**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**JULY 16, 2022**

**6739 Academy Road**

**Albuquerque, NM and VIA ZOOM**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Hannah Burling, President

Kathy Brook, First Vice President/LWVSNM Co-President/Program

Barbara Calef, Second Vice President and LWVLA Co-President (via Zoom)

Dick Mason, Action Chair

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Suzanne Ronneau, Treasurer

Judy Williams, Past President/Voter Services

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

Karen Douglas, LWVCNM Co-President and Spent Nuclear Fuel

Eileen VanWie, LWVSNM Co-President (via Zoom)

Becky Shankland, LWVLA Co-President (via Zoom)

Janet Blair, Communications

Jody Larson, Archivist (via Zoom)

Rebecca Álvarez, JEDI (via Zoom)

Ann LePage, Reproductive Rights (via Zoom)

**GUESTS:** Starlyn Brown and Linda Miller

**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 amended the agenda to replace Akkana Peck’s name with Dick Mason’s under the introduction of Ann LePage. Kathy moved that the amended agenda be approved, and Meredith seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Dick moved to approve the April 30, 2022, Council minutes and Kathy seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Dick moved to approve the April 30, 2022, board meeting minutes and Karen seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Hannah reported on the LWVUS Convention which was recently held in Denver. She described the event as the best she has attended. There were exciting caucuses and workshops, and all attendees were inspired by new ideas. A change in the bylaws regarding PMP passed. Starting no earlier than January 2024, member dues will be split between LWVUS, the state, and local Leagues. The evening activities were cancelled following the SCOTUS decision overturning Roe v. Wade and delegates instead marched on the state capital.

Recently, Hannah, Dick, and Karen Wentworth met with representatives from Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) regarding the suit filed by three New Mexico residents attempting to have Otero County Commissioner Couy Griffin removed from office under Section 3 of the 14th Amendment. This provision reads: *“No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil, or military, under the United States, or under any State who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a members of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof…”* Hannah communicated with the LWVUS litigation department about signing on with this suit, but she was told “no” on the grounds that LWV does not single out any member of Congress. The Executive Committee of LWVNM has discussed whether Hannah should return to LWVUS because Griffin is not a member of Congress, and he should be removed from office based on his participation in the January 6 Insurrection. Hannah clarified that, if permitted, LWVNM would be signing on an Amicus brief, and we would need a volunteer lawyer. The discussion was entirely positive, and Hannah will return to LWVUS on this issue.

Directions to the Board following our recent Council included both what we do well and what we should do more of. What we do well included electronic meetings, Vote411, and our redistricting efforts. Meredith will submit details of her appreciation of our Vote411 efforts for inclusion in the minutes. Suggestions regarding what we should do more of as a League included online outreach, spearheading the development of local climate action plans, statewide recognition of who we are, working more with coalitions, respectful public discourse, more focus on voters and elections, and expanding our expertise in election reform.

For those who send reports to Hannah for inclusion in the board packet, Hannah asked that we do not lead with LWVNM because she must title them so that they are accepted by Akkana’s program.

Hannah learned that Leagues in Wisconsin and Texas sent out election surveys on social media about registration and voting experiences. She suggested that such a project, including photos and individual stories, could enhance our fundraising efforts and it may be something Voter Services may want to pursue in the future.

Our resolution on the non-partisan election of election officials was rejected by Convention delegates because it did not include enough language, references, or resources.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne presented the Treasurer's Report showing an ending balance of $38,768.82. The report reflects a $100 donation from Stuart Bluestone in memory of Kay Grotbeck and $100 from Hannah, which stemmed from an honorarium she received for training she conducted.

Suzanne noted that the budget for this years’ Convention was $2,400, but the registration fees paid were far lower. She asked if the expenses incurred by the delegates should be reimbursed. Both Hannah and Meredith declined any reimbursement and Kathy, who attended virtually, did not incur any expenses.

