**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**MARCH 6, 2021**

**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

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

Janet Blair, Communications/*La Palabra* Editor

Jody Larson, Archives

Rebecca Álvarez, Temporary JEDI Liaison

**CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**

Hannah called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their position with the LWVNM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Several amendments to the agenda initially proposed were needed because of scheduling issues. Barbara removed 7.1 Proposed Bylaws Amendment because it was approved at the January board meeting. Barbara moved that the amended agenda be approved and Judy seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Meredith moved that the January 16, 2021, board meeting minutes be approved and Kathy seconded this motion. Kathy then proposed changes to the second paragraph of the president's report pertaining to the Spent Nuclear Fuel informational meeting in Southern New Mexico and Hannah asked for a word change in the voter services section. Meredith then moved that the amended minutes be approved and all voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Hannah met with governance at LWVUS to discuss how to treat a disruptive League member. She learned that we have no recourse, as there is no way to remove a member. LWVUS intends to look into such issues further.

Hannah offered her congratulations to Diane for a great year. After an enormous amount of time and energy over many years, the bill decriminalizing abortion passed and has been signed into law. This is a great victory for the League. Congratulations were also offered to Akkana and Dick for their work on the GIS mapping data and redistricting bills, respectively, both of which are progressing in the legislature. The virtual Women's March was also a great success with participants including Deb Haaland and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, whose speech was essentially an "infomercial" for the League.

Hannah, Akkana, and Janet are currently discussing updating our website. In addition to cosmetic upgrades to the front page, they are planning informational additions so our website can be a source of information for people throughout New Mexico. Examples of new information to the website will be articles on misinformation and disinformation, and a listing of state events. Hannah asked that any League events be sent to Susan and Akkana.

Hannah also asked for a web czar. She needs assistance during webinars as she finds it difficult to moderate a program and keep up with Zoom at the same time.

**PROGRAM**

Chris wrote a statement to the LWVNM board outlining the LWVUS procedures on the adoption of positions. One way to arrive at a position is through a formal study. Because that procedure takes significant time, LWVUS introduced the concurrence process, which allows Leagues to adopt other Leagues' positions. Chris felt the need to write this statement because neither the Education position nor the Spent Nuclear Fuel position, both of which are before the board for approval, followed the standard study>consensus>position process. Two main issues with both studies were that the consensus questions did not cover all the points of the study and the questions should be written before the positions, rather than after the fact. Judy and Jody agreed with Chris that there are important reasons for following the approved process. Both Karen D. and Meredith explained the special circumstances and difficulties they encountered surrounding their respective positions. Karen W. suggested that, going forward, we develop a series of questions we want to have answered by the study which we can refer back to when we get to the point of writing consensus questions. Chris noted that we already have a document on how to conduct a state study but Karen W.'s suggestion could be added to that document. Meredith maintains that not all studies are the same and new positions need a different protocol than updating positions. Barbara added that what a study will reveal is not necessarily known at the outset and she proposed that we hold a special meeting to discuss how to conduct a study. Updates and technical issues could be addressed at this meeting.

The wording of the Transfer of Federal Public Lands position was clarified (adding "with Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management") after the position was submitted for concurrence at the 2020 LWVUS convention. This new language was not included in the 2020-2022 *Impact on Issues* because, according to LWVUS bylaws, once a position is distributed to the membership as a proposed concurrence, the language cannot be modified. Because our League approved the additional language, Chris asked if it should remain on our website. Barbara was not opposed to this, but suggested the issue needs to be pointed out to delegates at the convention prior to a vote being taken.

**PROPOSED SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL POSITION**

Karen D. submitted the proposed position on the storage of spent nuclear fuel. After consulting with Bobbi Merryman, Karen D. added "long term" in two sections with the hope that additional states would concur with the position. In addition, the inclusion of language "to reduce radiation exposure as to the lowest reasonably achievable level" was added because it is a legal term used by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Laura agreed that we should use regulatory language any time we can, but she questioned the addition of "long term." Barbara also questioned using the words "long term" and she suggested the word "as" was not necessary in the added sentence. It was agreed that the inclusion of "long term" was not necessary for other states to concur with the position and it will not be included. It was also clarified that the italicized language at the end of the document was for our use only and was not to be part of the position.

