**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2021**

**LWVCNM OFFICE and 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 (via Zoom)

Judy Williams, Past President (via Zoom)

Kathy Brook, Program (via Zoom)

Meredith Machen, Education/Immigration/Special Projects (via Zoom)

Akkana Peck, Webmaster (via Zoom)

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 (via Zoom)

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

Jody Larson, Archives (via Zoom)

Rebecca Álvarez, JEDI (via Zoom)

Bobbi Riedel, Women's Issues

Renny Ashleman, Voting and Elections (via Zoom)

**CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**

Hannah called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their position with the LWVNM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Judy and Dick each proposed revisions to the agenda. Kathy moved that the amended agenda be approved and Meredith seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Dick moved that the 2021 Convention minutes be approved and Rebecca Á. seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Bobbi moved that the July 17, 2021, board meeting minutes be approved and Barbara seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Hannah commented on today being the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon. The effects of those attacks were enormous and are still with us today. In a way, the terrorists were successful. Our country has seen an erosion of women's rights and our civil liberties, economic recessions, and fear and division in our country. Hannah is proud to be a member of an organization like ours that does its best to be nonpartisan, to bring voters to the political stage, and fight for the rights of women.

Hannah also noted her sadness in losing board member Diane Goldfarb, who is moving to Maryland. She asked that we provide her a gift card as our thanks for her service. Judy moved that we provide a $150 gift card to a fine dining venue to be determined, and Susan seconded the motion. Rebecca Á. then moved that the funds not come from the League but instead from our personal funds. Judy amended her motion to reflect that the funds will come from board donations, and Susan again seconded this motion. Suzanne then suggested that we issue the funds from the League but accept our donations to repay the League, and this was acceptable to the group. All voted in favor of Judy's amended motion. Rebecca Á. asked for a newspaper article or something similar explaining what we have decided. Suzanne, Judy, and Meredith all responded that there is precedent in making such a gift, and an explanation is not necessary.

Hannah received an email message from Kristina Flanagan, a member of the Santa Fe League and a member of the board of the Santa Fe Opera. The Opera wants to partner with the League on voters' rights and education. In the fall of 2022, the Opera is putting on a new opera based on the life of Fannie Lou Hamer, a civil rights activist. They will be happy to work with us in any way they can, including going into schools and sending singers to events in the Santa Fe catchment area. The timing of these events is not yet known but Hannah would like brainstorming to occur between the Opera and the local Leagues.

Hannah recently enjoyed lunch with Barbara and Becky in Los Alamos and toured the suffrage history exhibit at the Mesa Public Library. Hannah hopes that the exhibit will be shown at New Mexico Highlands University, and she encouraged the other local Leagues to set up at least part of this exhibit in their own communities. Susan said that the Santa Fe League is coordinating a caravan to see the exhibit, followed by lunch in Los Alamos.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne presented the Treasurer's Report showing an ending balance of $29,579.31. The lawyer engaged to set up a 501(c)(3) corporation was paid $2,750. We received the $45,000 grant from the Thornburg Foundation for Vote411 and redistricting activities. These funds are being held by LWVSFC as fiscal agent pending our successful application for 501(c)(3) filing status.

Suzanne also said that we have our general liability insurance policy with State Farm and that agency needs many details regarding the lease entered into by CNM. Janet suggested Suzanne discuss with Karen Wentworth.

**ACTION REPORT**

Dick reported that LWVNM received a $10,000 grant from the Albuquerque Community Foundation to be used through December 31, 2021, for additional redistricting work by our consultant. The first round of the Citizens Redistricting Committee public meetings is now complete, and Dick was pleased to report that the Native American communities, including the Navajo Nation and All-Pueblo Governors Council, were heavily engaged in the process. The CRC will present their proposed maps on September 16, to be followed by a second round of public meetings. CRC proposed maps will be submitted to the Legislature on October 15. The redistricting special session is scheduled for December 1, but it may happen as early as November.

Dick also presented the LWVNM 2022 Action Calendar. Events include the estimated start of the redistricting special session (December 1 or earlier); the advocacy workshop focusing on the budget process (December 11); virtual legislative preparation (January 13); the legislative reception honoring Justice Chavez (February 2); and League Day at the New Mexico Land Office (February 3). The location of the legislative reception is still to be determined. Judy will call Rio Chama again to see if they will take our reservation. The 2022 Legislative Session dates are January 4 to February 17, 2022.

Dick said that the legislators do not want to work on any budget issues but instead will focus on one-time expenditures for the more than $8 billion dollar surplus. In the past, such a surplus would have been used to provide tax relief for businesses, but in this session he would expect pushback on that. The Legislature may look at investing in broadband, but they will likely build up reserves. The Legislature knows it also has to address the financial disparity issues brought up by the Yazzie-Martinez court order. Dick anticipates money going into the Permanent Fund and making permanent the temporary voting statutes from the last session based on COVID.