Meredith suggested that in the future delegates should be supported more financially, and Becky agreed. Becky suggested that the expenses incurred by delegates for travel and the like be made part of the budget. Meredith then moved that $800 be allotted for each LWVNM delegate to the LWVUS Convention and Becky seconded this motion. Because some locations, such as Washington D.C., would be much more expensive that others, it was suggested that $800 may not be sufficient. Judy asked that a dollar amount not be specified and instead it become part of the budget process. Meredith subsequently withdrew her motion. Dick then moved that expenses for the LWVUS Convention beyond registration fees be considered in the budget process. Karen seconded this motion, and all voted in favor.

**INTRODUCTION OF ANN LePAGE**

Following the resignation of Bobbi Riedel, Dick put out a call for her replacement on Constant Contact. Ann LePage, League member in Los Alamos, answered the call. Ann would like to focus her efforts on Reproductive Rights, as opposed to Women’s Issues in general. Ann introduced herself and noted that this is a major issue for her, both personally and politically. She is bringing herself up to speed on the issue and has a decent idea of major issues we will want to focus on.

Dick moved that Ann be appointed as Director of Reproductive Rights and Barbara seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**ACTION REPORT**

According to Dick’s written report, the Action tax subcommittee is made up of Laura West, Karen Wentworth, Kathy, and Dick. This will be an issue in 2023. This subcommittee attended the state’s Revenue and Stabilization and Tax Policy (RSTP) Committee meeting in early July. RSTP received an overview of tax policy in New Mexico. The Chair of RSTP, Christine Chandler, is a League member in Los Alamos and has agreed to meet with our subcommittee on July 28. She will also discuss the anti-donation clause constitutional amendment.

Representative Figueroa will sponsor a constitutional amendment to create an Independent Redistricting Commission, which will also be supported by the New Mexico First Redistricting Task Force. A survey on this issue went out to New Mexico House and Senate candidates. Thus far the response has been positive. A short animation on redistricting will be launched in late July and presented to a joint meeting of the Senate Rules Committee and the interim Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee. Hannah said that this public service announcement will probably be posted on social media and our website. Senator McKenna will try and get county redistricting on the interim Indian Affairs Committee. Senator McKenna will also pursue a funding bill to study redistricting affecting county, municipal, and school board elections. Dick suggested that this is an issue LWVNM may want to take on. Hannah asked that the Action Committee discuss this and bring it to the board.

Regarding Voting and Elections, a joint meeting of the Senate Rules Committee and the interim Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee will discuss election and voting legislation. On a positive note, Dick expects separate bills rather than the omnibus bills seen in 2022. Furthermore, Heather Balas is working on an expanded oath for election officials. Dick thinks we should be looking at the Voting Rights Act and other rights that might be affected unfavorably by SCOTUS rulings.

Hannah noted that the Action Committee has agreed to move all communications to Outreach Circle. There will be an explanatory meeting on August 23 at 5:00 p.m., via Zoom.

**MODERNIZING THE LEGISLATURE**

According to Judy’s report, the University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research is conducting research on the issue of modernizing the legislature, including compensation. Common Cause is concerned that the idea of paying legislators has not polled well in the past, and they are proposing a new poll this fall. Research and Polling, Inc., has proposed conducting a survey of 400 to 500 people, which would cost between $25,000 and $30,000. Common Cause is looking for funding and several organizations in the coalition have pledged between $1,000 and $2,000. Judy suggested that LWVNM pledge $1,000 which would make us a legitimate partner in this coalition. Hannah suggested that the unspent funds from the LWVUS Convention be spent on this effort. Barbara moved that we donate $1,000 to support this poll and Dick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**EDUCATION**

Meredith submitted a comprehensive draft report on the LWVNM comments on the Martinez-Yazzie action plan. Her report noted that New Mexico has taken significant steps toward ensuring that our public education programs adequately prepare students for successful lives and careers, including increasing funding, improving fiscal transparency, and responsible management. The action plan is both comprehensive and ambitious and covers innovative and proven practices from early childhood through higher education. LWVNM comments focus on improving preK-12 programs, especially for students who are economically disadvantaged, Native American, English learners, and differently-abled. Long term results of implementing this action plan will include evidence of strong student growth and empowerment demonstrated through significantly increasing student academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college completion. Meredith’s report covers highlights of the action plan as well as suggestions and questions. These issues will be addressed by the Action Committee. In the meantime, however, Meredith will draft an editorial on behalf of LWVNM.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Janet provided an update on the video we are producing explaining where your vote goes, and how your vote is counted. Thus far, the audio track has been cut and the video has been shot. She expects a preliminary video sometime next week. So far, we have spent $1,400 which is roughly half of the amount budgeted. When the video is complete, it will be posted on social media and YouTube. A thank you to Augusta Myers will be added.

