**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**September 19, 2020**

**VIA ZOOM**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Hannah Burling, President

Barbara Calef, Second Vice President and LWVLA Co-President

Dick Mason, Action Chair

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Suzanne Ronneau, Treasurer

Judy Williams, Past President

Chris Furlanetto, Program

Janet Blair, Communications/La Palabra Editor

Meredith Machen, Education/Immigration/Special Projects

Diane Goldfarb, Voter Services

Akkana Peck, Webmaster

Laura Atkins, Director at Large

Karen Douglas, LWVCNM Co-President

Karen Wentworth, LWVCNM Co-President

Kathy Brook, LWVSNM Co-President

Eileen VanWie, LWVSNM Co-President

Becky Shankland, LWVLA Co-President

Jody Larson, Archives

Brittany Dutton-Leyda, Director at Large

**CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**

Hannah called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their position with the LWVNM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Eileen asked who casts a vote when there are co-presidents. Hannah confirmed that co-presidents are equal members of the board, each with the right to vote.

It was moved that the agenda be approved. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor.

It was moved that the July 18, 2020, board meeting minutes as amended be approved. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor.

**ELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER**

Barbara moved to appoint Brittany Dutton-Leyda to the board as a director. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Hannah noted that the main thing on our minds at this time is the upcoming election. The work done on Vote411 has been amazing. It is a brand new platform on an unprecedented scale. Vote411 covers the entire state and came about because of the numerous volunteers who are concerned about the election. Hannah also realizes that it is a stressful time, and those who put in so much work on this endeavor have been pushed to the limit. She would like to look at recruiting more League members to be volunteers.

There was no room on the agenda for the Spent Nuclear Fuel Research and Advocacy Committee but Hannah thanked the members for their great work, noting that their report on the HOLTEC Environmental Impact Statement was sent to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission approximately one month ago.

Hannah also listened to a meeting between Secretary of State (SOS) Maggie Toulouse-Oliver, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that covered cybersecurity issues. The amount of work that is going on ahead of the election is impressive, and she is reassured. She learned, however, that cybersecurity is "a race that never ends." The SOS is also working with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to ensure mailed ballots will be promptly and correctly delivered. The USPS in New Mexico has also rolled back the policies that would have led to voter suppression. A division of DHS, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has a button on their website with which one can report cybersecurity issues. The National Guard has a team that has its own voting machines that can be used in the event of an "attack" on a local voting site. Becky asked that this information be more widely shared. Meredith will send Akkana a link to a recent Santa Fe New Mexican article detailing our SOS's meeting with USPS officials for posting on our website, along with information on CISA.

The question of trust recently arose with an incident involving the Spent Nuclear Fuel committee and a League in another state. That League was sandbagged by its committee members who posted false information on their website. Ultimately that League removed the false information but Hannah wanted to express her thanks to our trustworthy and thorough committee members.

The recent death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is also on our minds, and the void she has left makes us all want to work harder. There was some discussion of our League making a statement requesting a deliberative process in choosing Ginsburg's replacement. Meredith will write a draft statement for Hannah's review.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne provided the Treasurer’s Report and Income-Expense spreadsheet electronically. She noted we received donations to the EdFund, one of which came with a matching grant she will apply for. She was puzzled that the donations came with a form printed from our website that was dated 2011. Suzanne also mentioned that $5,000 was transferred from our redistricting grant from Thornburg to Vote411. Although we do not presently have bills to pay related to this project, the funds will be applied to future costs. Dick noted that a new Thornburg grant for Vote411, including a translation into Spanish, brings the total voter services grant to $12,500.

**ACTION REPORT**

In a normal year we would have already requested space at the legislature for League Day but because of COVID there has not yet been a decision if the legislative session will allow in person attendance. Dick suspects that even if the public can participate in person, it is unlikely there will be tables for community organizations set up in the Roundhouse. The question then becomes, do we want to proceed with planning a virtual League Day and then move to in person if they decide to open the session? After some discussion, it was agreed that we will wait until the next meeting to decide how to proceed. Dick suggested the Action Committee can select a possible date for League Day.

