**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**JULY 17, 2021**

**SANTA FE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**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

Kathy Brook, Program

Meredith Machen, Education/Immigration/Special Projects

Akkana Peck, Webmaster

Karen Douglas, LWVCNM Co-President and Spent Nuclear Fuels

Donna Sandoval, LWVCNM Co-President

Eileen VanWie, LWVSNM Co-President (via Zoom)

Becky Shankland, LWVLA Co-President (via Zoom)

Susan Haase, Membership and Events

Janet Blair, Communications/*La Palabra* Editor (via Zoom)

Jody Larson, Archives

Rebecca Álvarez, JEDI (via Zoom)

Bobbi Riedel, Women's Issues

Renny Ashleman, Voting and Elections

**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**

Hannah proposed two revisions to the agenda. Renny moved that the revised agenda be approved and Akkana seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Kathy moved that the April 25, 2021, board meeting minutes be approved and Renny seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

The 2021 Convention minutes will be an item on the September agenda.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Hannah participated in the LWVUS Council during which she sat through several workshops. One workshop concerned "asset framing" which defines communities on their hopes and contributions rather than challenges and deficits. She also attended a meeting on "selling" the League to the media, which she will share with Janet. The third meeting Hannah attended was on dealing with a hostile legislature. Hannah found the entire event very encouraging. Following several suggestions from the group, Hannah agreed that her experience could be described in more detail either in a *La Palabra* article or during a separate meeting/webinar.

Hannah thanked Meredith for arranging for the meeting room and ensuring the hybrid model of meeting was available.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne presented the Treasurer's Report that reflects an ending balance of $32,366.26. She has yet to find an investment account with a reasonable interest rate. The income reported includes $2,000 received from LWVUS. There are no restrictions on how this money is spent. It was suggested that a portion could be used to pay for the legislative reception.

**ACTION REPORT**

Dick reported that the Thornburg Foundation approved a $45,000 grant that includes $10,000 towards Vote411. The balance could be used to pursue a constitutional amendment on redistricting, but it might not be worth pursuing during a limited 30-day legislative session. If not used for that purpose, the balance could be used for Vote411 or another project. Thornburg is flexible.

The Citizen Redistricting Committee has its first public meetings scheduled for early August. Dick has been encouraged that all Native American groups, including the local pueblos and Navajo Nation, are now organized into a single committee. These underrepresented communities are now properly represented, which is what the League hoped for when the redistricting legislation passed.

The first round of hearings will focus on communities of interest (he will send out a definition for our edification). The second round of hearings will commence after maps are developed. We can discuss that at a later time. Dick suggested that the League consider drawing its own alternative district maps.

The calendar of events includes the estimated start of the Special Session of Redistricting (December 1); the advocacy workshop (December 11); virtual legislative preparation (January 13); the legislative reception, location to be determined, honoring Justice Chavez (February 2); and League Day at the New Mexico Land Office (February 3). The 2022 Legislative Session dates are January 4, 2022, to February 17, 2022. Only budget issues and issues the Governor puts on her call will be considered. Judy noted that the Secretary of State reported that the emergency provisions of SB4 have expired and will try and get them reinstated during the 2022 session.

After some discussion, it was agreed that Action Committee calls would be held on Thursdays at 5:30 p.m. in order to allow more people to participate. For those individuals who cannot or will not testify, Dick suggested that they volunteer to follow a bill throughout the session and keep the Action Committee up to date. Hannah and Renny agreed and suggested that these individuals could alert us to amendments and the bills' effects and alternatives. Hannah specifically mentioned this could be helpful in knowing when and if we decide to no longer support a bill. Everyone agreed it would be helpful to have information on amendments as early in the process as possible.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Janet had nothing new to report.

**WEBSITE and DOCUMENT STORAGE**

Akkana has been involved in the LWVUS Rural Caucus focusing on health care, voting, and broadband. She asked that LWVNM host a web page that collects details local Leagues could use to advocate for broadband, including states that have had successful legislation. Barbara moved that we host such a page and Bobbi seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Akkana has also been helping with a healthcare reform website, which she confirmed has been endorsed by the League. In addition, she has been working with a small committee (made up of Akkana, Hannah, Susan, and Sandra West) charged with redesigning the LWVNM website. This committee has made some progress but recently lost some ground and they need more help. She is asking for someone involved in one of the local Leagues to become the organizer. Dick suggested this be advertised under open positions via Constant Contact.