Barbara moved that we adopt the proposed position without the word "as" and Meredith seconded this motion. Jody questioned whether LWVUS wanted state and local Leagues to develop their own positions, although we were encouraged to weigh in and consult with LWVUS. She also wanted to know how this position would affect relations with other Leagues. Hannah said she is certain that LWVUS and members of the Texas League will be very interested in this position. Her impression is that LWVUS is referring other Leagues to LWVNM because other Leagues lack the expertise in this issue. Eileen did not believe that consensus was reached by local Leagues; the definition of "lowest reasonably achievable level" should be included; and in some places of the position the language is not strong enough. Many members of the Southern New Mexico League do not want the position to sound like LWVNM wants a SNF site in New Mexico. A permanent storage site should be identified and SNF should be sent directly to that site. Kathy also questioned whether consensus was reached; she objects to the term "maximum in the first paragraph; and she was concerned about the last part of the first sentence under section 4. Specific Criteria, which suggests that the League will support developing an interim storage site in New Mexico. Laura believes the position is good and the real lack of consensus is that there are League members who will never approve a facility like this in New Mexico. Jody agrees with Laura and suggests we set the bar very high for safety. Judy agreed that many members would be appalled if they thought the League was supporting such a project. Kathy thinks the position is lacking an emphasis on environmental equity.

Chris suggested that the introductory sentence under section 4. Specific Criteria end at "following criteria be satisfied" and delete "before the League can support the application or proposal." Barbara accepted Chris's suggestion (ending that sentence with "satisfied") and she moved to call the question. Chris seconded this motion. Ten members voted in favor of calling the question and three were opposed.

A vote was then taken on the original motion with the language change proposed by Chris. Ten members voted in favor and five members were opposed. The position will be brought to the convention for a final vote.

**PROPOSED EDUCATION POSITION**

Eileen provided an overview of the process undertaken by the Education Committee. The Southern New Mexico League started to update their education position in response to the Yazzie-Martinez court decision. When they learned that the Governor and Public Education Commission wanted court oversight removed, the SNM League was opposed and came to LWVNM leaders, some of whom recommended that the state position be updated with language on early childhood education, learning technologies, and higher education.

Eileen noted that the word "education" was accidently omitted from the first sentence of the paragraph preceding section 1. Teachers, Administrators, and Staff. The sentence should read, "Essential elements for a high-quality, equitable education system..." In addition, the word "equitable" was accidentally omitted from the first sentence of the paragraph preceding section 8. Funding for Public Education. The sentence should read, "The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports sufficient funding for a high quality, equitable educational system for all students..."

Barbara supported the position but asked that the term "global economy" be removed from the last sentence of the introductory paragraph. She also does not believe that the second paragraph should include, "Each student should be respected as an individual in learning environments that value diverse cultures." Meredith responded that both concepts were important to the committee. After some discussion, it was agreed that "global economy" should be deleted. There was quite a bit of discussion about the inclusion of the sentence Barbara questioned. Some questioned whether we could advocate legislation prohibiting bullying, for example, but Eileen noted that our positions are used for more than lobbying for legislation (e.g., op-eds). Laura also does not believe that laws telling people to be nice to each other are effective, but Meredith emphasized that New Mexico has a history of discrimination. Chris questioned the inclusion of language proposed by the individual local Leagues at consensus meetings unless there was a common thread.

The board was asked to decide whether the sentence in question should be included or omitted from the position and there was a clear majority that the language should remain. Barbara then moved to adopt the education position as it now stands and Meredith seconded this motion. All voted in favor. The position will be brought to the convention for a final vote.