In the event of the need for a virtual event, Judy suggested we organize a lobbying campaign during which we can pick a couple of bills and spend the day contacting legislators. Akkana also suggested participants can watch a session being broadcast with some side commentary explaining what is happening. Dick will focus on how individuals can testify virtually, should the need arise, which may allow for greater participation.

The Advocacy Workshop, which is scheduled for December 5 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., will focus on how citizen lobbyists can interact with legislators, testify at hearings, and advocate. Dick also noted the Action Committee is planning a great panel of speakers, and the forum allows for up to 500 registrants.

It is not yet known if in-person testimony will be allowed, but by the time of the workshop it will be known how citizens can testify. It is likely that we will need to adapt our advocacy work to virtual testimony. Becky appreciates the idea of teaching people to testify but wants an educational piece as well to help citizens understand the issues. Dick promised fact sheets. Karen W. suggested very basic information be provided to new members about how the New Mexico legislature works, and Barbara noted that the workshop will cover this information. Hannah wondered if a speaker such as Dede Feldman at a local league meeting would be another way to explain the process. Eileen said the Education Committee is looking at learning technologies such as a "back channel" on Twitter. Akkana said she likes the idea of a back channel but does not think Twitter is the best platform (it requires the user to sign up for Twitter, and the message length is restricted). Hannah said this should be addressed by the Action Committee.

Dick expects the legislative session will be focused on the budget shortfall but this might lead legislators to diversify our revenue sources including increasing the distribution from the permanent fund for education. He also assumes there will be legislation decriminalizing abortion. There may be an attempt to change election law to allow for voting by mail.

Regarding redistricting, the Planning Committee for New Mexico First met on September 10 to select members of the task force. There were over 70 applicants, and the maximum number of members selected will be 25. The co-chairs are New Mexico First board members who were chosen by New Mexico First. The League approved most of the legislators, and the judges who were selected. Dick will be on the task force, and Kathleen Burke, who was not selected, will move to the Planning Committee. Overall, Dick believes most of the task force members will champion fair redistricting, and we will get a good report.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Diane reported that Vote411 went live on September 15. A personalized ballot will be prepared based on the address entered. The local Voter Guides will soon go to the printers and will be linked to Vote411. She had 26 wonderful volunteers who made follow-up calls to county and legislative officials who were new. They had some difficulty getting responses from some candidates, especially those who are unopposed. The process was particularly challenging this year for three reasons. First, they had difficulty working with the SOS office. Unlike past years, there was poor communication from the SOS. Second, the sheer number of judges (approximately 94) on the ballots added to the difficulties. Many of the judges up for retention had no contact information, and the volunteers were unable to contact some new positions that were added at the last minute. Third, the group had great difficulty getting mapping information for county commission races. Even now that the process has been completed, they still do not know who is responsible for this information. They did the best they could but because of this difficulty cannot guarantee every voter in every county will have a complete personalized sample ballot for county commission races. Diane thanked Janet and her group for their work publicizing Vote411. Judy agreed the process was inefficient and time consuming, especially related to the judicial races and GIS mapping data. Akkana wants to open a line of communication with the SOS regarding mapping data, which should be in a designated repository. Dick offered to draft a piece of legislation requiring such data to be available to the public, and he will add this to the next Action Committee agenda.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Janet reported that her committee decided that the best way to publicize Vote411 was through social media. However, Hannah learned that LWVUS had already paid for the Google ad market. They decided that there was no need to recreate the wheel, and the funds budgeted could be better spent. Sandra West did a wonderful job customizing the LWVUS graphics that will be used with Facebook Boost. Public Service Announcements will be broadcast on radio and print ads will be inserted in 23 newspapers across the state. They are looking to divert some funds originally dedicated to Google to radio spots. It is hoped that some radio ads will be done in Navajo in the Grants and Gallup areas. The advertising inserts are expected to be included in newspapers published October 17 and the following week. The only news station that agreed to do a promotional spot was Channel 4. Diane thinks all of this effort will prompt some candidates to respond. Janet is also looking into placing ads on National Public Radio during peak drive time. Meredith will inquire into having these ads translated into Spanish. She also thinks a lot of advertising can be done without spending money by utilizing our allies. Janet wants us all to go to our Facebook page and "like" and "share." Akkana is working on Twitter.

