and a fund-raising packet has been developed for both LWVNM and the Education Fund based on the LWVUS packet. The next meeting of the Ed Fund Committee will be in March. The invoices that were sent out to LWVNM board members yesterday all come under the Thornburg grant for Fair Districts New Mexico.

**LWVNM CONVENTION PLANNING**

The Lodge in Santa Fe has been confirmed as the location for the convention. Because they do not currently offer food service, we will be able to bring food from outside the hotel. La Fonda will be the location of the banquet on Saturday evening. The member cost for the convention depends on the number of members attending. Debbie Helper will not be able to attend the convention and is working to assemble an arrangements committee. There is not expected to be a problem getting items for a silent auction but there is not yet anyone to organize the auction. Several ideas for speakers at the banquet were discussed. We need a place to hold a reception (typically held at a member’s house). Each local League is asked for at least one member to work on the convention planning committee. ***Action Item***: Send ideas for speakers to Debbie.

**BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Kathy reported the Budget Committee will convene in the next few weeks. Additional names were suggested to be on the Committee.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

The LWVCNM report contains a link to Job Training Albuquerque. LWVCNM has not been able to use all the grant money from Job Training Albuquerque and is inviting other local Leagues to make use of the unspent training money. Action Item: Let local Leagues know the money is available for appropriate courses.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Hannah Burling announced that the LWVUS Council will be held in Leesburg, VA, June 26-29, 2025. LWVNM can send two people, whose registration may be covered by LWVNM with the remainder of the expense being a “self-funding opportunity.” Starlyn expressed interest in attending. ***Action Item***: Let local Leagues know in the event others are interested in attending the Council.

The next meeting of the LWVNM Board will be Saturday, March 1, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., on Zoom.

Jody expressed concern about the LWVUS approach to the first 100 days of the new administration and asked Hannah and Kathy to convey to LWVUS our desire for the League to be vocal in expressing its concerns about issues important to us. There was some discussion about whether the League was being overly circumspect or strategic in choosing its battles. Either way, League members want us to be strong on our issues. ***Action Item***: Hannah will arrange a meeting with Kathy and our LWVUS board liaison to follow up on this topic.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

*Written by Edwina Jaramillo and Kathy Brook*

*Edited by Barbara Calef, February 4, 2025*