**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

 **Board Meeting Minutes**

 **July 18, 2015**

 North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center

 Albuquerque, New Mexico

Present: Barbara Calef, Diane Goldfarb, Cheryl Haaker, Gwen Hanson, Meredith Machen, Dick Mason, Tarin Nix, Akkana Peck, Laura Stokes, Carol Tucker Trelease

Guest: Heather Brislen, M.D., CNM member

President Machen called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. Attendees introduced themselves to the guest and explained their roles with LWVNM. The agenda was reviewed and modified so that we could spend more time on legislative process improvements.

The minutes of our meeting on May 17, 2015 were approved as presented.

In her report, Meredith talked about the evolution of the League. We need to increase our visibility and let people know what an impact on policy we are making. The recognition will help us build membership. There was much discussion about having more forums. Meredith discussed her work on the Charter School Regulation Study. She is sorting through which of the many documents to share with the committee in the fall.

Cheryl gave the treasurer’s report. The Operating Fund is doing very well, with a current balance of $14,393.21. Budgeted expenses for the rest of the year will be about $4,500. We expect to receive $5,271.50 in PMP. The Wells Fargo bank account has $14,939.21.There is a balance of $1,157.71 in the Ed Fund.

Diane talked about Reproductive Rights. There has been discussion about nurse practitioners performing medication abortions. In NM, only physicians are allowed to do this, so we would need legislation to allow nurse practitioners to provide medication abortions. The Coalition for Choice has done lots of work on messaging recently because of the Planned Parenthood situation. The abortion rate in New Mexico is reduced, partially because more women are using effective contraception such as LARC--long acting reversible contraception.

Dick talked about Health Care. He serves on a number of committees related to health care. He serves on the Executive Committee of the New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils. He discussed the NM Department of Health’s State Innovation Model (SIM) Initiative. He will be inviting Heather to some meetings. There is a celebration of fifty years of Medicare and Medicaid on July 30 in Albuquerque at Explora from 4:00 until 6:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Dick reported that the big budget fight in the NM legislature in 2016 will be about funding Medicare and Medicaid. The federal government will not fully fund these programs in the future. The New Mexico Secretary of Insurance, John G. Franchini, has done a good job. Blue Cross Blue Shield has asked for a 51% rate increase.

Alcohol tax: Dick talked about the $154 million dollar program generated by increased tax on alcohol. Dick explained a program called “Alcohol Taxes Save Lives Campaign.” It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to support that program.

In Santa Fe, there is a High Utilizers Group made up of people who use emergency services the most. Through using case managers to assist them, these people are using the emergency room much less. The program is saving money and human resources in addition to helping clients improve their lives.

Again, Dick reported that 2016 will be a budget session of the New Mexico legislature. The big battle will be over sharing funding for Medicaid with the federal government. Another issue will be funding for education. There is a lawsuit, initially filed by MALDEF now managed by the NM Center on Law and Poverty, saying that New Mexico is not proving adequate funding to educate English language learners and other at-risk students.

There may also be an attempt to reform the capital outlay budget.

Natural Resources: Barbara reported that the League has advocated against approval of PNM’s current plan for re-structuring the San Juan Generating Station and supplying energy to compensate for closing down two of the four units in part because the confidential nature of the agreements prevents adequate public scrutiny. Also, we believe the replacement mix of energy resources should include more renewables. In April we joined other environmental groups asking Attorney General Balderas to withdraw his support. At the end of May, the LWVNM Natural Resources Committee wrote a letter to the editor again calling on the Attorney General to change his position regarding the plan. He finally did so on June 24, saying that the plan lacks enough renewable energy sources and that costs to ratepayers need to be lowered. The deadline for finalizing all the agreements is August 1.

Meredith mentioned that all of the local Leagues are focusing on campaign finance and ethics reform, due to the LWVUS Money in Politics Study. Jeanne Logsdon, CNM, is our expert who is serving on the LWVUS Study Committee.) CNM and some of the other Leagues will not be working on the Constitutional Amendment Study, though they may hold a meeting on the consensus questions.

For more information on these LWV studies (study materials, consensus meeting planning, and more), there will be a webinar on Wednesday, July 29 from 1:00 until 2:15. Address for the webinar is <https://lwv.adobeconnect.com/mip-ca-study-sign-up/event/event> info.html

Communications/Collaboration Strategies: Tarin talked about what/how do we want to use social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter? What do we want to put on them? Communications are in integral part of growing membership in our organization. Press releases statewide may be useful. We need to identify ourselves as League members. Tarin will be reaching out to all League presidents regarding what issues/topics they are interested in.

Meredith mentioned that we need to strengthen our outreach to non-members. LWV advises us to use language carefully, for instance, it is more powerful to say “women’s voting rights” than “women’s suffrage.” People fought hard to get the right to vote, and we have to keep fighting those who are now trying to take it away.

Akkana talked about Website Membership Interests. Asked about engaging more members through Constant Contact, she explained the Constant Contact is a broadcast method that doesn’t allow discussion. Akkana will explore some blogging options. If people have ideas, please contact Akkana.

LWVGLC is going to have a Festival Showcase of Priorities. League members will be able to share their talents and interests.

Akkana said that if your League is having an event, please let Tarin and her know.

Meredith distributed the final version of the 2015-2016 Board Calendar, noting that there will not be a LWVNM Lobbying Workshop in Albuquerque in December after all. From now on, we may just hold the Lobbying Workshop in Santa Fe before 60-day sessions when more topics are germane. We will move our 2016 Legislative Reception to February 3. Richard Anklam, who directs the Tax Policy Commission, will speak for ten to fifteen minutes. We will then have more social time. League Day will be February 4. We may (or may not) be able to use the Land Office auditorium for presentations. If not, Dick will try to get a room in the PERA building. If that’s not available, Meredith can try for a room in Mabry Hall. We may need to rent a space at either the Desert Inn or the SF Community Foundation if available.

The Legislative Process Improvement discussion was led by Dick. Two principles are listed: the ability of the public to participate in the legislative process should be a major consideration in the operation of the Legislature, and the business of enacting legislation should take precedence over ceremonial functions. Transparency was added as a third principle. Areas of Concern were also discussed. Concerns will be shared with the leadership of the Legislative Finance Committee and the Legislative Council Service. We also need to connect with Common Cause and other organizations to share our concerns.

Local League reports: Gwen distributed a written from LWVGLC. They had the President of Dona Ana Community College speak to them. They are having dinner meetings at this time so that people who work are able to attend. They have lots or collaborative meetings with community partners including Common Cause.

Barbara talked about the Los Alamos Environmental Sustainability Board. LWVLA asked them to support a bag ban. Ultimately, they did. It has changed to a “pay for bags” issue.

Cheryl gave the report for LWVCNM. Our Executive Committee met earlier this week to discuss priorities. We held a Calendar Planning session earlier this summer. Senator Harrison Schmidt will be our speaker in October, talking about the Spaceport.

Meredith gave the LWVSFC report for Judy who was on vacation in the Yukon. SFC has an active Action Advocacy Committee that is monitoring several city and county committees as well as the schools. This League continues to work on the County’s Sustainable Land Use Code, which is finally getting close to being ready for implementation. Certain SFC members have been working with members of the City’s Ethics Review and Campaign Finance Board to clarify and improve the ethics provisions in their code. The committee is active on other issues of community concern.

Meredith has large League plastic drinking glasses available if anyone wants one.

There being no further business, it was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to adjourn at 2:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Tucker Trelease

Secretary