Hannah and Akkana have discussed account security. It has been decided that all usernames and passwords are to be sent to Hannah in a safe manner and they will be shared between Hannah, Akkana, and Jody. Such accounts include, but are not limited to, social media, bank accounts, and Zoom.

**PROGRAM**

According to Kathy’s report, at the LWVUS Convention in June, all existing national positions were reaffirmed as was the continued focus on the Campaign to Make Democracy Work (CMDW). The statement concerning CMDW was amended by the Convention to include election of the President by popular vote, specifically referencing the National Vote Interstate Compact and the abolishment of the electoral college through a constitutional amendment. A motion passed adding the Equal Rights Amendment to the LWVUS Program so that resources can be used to accomplish its passage and further the League’s mission. The Convention voted to concur with the LWVCA position on criminal justice, the LWVNY update of the health care position, and LWVCT position on digital equity. (The digital equity position was not recommended by the LWVUS board.)

Barbara reported that the subcommittee updating our position on criminal justice is making great progress, and they would like to bring it to the board in September.

**GOVERNANCE**

Hannah presented the LWVTX guidelines for social media which she previously sent out via email. While the words “without approval” were unpopular, Hannah believes the guidelines provide enough protection for the League. She maintains that we need such guidelines now that the Ed Fund is in place. Meredith moved that we approve these guidelines and Dick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The LWVNM policy on Conflict of Interest was also discussed. It appears from our board handbook that this policy needs to be adopted yearly and Barbara added that this stems from our 501(c)(3) status. Hannah will email the policy with a signature page for everyone to sign and return.

**BOARD ADMINISTRATION**

Kathy provided a draft of the Handbook for Board Directors that was based largely on a handbook created by LWVTX. The most recent version incorporates comments submitted following the issuance of her first draft. Meredith moved to adopt this version of the handbook and Dick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**ED FUND UPDATE**

Hannah reported that we are now a 501(c)(3) organization. The Ed Fund will further the education functions of LWVNM and allow for fundraising. Hannah noted that the Ed Fund board needs more members and Judy added that someone involved in Voter Services should be included. Akkana is working on a page for our website that will include an option for making donations.

Hannah sent fundraising letters to Thornburg and LANL Community Partners. She has drafted a letter to send to local unions, but it will be rewritten with input from Heather Balas. Hannah would like extra funds in order to print 15,000 hard copies of the Native American Voter Guide for distribution, including to all House and Senate legislators. She is being careful not to conflict with the local Leagues in fundraising efforts. Rebecca Á noted that she may have a donor for the Native American Voter Guide project.

**IMMIGRATION**

Meredith’s written report noted that delegates to the LWVUS Convention overwhelmingly approved the following resolution: *“Whereas the League of Women Voters has had a long-standing immigration position since 2008 and a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), be it resolved that LWVUS actively advocates and supports Immigration Reform at all levels of LWV.”* Meredith maintains that the resolution elevates immigration advocacy into the Making Democracy Work campaign from its lower status as an “other priority.”

Meredith invites any League member to join the national discussion on immigration reform. She also would like to adopt through concurrence the SNM statements on immigration reform. Hannah asked Meredith to talk to Kathy about this in advance of our meeting in September.