Some legislators want a constitutional amendment creating an independent redistricting committee, but others are apprehensive about doing this during a 30-day session. Dick prefers waiting for the 60-day session in 2023. Those pushing for 2022 are those who think there is momentum on the issues, and it could work if the Legislature ignores the CRC recommendations. In any event, two strong sponsors will be needed to get a hearing scheduled before we can mobilize people around it.

Renny reported that the meetings he has been participating in concern what the coalition is going to work on. That remains wide open and what the legislators will support is an unknown. He expects one or more omnibus spending bills that will address everything you can think of, but it is too early to tell what will be presented and what the League will support.

Judy said that the Legislative Modernization Committee wants to do a public relations campaign to promote constitutional amendments to pay legislators. They will also advocate for paid staff. The New Mexico Ethics Commission, which has been suggested as the appropriate body to set legislative salaries, would like a guaranteed source of funding so they are not punished during the budget process. There has also been talk of having the Supreme Court set legislative salaries.

Bobbi asked that we support investment in child care centers and this was supported by Meredith. Dick responded that the League typically does not weigh in on how surplus money should be spent, but instead our focus is on revenue. Bobbi also suggested we support unionizing child care providers but Dick does not think the LWVUS has a position on unions. Rebecca Á. asked what Native American groups support a constitutional amendment on redistricting. Dick responded that the Navajo Nation in Arizona supported such an amendment, but he does not know what the position of the Pueblos will be.

Dick suggested that the League could use an "action memorial" to prompt the Legislature to act on an issue like child care centers. He will write up a summary of such a memorial and Bobbi will bring the topic to the Action Committee.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Janet had nothing new to report other than to note that she has a public address system in her garage for our use. Hannah noted that Donna Sandoval, from CNM, and Jamie Aranda, a Santa Fe League member, have agreed to work on social media.

**WEBSITE and DOCUMENT STORAGE**

Hannah thanked Akkana, Susan, Janet, and Sandra West for redesigning our website. She described it as accessible and loaded with information. Akkana added that it may contain too much information and she is seeking our feedback. She solicited more pictures. In response to a question from Susan, Akkana said we will not have document storage on our website and that is expected through a document storage site such as Drop Box. That is not her area of expertise.

**PROGRAM**

Kathy was thanked for the comparison work she did between our current positions and the LWVC Criminal Justice Position. She asked the California League for more background materials, and they sent a suggested reading list, definitions of terms related to criminal justice, and advice on appropriate language related to this topic. They did not outline what they did in the way of a study. Kathy understands that Los Alamos and CNM plan to look at the position more closely before weighing in. Rebecca Á. said the California position appears to be well thought out in many ways, but is lacking with respect to issues surrounding police unions. These issues are typically adjudicated at the city or county level. Karen D. brought up her experience with Albuquerque and noted that unions get involved with complaints because the reviews are often not handled in a timely matter due to staffing issues. Before the meeting via email, Barbara asked that we not discuss this issue until local Leagues have had an opportunity to review the position. Judy added that it is better to have a general position rather than one with such detail, and Barbara agreed. Kathy noted that our existing positions do not make clear what our goals are, whereas the California position puts the goals up front. In response to a comment from Meredith, Judy said that we can concur with all or part of the position, but we cannot add to it without a study. This topic will be explored in more detail at a future meeting.

**BYLAWS and POLICIES**

Barbara reported briefly on publicizing non-League events, which was brought up at the Convention. She worked with Hannah in developing the following policy: "The LWVNM may publicize the events of other organizations, as long as there is no encouragement to donate; the goal of the events is to educate the public, to give input, and/or to hold decision makers accountable; the events are strictly limited to advocacy on issues that the League supports and/or education of the public; the organization is strictly nonpartisan; and the decision is approved by the Executive Committee of the Board of LWVNM. Dick moved that we adopt this policy, and Barbara seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Barbara and Hannah also worked on amending our policy on Advocacy at the State Legislature, and provided new language dealing with Advocating for Other Organizations and Committee Amendments. Meredith suggested minor language changes to the existing policy. Dick asked that Action Chair or President be added, as well as the words "and approved" under the section on amendments. Judy suggested that the word "substantive" be added. Susan expressed concern that the person assigned to speak on the bill would not necessarily be able to reach Dick, Hannah, or the Action Committee and would, therefore, not be able to speak to the bill. Renny agreed with Judy and Susan and added that we should trust the speaker’s discretion at least to a certain extent. Because of these suggestions, Hannah decided that we would postpone further discussion until November.

**JEDI**

Rebecca Á. reported that JEDI has developed a recruitment/research questionnaire for potential university student members. Brittany Dutton-Leyda and Donna Sandoval will pilot the questionnaire at a voter registration event for law school students, in partnership with the UNM ACLU, on the UNM Albuquerque campus on September 30. JEDI also plans to circulate a survey to League members on DEI issues and she asked for input on timing this survey to maximize the response rate. JEDI also is discussing developing a state-level mentorship program with protocols designed to support DEI. JEDI members met with Hannah and Dick for training on how to become more actively involved with policy work within the League.