**PROGRAM**

Kathy sent out a copy of the LWV-CA position on Criminal Justice along with our existing position related to courts and justice. California has asked us to concur with their position. Kathy is not asking for a vote today but is looking for preliminary feedback and future input from the local Leagues. Karen suggested that the California policy is relevant for New Mexico but others expressed doubts about the position. Barbara agreed that we need to update our positions but first we should have discussions with the local Leagues. Judy wants California's underlying research and rationale, which Kathy will attempt to obtain. Kathy noted that we have other positions that address aspects of criminal justice and most recently we have focused attention on our JEDI position. She would like to see the issues tied together. Jody read parts of our concurrence and procedures policy, specifically section numbers 2 and 6. Based on this policy, she will not be prepared to vote until each local League has had at least one meeting and the ability to examine relevant documents. Kathy agreed but she worries that we have a gap in our state positions.

Hannah asked that everyone review the position thoroughly before the next meeting. She will send out a request for local League members to work on this via Constant Contact.

**BYLAWS and POLICIES**

Barbara noted that the only controversy that arose during the convention was regarding nominations and she wants to avoid this issue at the next convention. We currently have seven elected directors and we can have up to eight. Based on our need to have a number of areas covered (e.g., Program, Webmaster, Membership, Archives, JEDI, Women's Issues, and Voting and Elections), Barbara suggests we change the bylaws to allow for up to nine elected directors. She will bring this proposal to the board for a vote before the 2023 Convention.

Up to six directors may be appointed by the board. The bylaws say, "The appointed directors shall be appointed by the state board as ad hoc directors as the need arises in relationship to projects adopted by the state board..." So, appointed directors should have a portfolio and not be at-large. Barbara proposed that our website change titles from at-large to portfolio. Karen's portfolio is Spent Nuclear Fuel and Susan's is Membership and Events. Jody moved to make the change and Judy seconded the motion. All but Meredith voted in favor.

Hannah said that while she and Barbara were discussing these issues, she reviewed the LWVUS best practices. This encourages a League to maintain flexibility in its administrative structure, modify the structure as needed, and maintain an active nominating committee, which should work throughout the year.

During this discussion, Bobbi asked for a mentor. Judy and Meredith both agreed to help and Barbara suggested that Diane Goldfarb also be consulted. Bobbi hopes to focus women's issues on pay equity, compensation for care work, care equity and support, and childcare. She is currently working on her job description.

At LWVUS Council, it was proposed that the best way to retain allies is to publicize their events. As such, Hannah would like to see our unwritten rule prohibiting this dropped for closely allied, non-partisan groups. Janet noted that she has serious concerns about posting information from other groups, including that of the Citizen Redistricting Committee, and she believes a policy would be helpful. Hannah and Barbara will start to work on this issue. Eileen asked that any policy we consider include what electronic documents are relevant and where they should be stored. Presently, Southern New Mexico League documents are archived at New Mexico State University and other League's documents are archived at the University of New Mexico.

**EDUCATION FUND**

Establishing an Education Fund under 501(c)(3) came up at our retreat last month and everyone who participated was in favor. Dick has found a lawyer who specializes in this area of law. Hannah said the costs associated with this should be less than $1,000. Susan moved that we set up a 501(c)(3) Education Fund for LWVNM and Meredith seconded this motion. All voted in favor. It was decided that no budget adjustment is needed because we can use part of the unrestricted $2,000 gifted to us by LWVUS. Hannah will set up an appointment with the lawyer. Judy and Suzanne will take part as well.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Susan reported that in 2020 LWVNM had six at-large members (one of whom is a lifetime member). All renewed this year and they are located in Capitan, Socorro, Portales, Silver City, El Prado, and Truth or Consequences. She sent thank you notes to them all. She wonders how else they can be engaged with the League, other than merely receiving *La Palabra*. Several suggestions were forthcoming including: following the lead of Maine with no rigid definition of local Leagues; dividing the state into four quadrants in order to be supportive of everyone; holding our meetings within striking distance of these at-large members; inviting them to Zoom events; encouraging them to act as recruitment agents; and publicizing the League in these outlying areas.

Susan also brought up the issue of attracting and retaining younger members. Bobbi suggested that because a lot of news sought out by younger people is national, that we tailor our work to focus on larger, national issues. Gender and care equity are good issues to focus on. She suggested that New Mexico develop a subsidized program at the community college level to train childcare providers. Eileen noted that our position on childcare was last updated in 2003 and any revision to this policy should include equitable care. Rebecca Á. said that if we think more organizationally in addition to policy, younger members with childcare issues could more easily participate.