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI)**

Five members of JEDI were present during the lunch break for a presentation on diversity. These members included Irene Epp (JEDI Coordinator), Rebecca Álvarez, Katie Christianson, Joanna Velasquez, and Brittany Dutton-Leyda. The presentation began with a working definition of diversity. The LWVUS definition is, "population groups that have been historically underrepresented in socially, politically, or economically powerful institutions and organizations." Based on this, JEDI has drafted the following policy for LWVNM: "The LWVNM works constantly for a stronger democracy, rooted in principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to ensuring that every voice is heard, every individual is counted, and every person has a seat at the table."

JEDI urged the board to ask how we, as a governing body, can work in support of diversity throughout our organization. They developed the following list of barriers and possible solutions: 1) time available to volunteer/small, concrete tasks or online work; 2) availability of childcare/kid-friendly events or onsite childcare; 3) availability during working hours/weekend, evening, flex time, online; 4) voter registration locations/increased visibility in new areas; 5) paid memberships necessary/affordable and free memberships; 6) membership application process/one click online application; 7) appearance of tokenism/listening as a mentor; and 8) deliberative process/diverse options for participation.

The JEDI team also identified three primary goals: 1) assess LWVNM diversity efforts; 2) make state alliances to lift marginalized voices and increase representation; and 3) increase diversification of LWVNM. To these ends, JEDI has participated in outreach efforts including several Black Lives Matter events, voter registration drives, strategic planning, alliance building, and the 2021 Women's March Coalition effort.

JEDI hopes to reach out to the LWVNM general membership by producing a short video made up of one board member, one general member, and one JEDI member discussing diversity and ideas to move the League forward. They hope to produce this video by October 1 and analyze the responses.

Dick told the JEDI committee that there is currently nothing in League positions dealing with Native Americans and that could be one area of their focus. Barbara expressed concern that JEDI thinks the deliberative process is a barrier. She maintains that it is important for people to educate themselves about the issues, and the deliberative process sets the League apart from other organizations. Judy asked about the proposed location of the proposed march and asked if the group had considered Albuquerque as a larger, more diverse location.

The JEDI logo was asked about, and it was noted that LWVUS has standards as to designs and colors used. If JEDI's current logo is to be used externally, it would need to be brought to the board for approval.

**PROGRAM PLANNING**

The Sapien amendment to Senate Bill 4, which passed in the special session, decreed that a voter not affiliated with a major party (currently D, R, or L) could vote in the primary after registering with one of those parties. This portion of the bill does not sunset at the end of the year. Because of this, Meredith proposed that the LWVNM concur with the LWVME position, or a modified version, on election procedures. She proposed that our Election Procedures #6 ("an all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election") be changed to concur with the Maine language having to do with primary elections. Barbara proposed that, instead of concurring with the Maine position, we add the following language to #6: "Voters who are not enrolled in a major political party may vote on one ballot per primary without having to enroll in that particular political party. Voters enrolled in a major political party can vote only on the ballot of their party." There was much discussion on Barbara's proposal. Those not in favor thought the added language was either insufficient or not general enough, and that we should not have to change our position with each new law. Meredith was in favor of Barbara's proposal, as was Dick who said that our current position, as it is written, would not allow us to oppose the Sapien amendment. The proposed language change would make it easier for the Action Committee to take action on proposed legislation. Becky agreed because we have so many Decline To State voters, and we want to encourage voting for those not enrolled in a major political party.

Dick moved that we add the language proposed by Barbara to our Election Procedures #6, and this motion was seconded. The motion passed after four members voted against the change, and 14 voted in favor of the change.

**JEDI - Proposed Women's March**

Brittany reported on the 2021 Santa Fe Women's March that JEDI has asked the board to endorse. She noted that, because recruiting younger people is a priority to the League, this would be an opportunity to tap into young people who would participate as well as those involved in partnership organizations. JEDI is asking for our endorsement as well as funding of $2,500 for this event, which they want held on January 23, 2021. JEDI provided two different written event descriptions based on the status of COVID and public health restrictions. They also provided a list of prospective coalition partners who would be recruited if JEDI is given board approval.

