

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO

Board of Directors' Meeting

May 17, 2008 – 1:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church

715 Diamond Drive, Los Alamos

Members present: Johnnie Aldrich, Bonnie Burn, Barbara Calef, Katherine Campbell, Diane Goldfarb, Cheryl Haaker, Jody Larson, Lora Lucero, Richard Mason, and Linda Moscarella
Absent: Diane Albert, Cathy Mathews

Call to Order: 2:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: No changes

Meeting Minutes 3/8/2008: Accepted as written.

Old Business:

Financial Review

- Diane Albert believes she can find someone to do it and will follow-up

Tracfone

- Larson gave an explanation of Tracfone .
- Verizon costs \$15/month.

Motion: Burn moved to authorized the president to acquire a mobile phone. Seconded by Aldrich and motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Calendar Planning (draft attached):

- July Meeting – Because of proposed agenda, an electronic meeting would work well. The dates should be changed to July 11-18.
- Fall Meeting – Board members would prefer only one meeting and that it be scheduled for October 18 in Socorro. Remember that candidates' forum will occur in September.
- March Meeting – Legislation Session is 60 days in 2009, beginning at Noon, January 20 and ending on March 20; therefore, Board meeting is rescheduled to March 21 in Socorro.
- Convention Meeting – May 16 and 17 in Albuquerque with Central New Mexico taking the lead on arrangements.

Updated Calendar is attached.

MOU with LWVCNM (See attachment)

- The building in which CNM occupies office space has been sold. A new contract has not been signed yet. Increase of rent may occur. CNM needs to learn what the new arrangements are. LWVNM has been remitting on a quarterly basis and that will continue.

Motion: Aldrich moved that we adopt the agreement as amended by date and local League name change and at the current rate of \$50 per month. Seconded by Mason and motion carried unanimously.

Planning

Communications Committee:

- Voter Registration
Mason suggested expanding the opportunities for voter registration beyond the Bureau of Elections among the governmental agencies. Discussion around handing out registration applications ensued. Clarification of locations to register voters (e.g., Bureau of Elections, libraries, Motor Vehicle Departments), and guidelines for distributing and completing the

registration application are needed. *America Votes*, a book recommended by Lora Lucero, was offered as a reference and is available from the American Bar Association. Mason suggested that the Communication Committee write an op-ed piece that would clarify rules and regulations.

Action: Lucero, Haaker, Mason, Porter, and Delores Wall will be working on an article.

Moscarella suggested that "In Focus" would be a good TV opportunity (Gene Grant). Ch 7, Albuquerque might offer coverage, as well.

Voter ID is another issue that should be publicized.

- Public Relations Opportunities: Share a calendar of events with Board and for publication on LWVNM web site.

Other goals for 2008-2009

- Candidates Night for Senate Race. Moscarella's suggestion that LWVNM sponsor a forum for U.S. Senate candidates was welcomed by members. Mason asked that the congressional calendar be taken into account when scheduling dates. An incentive to have the candidates accept is the opportunity for the forum to be broadcast throughout the state. It was suggested that Mary Wilson be the moderator. Late August may be best time for scheduling this event. Motion: Burn moved that the Communication Committee explore dates, venues, and locations for a forum for the Senatorial Candidates. Seconded by Moscarella, and passed unanimously. Members discussed various initiatives that are already in the works. Lucero asked to be advised of any arrangements that are made by other local Leagues.
- Presidential Debate hosted LWVUS. In response to the public who feel the League's absence in national debates, LWVUS may host such a forum this year, in light of the excitement about this election. Possible follow-up will occur at the National Convention.

Announcements

Update Board Lists: Please send copies of updated listed to Kathy Campbell and Bonnie Burn

Adjournment: Aldrich moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Larson and approved unanimously. Adjournment was 3:10 p.m.

Attachments

- President and Study Group Reports
- Revised FY 2008-2009 Calendar
- Memorandum of Understanding



League of Women Voters of New Mexico
Study Group Report
Fair Representation



16 May 2008

The result of the Study Group's statewide unit meetings was that the immediate issue for the group, by general agreement, should be redistricting. (There was also a strong desire to pursue alternative electoral systems and ranked choice voting, but later.) The immediate goal of the study group will be to educate the membership and the public on redistricting issues, to include:

- **Independent redistricting commissions**: why, how, examples; pros and cons; who are the members, who selects them, and how; what criteria does the commission use; what input is provided by the public,
- **Districts**: address and define "communities of interest", "compact and contiguous", "competitiveness", "fairness"; what data is necessary to address these and other criteria; rural vs. urban districts/city vs. country – should city districts incorporate large areas of rural countryside? Might multi-member all-urban districts be better?
- **The interrelatedness** of districts, voting systems, and systems of representation.

Education will be done by further articles in the Voters and La Palabra, the websites, public forums and town hall meetings, radio and television (study group Judith Binder has a weekly program.) No details have yet been determined.

Meanwhile, other State Leagues have been studying redistricting, and at least two of them - Virginia and Oregon – have submitted Statements of Intent to the National League to try to get the League's position on reapportionment and redistricting (which is basically as generic as New Mexico's position) updated at the LWVUS Convention in June.

The **Virginia proposal** would change the LWVUS position (the first paragraph is the current LWVUS position, in its entirety) to read:

"The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. The League is convinced that this standard, established by the Supreme Court, should be maintained and that the U.S. Constitution should not be amended to allow for consideration of factors other than population in apportionment. ("Impact on Issues")

The League believes that redistricting plans for congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be prepared by politically balanced and independent commissions that are established in law and are bi-partisan, composed of individuals who are not elected officials, representative of the geographical distribution and demographic diversity of the state, and consist of an uneven number of members.