Bobbi suggested forming a working group to brainstorm, identify what resources exist, and come up with action points. Bobbi will set up initial meetings and both Susan and Judy will participate.

**VOTING and ELECTIONS**

Renny has attended a meeting of the Election Administration Policy Committee, a group of 18 organizations working on election reform. This group is looking into 19 different areas on how to administer an election. He noted that New Mexico is 40th in percentage of registered voters with only 70 percent of whites and 59.9 percent of Hispanics registered to vote. We compare to Texas and Missouri for ease in using our election laws. One area of concern is the requirement that third party registrars need to turn in registration documents within two days. Renny and Judy recently met with the Director of Elections at the Secretary of State. She will look into this. She also said they will try to get the election provisions passed in SB4 in 2020 renewed in the 2022 session. Renny noted that the Policy Committee is closed, he cannot get an official list of attendees, and it is hosted by America Votes.

Renny also said that Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) comes up during these discussions, but we do not have a position on this issue. Barbara noted that there is no consensus on this issue. There is no position in Santa Fe while Southern New Mexico does support RCV (also known as instant runoff). Hannah said because there is currently no consensus on this issue, any interested party or group should speak with Kathy.

Judy noted that the Secretary of State has signed a contract with UNM to work on GIS mapping for all local elections and they are to be done by January 2022.

**SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL**

Karen submitted a written report, which noted that a final environmental impact statement will be issued in November 2021 and the final Nuclear Safety Evaluation Report issued in January 2022. If this is approved, waste would start to arrive at the Holtec facility in 2024. She participated in a meeting today hoping that other Leagues will concur with our position and attended a recent meeting in Carlsbad concerning the safety and update of the proposed interim storage facility.

**JEDI**

Rebecca Á. reported that the JEDI committee has decided to focus on four areas: policy advocacy via the Action Committee rooted in JEDI principles; registration of voters at JEDI-aligned events; advocating for JEDI principles via the tribal law study; and the creation and administration of a recruitment/research questionnaire on the UNM Albuquerque campus for potential university student members. Eileen asked that NMSU be included in this questionnaire.

Rebecca also gave a brief update on the Tribal Sovereignty Study. The committee has met four times and is in the process of completing a guide to be disseminated to local Leagues in advance of consensus meetings. She thanked Dick for his assistance and input. Barbara asked that the study include a list of New Mexico tribes, how they govern themselves, and a definition of sovereignty. Barbara also thinks criminal justice, health, schools, and gambling are important issue areas. Rebecca suggested that gambling would fall under the purview of economic development, which is one area of focus. Barbara also would like to see that all League members be invited to participate in the study, via Constant Contact and *La Palabra*.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

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

**EVENTS**

It was agreed that the next board meeting will be held on September 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. because Hannah could not make the originally scheduled date of September 18. The location is to be determined, but likely to take place at the new offices of CNM in Albuquerque.

The Santa Fe League has several upcoming events they think all League members may be interested in. They include Think New Mexico's education reform agenda for the 2022 legislative session; Elizabeth Reese (Stanford Law Professor and enrolled Nambé Pueblo member) who will talk about Finding Common Ground in Tribal, State, and Federal Law; and "the U.S. Constitution From a Woman's Perspective." No dates or times are yet available but once available they will be advertised on our website and through Constant Contact. Barbara asked that all local League presidents receive the details.

Meredith and Eileen reported on the New Mexico Humanities Council $50,000 grant initiative, "Creating a More Perfect Union" in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. They propose that three of our four local Leagues (Los Alamos is not participating) have civic conversations around the state to reach out to rural communities where we do not have a presence. The idea is to recruit people to have these conversations about our fraying democracy. This will be a "train the trainer" event focusing on difficult topics such as mutual respect and finding common ground. Through this grant, it is hoped that communities will become more engaged. Christa Slaton, who spoke at the convention, has already done a lot work in this area and the grant money will be used to fund her and other facilitators. The grant time frame is October 2021 to September 2022.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

The next board meeting is scheduled for September 11, 2021. It will hopefully be held in person in Albuquerque with an option of participation via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (July 21, 2021)

Edited by Barbara Calef (July 22, 2021)