There were several concerns raised about this proposed event including the budget, permitting, security, liability insurance, and what legal entity would take the lead. Board members asked for an explanation of the budget including detailed costs associated with permitting, security, and insurance. It was also noted that an event in Santa Fe could exclude participants from other parts of the state and that there is ordinarily a similar event in January in Albuquerque. It was also noted in the Zoom chat that the date they have selected is the same date as the Pueblo of San Ildefonso Feast Day. Brittany agreed to bring these concerns to JEDI.

Janet moved that we approve the event in principle pending budget and other details, and this motion was seconded. Six board members voted in favor and nine were opposed.

Chris then moved that the board direct JEDI to do further research on the budget and building a coalition and bring this information to the Executive Committee for further consideration. This motion was seconded, and all voted in favor. JEDI was also reminded that any such event must be non-partisan in nature.

**EDUCATION**

According to its written report, the Education Committee is studying several topics with the intent of adding some elements to the LWVNM education position. Areas of study include multicultural/multilingual education, learning technologies, early childhood education, dual credit courses, family involvement, and teacher education. Many of these topics are outgrowths of and connected to the Yazzie-Martinez educational insufficiency findings and public demand for New Mexico to address the achievement gap for students with disabilities, with language and cultural challenges, and with limited economic and technological opportunities. The pandemic has exacerbated these problems.

The rationale and statements for the position changes will be presented to the board for approval by the November or January meeting. Once approved, the proposed new position needs to be sent to the membership 30 days prior to the LWVNM Convention in April and must be published in *La Palabra* prior to the convention. If the board approves the changes, they could prove useful for advocacy in the 2021 legislative session.

Meredith also noted that moving to monthly Zoom meetings has improved collaboration with educators from across the state.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Meredith provided a detailed report on the extensive activities undertaken in the areas of centennial events and voter engagement since the update provided during the July board meeting. These events included, but are not limited to, the following: presentation to Santa Fe County Commission; interview with City of Santa Fe public access television; promotion of the centennial and voting information for the 2020 election; success in getting two cities on the National Votes for Women Trail; coordination of 'porch parades' photography project; presentation to the Albuquerque City Council in conjunction with a proclamation; coordination of a car parade in Santa Fe following the route the suffragists took in 1915; participation in Women's Equality Day; and participation in two podcasts with scholars exploring the history of the expansion of voting rights for women and people of color in New Mexico.

Meredith thanked the History Committee for their work, which increased the visibility of the League and voter engagement.

Hannah suggested that a slide show of the centennial year and its history could be put together for a presentation during our next board meeting. She asked for photographs from Meredith and the local leagues.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

Submitted in writing and will be included in the next edition of *La Palabra*.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Karen D. told the board that the Observer Corps training is scheduled for Monday at 6:00 p.m. and it will include a presentation on open meetings laws and Hector Balderas's open meetings compliance guide.

Karen D. also noted that we are evaluating the Texas Interim Storage Partners draft environmental statement. Public webinars will be held on October 1, October 6, October 8, and October 15, and the comment deadline is November 3.

Regarding the Albuquerque Police Department consent decree, Karen D. said excessive use of force complaints now go to the civilian police oversight agency. She noted that racial bias was never a measure delineated in the 2014 consent decree, and there have been no findings of racial bias, just too many incidents of excessive force including the use of deadly force.

Barbara said the LWVLA Lunch with a Leader, which featured Bobbi Merryman on Spent Nuclear Fuel Safety and Storage, was excellent and very neutral. It was not recorded but Barbara suggested either Santa Fe or Southern New Mexico may want the same presentation which could then be recorded. Laura liked the idea of this presentation for the Santa Fe League but thought it may be too long and too detailed for their audience. She will bring the idea to the board.

Meredith asked the Southern New Mexico League what counties they serve. Eileen responded that they have intentionally kept it vague but their focus has been on Doña Ana County. They recently had an inquiry from someone in Silver City in Grant County. Diane noted that the best response her group received came from Grant County, and she shared the name of a volunteer as a good contact.

Judy commended the Spent Nuclear Fuel committee for their comments. She also noted that the Santa Fe league is co-sponsoring events in the coming two weeks on fake news and disinformation and their effects on the election. She can send the board the link.

Barbara reminded everyone that the *La Palabra* deadline is September 21.

Hannah asked for suffrage centennial photographs for the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2020, possibly in Santa Fe but likely via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (September 24, 2020)

Edited by Barbara Calef (September 25, 2020)