The League believes that redistricting plans should meet the following requirements and principles: Comply with the Constitutional and Voting Rights Act requirements regarding equal population and protection of the voting strength of minority groups; be composed of contiguous and compact

districts; respect natural geographical boundaries and communities of interest; and promote competitiveness.

The League further believes that redistricting should occur only once each decade, following the decennial census.”

The study group is concerned that this position specifies “bi-partisan” rather than “non-partisan”, says nothing about “fairness”, and allows for incumbents to protect their districts. The Oregon proposal is even more detailed, and would change the LWVUS position to:

“Congressional and legislative redistricting should advance the fundamental purposes of representative democracy and a republican form of government by affording the people a meaningful choice in electing their representatives and holding the government accountable to the people.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that the legislative and congressional redistricting system should be efficient, adequately funded, based on well-defined criteria, subject to a reasonable and effective timetable, and have an open and public process.

A. Any redistricting plan should assure that voters are effectively able to hold their public officials accountable, responsible, and responsive, and be based on the following criteria:

- Adhere to all federal constitutional and legal requirements such as that every district should have equal population, be contiguous, and meet the requirements of the Voting Rights Act;*
- Promote competitiveness and partisan fairness;*
- Consider other criteria, such as respect for political subdivisions, communities of interest, and geographic barriers.*

B. Any redistricting plan should be developed independently of the Legislature in a nonpartisan manner with substantial public input. The Legislature may be afforded an opportunity to review the plan and accept or reject it.

C. The courts should promptly review and rule on any challenge to a redistricting plan and require adjustments if the criteria have not been met.

D. Redistricting should be conducted only once during each decade following the federal census”

The study group finds that the Oregon statement also does not address incumbents protecting their districts, is more vague about the organizations that develop redistricting plans, and perhaps unnecessarily, details the responsibilities of “the courts.”

There will be three members of the Fair Representation Study Group attending LWVUS Convention as delegates: Cheryl Haaker, Kathy Campbell, and Josephine Porter. The group will be able to weigh in on these (and possibly other) proposals.

The Fair Representation Study group meets monthly on fourth Tuesdays, sometimes more frequently, as needed. The next meetings will be May 20, and (a week early) June 18th, to accommodate the LWVCNM calendar planning meeting on June 21st. For more information, see the web page www.lwvcnm.org/fair, join the listserv LWVNMFair@yahoogroups.com, or contact Cheryl Haaker, cberyl@haaker.org.

Submitted by Cheryl Haaker, Study Group Chair

References:

LWV OR redistricting report: <http://lwvor.org/documents/Redistricting2007.htm>

LWV VA redistricting report: <http://www.lwv-va.org/redistrict.html>.

LWV/ABC Annual Report

LWV/ABC had a year of membership growth—We numbered 337 at the time of our Annual Meeting on May 3—and lots of activity. The loss of some of our officers and committee chairs posed a challenge for our board, but program and events continued on.

We continued to maintain our office, open five mornings a week, and noted an increase in the volume of calls from the public. We fielded an especially high number of calls during the October municipal election and the February Democratic Presidential Caucus. We had a training for third party agents to register voters, registered voters at several sites around the county, had a few speaking engagements, and moderated several candidate forums. We were asked by the Albuquerque Public Schools Board to assist with conducting public forums for prospective superintendent candidates.

As part of our Community Education Series we held a lobbying workshop in December. We published a *Voters' Guide* for the October 2007 Albuquerque Municipal Election and our annual edition of *Who's Who*, Directory of Elected Officials.

For our membership we had a well-attended reception to meet all of our city councilors and county commissioners in November. In the summer we had our annual social event for new members to meet our board. A salad luncheon to attract prospective new members was reinstated as well.

The four units meetings per month continued with good attendance and covered a variety of topics. Consensus on immigration took place over two months in the fall. The Drug Policy Study and the Public School Governance Study both continue.

Our Sandoval County unit has found a good home in Corrales and has some active members there. There has been interest expressed in Valencia County for a potential unit, and Board members have spoken to a group there.

The Board has spent several meetings updating policies and the two-year plan. Members have also contributed time and energy to several fund raising efforts. Sales of the Entertainment Book, an annual theater party, a large garage sale and solicitation letters to the membership have benefited both the operating and education funds. The City of Albuquerque Labor Management Board hired LWV/ABC to conduct a union representation election in April, and proceeds from that effort will benefit the operating fund.

And a significant milestone took place at the LWV/ABC Annual Meeting when the membership voted unanimously to change the name of our organization to the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico.

Diane Goldfarb, President

**League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County
President's Report – Jody Larson, President
May 17, 2008**

After our general meeting with elected and appointed county officials in March, Santa Fe County announced a transparency initiative, including an invitation to our local League to lead a five-member transparency advisory board, among whose duties will be to conduct transparency audits. Two of us met with the county manager to clarify expectations, and we put out a request for a model or template on the LWVUS Leaders' Listserv, receiving several responses, from Ohio to San Diego. An initial group of volunteers meets next week to develop a project plan and identify other organizations to serve on the advisory board.

At our Annual Meeting April 26, in addition to approving a budget and electing a new board, we did a little bit toward developing a strategic approach to our plans. The members in attendance did some SWOT analysis, and suggested a few goals as well, for the board to build on. We have a few copies of local League strategic plans and hope to at least get a start toward some kind of strategic vision in the coming League year.

Our board orientation takes place on May 31, and our calendar planning meeting is scheduled for July 12. We are planning a series of candidate forums with the local Council on International Relations for the US Senate and 3rd Congressional District seats. We have no other events planned for the summer months right now, but hope to have at least one general get-together, such as a picnic, and a Breakfast with a Leader before our active year begins in September.

At this time we have only one for-sure delegate attending the LWVUS convention, with one other possible delegate.

--Jody Larson, president, LWVSFC