Hannah suggested that the timing of the survey for League members would be best after the election and before pre-filing. Dick suggested they utilize the survey function through Constant Contact. When it was determined that the subscription will soon expire, Bobbi moved that we renew our subscription and Barbara seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Rebecca also requested that LWVNM join the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women (CSVANW). She explained that this group includes every tribe in New Mexico along with other organizations, and our joining would show that we are committed to supporting our Native allies. We would pay $250 dues and would not be a voting member. Dick expressed concern about participating in advocacy for change within the tribes themselves, and Rebecca explained that since its inception the group has expanded into a policy advocacy organization. Dick does not want the perception that we are trying to tell the tribes what to do. Rebecca said we were invited to join this group, and they want us to help with advocacy at the Legislature. She would be happy to be our liaison to this group. Susan asked for more time to review the group. Eileen, Judy, and Becky were all supportive of our joining this important organization. Judy moved that we join CSVANW, and Meredith seconded this motion. Barbara added an amendment that we join the organization and pay the $250 dues. The amendment was accepted, and all voted in favor.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Judy briefly reported that the four local Leagues are using Vote411 for the November election, and most invitations have been sent out. Judy also received public relations materials from the LWVUS Vote411 coordinator. Vote411 should be ready by late September.

**SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Meredith had little to report on the grant from the New Mexico Humanities Council. It is expected that $50,000 will be made available by October 1. Hannah is working with the Secretary of State on the trademark for this project, "New Mexico Listens." She noted that LWVNM will hold the trademark even though it is three of the local Leagues that are going to be involved. The cost of this trademark is $50. Bobbi moved that we approve this expenditure and Susan seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Hannah reported on the proposed Education Fund. We have hired a lawyer and sent in the filing fee and paperwork to the Secretary of State, and she anticipates receiving nonprofit status fairly soon. The next step will be the Internal Revenue Service. It was decided that a small board is best for this. The Education Fund board is currently made up of Hannah, Suzanne, and Kim Sorensen.

**SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL**

Karen D. reported on SNF storage and disposal issues. Holtec must respond to 69 inadequacies in the Nuclear Safety Analysis before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission can issue a construction license. Once done, it is anticipated that spent fuel storage operations will begin in 2024. Karen added that both Holtec and ISP, both private corporations, will be needed for current and future storage. Karen also noted that Texas just put a ban on the storage of high-level defense waste, but the Texas bill does not ban commercial/civilian waste. Karen and Bobbi then engaged in a discussion of the unlikely event of WIPP being used for the storage of defense waste.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Susan gave credit to Akkana for creating our new membership page on the website. She hopes we all will take a closer look and let us know what we think. Susan also reminded the group that we have all been invited to a Zoom presentation by Stanford Law professor and Nambé Pueblo member Elizabeth Reese. This program will take place on September 17 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Susan added that the invitation to this program reached as far as Illinois thanks to Instagram. Meredith will send a link to the LWV presidents list. Because we are limited to 100 participants, Susan will ask the speaker if the program can be recorded.

**STUDIES**

Suzanne had nothing to report on the Judicial Selection Study, which is still on hold due to COVID.

Rebecca Á. reported on the Tribal Law Study. The participants have thus far interviewed six tribal leaders, and reports on these interviews are coming along nicely. Their plan is to assemble a study guide for dissemination to local Leagues in advance of scheduling consensus meetings.

**VOTING and ELECTIONS**

In addition to what Renny reported earlier, he advised the group that America Votes recently asked him and Judy if we need money for voter outreach projects. He had no idea how much we could use, but suggested that we could ask for money to translate Vote411 into more languages and to expand it for tribal governments. Judy added that money could be used for radio public service announcements promoting voting in the tribal areas. It was suggested that Amber Carrillo, the executive director of the All Pueblo Council of Governors, could suggest radio stations used by the Native community. Renny and Judy will present more details, as they become available, to the Executive Committee.

**WOMEN'S ISSUES**

Bobbi plans to put out a call for brainstorming on substantive things the LWVNM wants to cover. Her particular area of interest is regarding care issues, including child care, which frequently falls to women.

Bobbi reported that California recently passed a law making "stealthing" a sex crime. This is the non-consensual removal of a condom during sexual intercourse. Victims are potentially exposed to sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies. Bobbi said that this is a large issue affecting 10 percent of all women. She maintains that LWVNM should be joining women's rights organizations to advocate on this issue. Akkana and Rebecca Á. noted that LWVNM appears to be silent on sex crimes, and Rebecca Á. added that LWVUS has no position. Judy suggested we see if any other state Leagues has a broad position on sex crimes. Bobbi and Rebecca Á. will research this further. If there are no adequate positions, a study would be needed.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Barbara reported that the deadline for La Palabra articles is September 20.

The next board meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2021, in either Socorro or Los Alamos, with an option of participation via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (September 16, 2021)

Edited by Barbara Calef (September 19, 2021)