

League of Women Voters of New Mexico
September 22, 2012 Board Minutes
Pasa Tiempo Senior Center
664 Alta Vista, Santa Fe

Members Present: Cheryl Haaker, Richard Mason, Chris Burroughs, Meredith Machen, Barbara Calef, Lynn Jones, Linda Moscarella, Judy Williams

Absent: Sandra Browne, Shelly Shepherd, Bonnie Burn

Meeting convened at 11:05 a.m.

Review and Approval of Agenda: Board approved the agenda as amended.

Approval of Minutes: Mason moved to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2012 meeting; Machen seconded. The board unanimously approved the meeting minutes.

Leadership Team Report: Machen said the Leadership Team was continuing to operate pretty effectively, with the three remaining members fielding requests and working together on advocacy agendas. She alluded to the fact that the Leadership Team was down to three members because of the resignation of Joe Keefe. Information about the Leadership Team was included in the summer *La Palabra*.

Treasurer's Report: Haaker noted that the Wells Fargo checking account had \$1,886.70 and the savings account had \$6,103.33 for a total of \$7,990.11. She said the PAVP grant had \$2,838.61 remaining. The board accepted the report.

Membership: Jones said there continues to be 14 at-large members. One individual sent her an application form but no check. She thinks maybe it was sent to LWVCNM.

Web Report: Haaker said the on-line state *Voters' Guide* is up.

Nominating Committee: Machen said that Mary Wilson is chair of the Nominating Committee. Two LWVNM board members are needed to serve on the committee. Mason and Moscarella agreed to serve. The positions to be filled include President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer as well as six Directors, a Nominating Committee Chair and two members of the Nominating Committee.

Convention: The 2013 LWVNM convention will be May 18-19 in Las Cruces. Bonnie Burn requested in an email an estimate of how many people might be attending. It was estimated there might be a total of 27 from around the state, not including Las Cruces attendees. The board discussed several speaker options that were suggested by the Convention committee. Individual

Speakers who would speak for 30 minutes, with Q&A of 15 minutes for a total of 45 minutes. Possible speakers included: Joseph Cervantes, current NM House of Representatives running for NM State Senate, on the topic of “The Need for a NM Constitutional Convention”; Vicki Gaubeca, director, ACLU Regional Center for Border Rights, on the topic “U.S. Law Enforcement Model and Its Effects on Undocumented Individuals “ or “The New Immigrant” (immigration from Central America); Peter Ossorio, retired lawyer, speaking about the “NM Constitutional Rights for Immigrants”; Vicki Gaubeca and Peter Ossorio forming a panel of two to discuss the above two-related immigration topics; Charles Bowden, author of “Murder City,” the drug wars in Juarez; Peter Goodman, retired journalist, speaking on a political issue. (He periodically writes opinions about a number of issues.); and Professor Jason Ackleson, NMSU, Department of Government, currently serving a sabbatical in Washington, D.C., in Senator Bingaman’s office on the topic of elections and the political process or ethics in the political process.

League Day at the Legislature: The board discussed the speaker at League Day at the Legislature lunch and who should be on a panel during a reception the night before. Several names were suggested, including Debbie Mason on healthcare and Viki Harrison of Common Cause. Mason said LWVNM would rent space at Garrett's Desert Inn around 3 p.m. on Feb. 4 for the evening panel and keep it through lunch on Feb. 5. Mason said League Day should be announced in the winter *La Palabra*.

Next meeting: The LWVNM board’s next meeting is to be in Socorro, probably at the Skeen Library. Calef said she would check into the possibility of using a room at the Bosque del Apache Preserve. The meeting will be from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Action and Advocacy Update and Planning:

Health Care and Medicaid: Mason said that some 230 people attended a Sept. 8 seminar “Understanding the Affordable Care Act” sponsored by LWVCNM, Health Action New Mexico and Volunteers in Support of the Affordable Care Act. The seminar was from 2-4 p.m. at UNM West, 2600 College Blvd. NE, Rio Rancho. The event is designed to increase public understanding of the multiple components of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Mason also noted that he is a member of the Advisory Committee on Health Issues, a small group that meets every three weeks to discuss health care issues. It is expected to file a report in November, in time for reflection by the state legislature. He noted that an advocacy group made up of some 72 organizations, including LWVNM, signed a letter regarding Medicaid which was sent to the governor and general policy makers. The letter is used in presentations regarding why New Mexico should accept the federal Medicaid program.

Redistricting: Mason said that he has been in touch with the Arizona redistricting people and is studying redistricting efforts in Arizona, California and Iowa. He would like New Mexico to model an independent redistricting commission on Iowa’s efforts.