**PROPOSED CONCURRENCE WITH LWVVT POSITION ON RANKED-CHOICE VOTING**

Delegates to the 2019 LWVNM Convention were asked to adopt the board-recommended statement in the Election Procedures position which read, "Ranked-choice voting [RCV] in all elections" to replace the wording, "Amending the State Constitution to allow run-off elections in the case of non-partisan elections." The delegates rejected this proposal because of a lack of understanding on the issue and the concerns about whether RCV had been successfully implemented in other jurisdictions. The Santa Fe League has asked that the RCV statement be reconsidered at the 2021 Convention. Chris moved that LWVNM adopt the RCV statement in place of the current run-off statement and to include it as a recommended item at the convention in April. Meredith seconded this motion. Chris noted that Common Cause will provide educational materials to League members and that organization has offered to meet with the individual Leagues about the issue.

Akkana instead suggested using language such as, "an alternative voting system like ranked choice voting" because there are multiple alternative voting systems. Karen W. noted that delegates from Central New Mexico still have concerns about RCV and they will be having a special meeting on the issue in early April. Barbara offered Akkana's proposed language as a friendly amendment, which Chris accepted. Dick is concerned about this language change because it suggests we approve every alternative way of voting. Eileen was concerned about amending language from a concurrence with another League and Kathy was concerned that adopting a position from another League does not allow buy-in from the membership until after the fact. Based on these concerns, Chris withdrew her motion.

Meredith then moved to change the proposed language to something including instant runoff and multiple candidates. Barbara said the board is not ready for this. CNM has an educational meeting scheduled that we can all attend and she proposed that we take no action today. The Santa Fe League can bring forward the request at the convention without recommendation from the board. There was no second to Meredith's motion.

**PROPOSED CONCURRENCE WITH LWV CUYAHOGA AREA ON AN ETHICS COMMISSION**

At an Action Committee meeting the issue arose that LWVNM does not have an ethics position, and Meredith volunteered to research positions adopted by other Leagues. The best she found is the position adopted by LWV Cuyahoga Area. Meredith maintains that this position covers most of the bases and is long overdue. Chris asked what this position would allow us to advocate for that we cannot do now. Barbara also noted that we have other positions to use for ethics advocacy. Dick agreed that we do not advocate unless we have a position and we have advocated in the past on ethics-related matters. Kathy has no concerns about developing an ethics position, but she has concerns about the proposed position because it is from a local area and it may not make sense for a state to have a single ethics board. Judy said we did have a position, and read from the LWVNM position on Campaign Finance and Ethics. It contains a statement on an independent ethics commission and the roles it should have. We have used it to advocate about ethics-related matters. Meredith subsequently agreed that we do not need a new position, but maintains that it is still important to support ethics for our history. She removed the topic from discussion and no action was taken.

**PROPOSAL FOR NATIVE SOVEREIGNTY STUDY**

Rebecca Á. proposed a one-year study of the pros and cons of codifying federal Indian laws at the state level, and where possible, Indigenous tribal laws at the state level, considering what is the best option for preservation of tribal sovereignty as well as benefits to tribal populations. The first objective is to educate ourselves about the complexities of enforcing federal Indian law as well as the complexities of balancing tribal sovereignty and tribal benefit. The second is to develop a position for advocacy. The Santa Fe League was in favor of this proposal being brought before LWVNM. Rebecca Á. reminded the board that this is an area where no League research exists, either at the state or national levels, and this proposed study will have no League precedent. A strong team has been assembled to begin work on this study and Meredith has agreed to serve on the committee.

Meredith moved to approve this study and the motion was seconded by Dick. When questioned about the input of local Pueblos, Rebecca Á. noted that the team has already enlisted the participation of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, which deals with these issues. This group includes as members a number of other organizations, including Tewa Women United, and many Pueblos and Tribes. All voted in favor.

**PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE JUDICIAL SELECTION STUDY**

Suzanne said that the study was approved in 2019 and was expected to continue for two years. The committee ran into some difficulties, including COVID, which slowed them down. Rather than rushing through, the committee is asking for additional time in which to complete the study. They intend to develop presentations for the membership in 2022 and hold consensus meetings in 2022 or 2023. Suzanne moved that the study be continued and Janet seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**ACTION REPORT**

Dick had little to report because the legislature is still in session. His written report noted that the abortion ban was repealed and signed by the Governor, and a compromise on redistricting is moving forward with Speaker Egolf's support.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Meredith submitted the report of the nominating committee. She noted that Judy is listed under both Program and Voter Services, but she will just be pinch-hitting until a permanent replacement for Diane is found. A director for Reproductive Rights is still needed; Meredith wishes to change the committee name to "Women's Issues." She pointed out that the board can appoint members in addition to those who will be elected. Meredith asked that any potential nominees be forwarded to the committee.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne provided the Treasurer’s Report and Income-Expense spreadsheet electronically. The checking account ending balance as of January 10, 2021, was $31,342.44. Barbara asked about the lack of interest income. Suzanne said she is still looking for a financial institution that will provide a decent interest rate. Rebecca C. suggested she check into the money market account at Del Norte Credit Union.

Meredith asked about the proposed budget for the convention. Judy realized she forgot to send it so the executive committee will need to meet to approve it.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Diane reported that we are signed up for Vote411 for 2021, and the total cost will be $1,500 as opposed to the expected $1,600. She has sent the information to last year's voter guide editors. Diane plans to meet with that group before she leaves and will also have her job description updated.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Janet said the committee has secured two young women, both of whom work full time, to operate our Twitter and Facebook accounts. They will each be able to post two times per week but will need content from the board and leadership. Sandra West has offered to assist with the renovation of our website after the legislative session ends. Janet's daughter-in-law can be a fall back.

Akkana had nothing new to report.

**BYLAWS and POLICIES**

At the previous meeting, Barbara submitted a proposed revision to the Electronic Board Meeting policy but there were several objections to that iteration. She subsequently incorporated several suggestions into the new proposed policy. Meredith questioned the five-day time frame for the meeting announcement and board packet materials as not always possible. Barbara responded that we have exceptions for materials that come in late. Meredith moved to adopt the proposed policy and this was seconded by Judy. All voted in favor.

**JEDI**

Rebecca Á. submitted the written JEDI report which does not require any action. She already reported on the proposed Indigenous Sovereignty study, which was approved. JEDI also held a virtual town hall on police reform bills, and organized the highly successful virtual Women's March. She will send the video of that event to Akkana for the website. JEDI has had active contact with three of the four local Leagues and will reach out to Los Alamos after the legislative session ends.

**CONVENTION**

Eileen presented the draft agenda for the upcoming convention. Speakers will include Yvonne Flores, Liz Bander, Dr. Jim Peach, Dr. Christa Slaton, and Johana Bencomo. They had planned on two plenary sessions on Saturday and a third on Sunday, but the second session on Saturday has been cancelled. Barbara added that the board will meet when the convention adjourns.

Eileen asked the board about having a registration fee. Barbara said whether to impose a fee will be up to Southern New Mexico and it would be to cover any costs they expect to incur.

The question of whether to hold a silent auction was then discussed. Because it will be virtual, there are online websites that can run the auction but they will take a percentage of the bids. Another complication is getting the item shipped to the winning bidder, which Eileen agrees is an issue. Meredith suggested omitting the silent auction in order to focus on the speakers. Judy thought a registration fee could cover the cost associated with using an online auction service. Barbara said that the board does not need to decide this issue; it is up to Southern New Mexico to make the decision.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Everyone was reminded that the *La Palabra* deadline is March 8, 2021.

The Annual Convention is scheduled for April 24 and 25, 2021, via Zoom.

The next board meeting will follow the conclusion of the convention on April 25, 2021, and will be conducted via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (March 9, 2021)

Edited by Barbara Calef (March 9, 2021)