San Juan Generating Station: San Juan Generating Station: Williams said LWVNM sent letters

to PRC, PNM and media regarding the San Juan Generating Station. She and other Natural Resources Committee members, plus Meredith Machen, also met with PNM. The League is advocating to shut down the generating station or at least a portion of it. The deadline on a decision on the station is Oct. 15.

Election Activities:

National Voter Registration Day: Mason said LWVCNM joined the League of Women Voters of the United States in celebrating the National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 25. Over 200,000 eligible New Mexicans are now registered to vote. The LWVCNM is working to increase the number of eligible voters who can participate in the Nov. 6 election. LWVCNM sent out a news release to this effect.

Protection Activities – Common Cause: Machen noted that LWVNM needs to have better policies on joint activities, such as what we have with Common Cause.

Women’s Issues: A discussion centered on whether LWVNM wants to be part of the New Mexico Coalition for Choice, a non-religious group. Diane Goldfarb would serve as League representative on the coalition. Machen moved that LWVNM join the coalition; Williams seconded. The board unanimously approved. The board is interested in a women’s issues forum and wanted to know if the coalition has any lined up.

Voters’ Guides

and Candidate Forums: The board discussed policies for including or excluding write-in candidates who are on the SOS website. No decision was reached. The subject will be taken up after the elections.

Lobbying Workshop: LWVNM will hold its annual lobbying workshop at the Montezuma Masonic Lodge on December 1 from 10 a.m.-Noon. The Lodge is at 431 Paseo de Peralta in Santa Fe. Machen said that LWVNM needs an insurance rider for the Masonic Temple. She asked Williams to check and see if LWVNM could use the Santa Fe Leagues insurance for the Dec. 1 meeting.

PRC Study Committee: Three members of the LWVNM PRC Study Committee -- Karen Heldmeyer, Jody Larson and Neva Van Peski -- presented a report on the committee’s work. Van Peski noted that they made presentations to all four Leagues in the state, including Central New Mexico, 16 attendees; Greater Las Cruces 17 attendees; Los Alamos, 7 attendees; and Santa Fe County, 8 attendees. Consensus was reached on the following positions:

New Mexico League of Women Voters – PRC Position Adopted by State Board

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports the following with respect to the Public Regulation Commission (PRC):

1. PRC candidates should be evaluated on the basis of qualifications by a broad-based nonpartisan process.

2. Candidates for the PRC should have education and/or appropriate professional experience in a related field or in consumer advocacy. There should also be mandated, ongoing professional training after election.
3. The PRC should be funded by assessments on the industries that it regulates and those funds should be sequestered from the general fund. The legislature should provide enough money in the PRC's budget so that it can carry out its allotted duties successfully.
4. Insurance and Utilities should be regulated by separate agencies.
5. The laws forbidding *ex parte* communications between Commissioners and those who are interested parties in cases before the PRC should be very strong, and penalties for violating these laws also should be strengthened.
6. The PRC should have an inspector general charged with reviewing practices for handling incoming payments properly, conducting internal audits of other functions, and pursuing such other investigations as are deemed necessary.
7. PRC Commissioners and advisory staff should be prohibited from working in a business regulated by the PRC for at least 1 year after they complete their tenure at the PRC.
8. Consumer interests should have strong representation when the PRC is making policy decisions and setting rates.

The board recommended several changes. Mason moved to adopt the consensus position as amended; Jones seconded. The board approved unanimously. Board members also agreed that they need to come up with directions about what consensus looks like. It was determined that during the upcoming legislative session LWVNM should support one constitutional amendment – the one dealing with PRC membership qualifications.

Reports: Presidents of the four local Leagues provided reports on their activities. All will be included in the fall issue of *La Palabra*.

La Palabra: Chris Burroughs said that she would continue for the time being as editor of *La Palabra*, as long as she didn't have to deal with distribution. Because Joe Keefe has left the board, Williams said she would be willing to help out with distribution with Constant Contact. Machen said that Mona Blaber was going to be in the area in the coming month and might be willing to give a tutorial on Constant Contact. Haaker said she would be willing to attend. Burroughs said that the deadline for the fall issue of *La Palabra* is Sept. 30. She made assignments for the next issue: Convention, Mason; Healthcare, Mason; Tax Expenditures, Mason or Williams; Lobbying Workshop, Mason; League at the Legislature, Mason; Nominating Committee, Mary Wilson; Common Cause, Mason to arrange; and Women's Coalition, Mason.

Adjournment: The LWVNM Board adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by:

Chris Burroughs, LWVNM Secretary