**JEDI**

Rebecca Á reported that the JEDI committee has identified the need for a mentorship program in order to attract younger members to the League. With help from Eileen, the JEDI committee has created a draft for the Mentorship Program. Hannah echoed the need for such a program because the League can be an overwhelming experience. Eileen noted that she did not realize how valuable such a program could be and added that the draft needs further refinement. Eventually it will be a tool that can be used by the local Leagues as well. Dick suggested that this could be used to create ways to get more people to participate and allow for easy entry into the League by having duties divided into increments (e.g., one hour data entry). Barbara said that this program is a great idea but does not need to be limited to younger or more diverse members. She is happy to work with Eileen and Rebecca Á in revising this document further. At Rebecca Á’s request, Hannah authorized her to send this draft document to a local League in Hawaii which requested a copy.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

A League member requested that Hannah include a Land Acknowledgment as part of our board meetings, and she asked the group if this was something we think should be done. Becky said that she would not support a statement at the beginning of every board meeting because our actions are more important. Eileen said that SNM does include such a statement which includes a description of the actions they take in support of the issue. Rebecca Á said that most such statements include the tribes/peoples whose land was taken but suggested that an action statement reminding us that we are on land that was taken may be more meaningful. Barbara is opposed to such a statement and will forward an article written on the subject which describes why such a statement is unimportant. Like Becky, Barbara maintains that actions speak louder than words. Hannah thinks this should be dealt with by the Action Committee and Dick suggested a simple statement that land acknowledgement is considered in all things the League does. Rebecca Á offered to bring this to the JEDI team at its next meeting to draft appropriate language. Barbara will review the language JEDI proposes. Hannah asked that no motion be made until the wording is finalized.

**NM LISTENS**

According to Meredith’s report, the NM Listens project received a yearlong grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities under the initiative, A More Perfect Union. By the time the grant ends on September 30, 2022, the League will have spent close to $24,000 on honoraria, room rentals, videotaping, editing, and so forth. The rest of the $50,000 grant will go to the Isleta Pueblo to expand educational efforts building awareness about voting rights and voter engagement.

Meredith said that there is a lot of momentum from this project, and she wants it to continue after the grant is over. Eileen added that the project led them to reach out to groups that we have not worked with in the past (e.g., Tortugas Pueblo and high school government classes). Meredith and Eileen would like this project to be considered a LWVNM project rather than a project of the three local Leagues so far. Dick said that we would need a proposal to consider. It should include the plan, why it is important, and what costs are involved. Hannah added that such a proposal should be brief and provide clarity and definition. The proposal can be considered at our September board meeting.

**SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL**

Karen’s report indicates that the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Holtec consolidated interim storage facility (CISF) was planned for July 2022 with the expected Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) license to be issued in the fall of 2022. Holtec responses for additional information were delayed, however, and the license issuance may be delayed until 2023.

The LWVPA presented a resolution during the LWVUS Convention revising the current LWVUS position to recognize that nuclear energy is a clean energy source providing 20 percent of domestic energy and 56 percent of clean power in the United States. The LWVUS Resolutions Committee advised LWVPA that a study would be required. Karen will be a participant in this study and a final study proposal is expected in August. Hannah added that at Convention the language “clean energy” was shot down but many Leagues were in favor of studying the issue.

**STUDIES UPDATE**

Suzanne had no updates regarding the Judicial Selection study.

Rebecca Á reported that the Tribal Law study has restarted with most of the key figures agreeing to continue through next year. Donna Sandoval will be unable to continue, but Jody Larson has agreed to help guide the process. Rebecca Á is hoping to provide draft consensus questions for our September board meeting. Barbara suggested that, after the questions have been finalized, each local League be contacted about when a presentation could be made. Barbara added that, if the committee wants a position by our April 2023 Convention, consensus meetings should be completed by the end of January 2023. Hannah added that such meetings could be held either in person or virtually.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Judy’s report indicates that the Vote411 committee is working on a timeline for sending questions to candidates and publishing the website for the general election. SNM plans to ask new questions on reproductive rights and gun safety and the other local Leagues agree this is timely. Judy would like all local Leagues, and LWVNM, to use the same wording for those questions. Dick agreed that a question on reproductive rights should be asked, because it has been our priority, but he opposed a question on gun safety. Janet disagreed with Dick on the gun safety question. The committee is working to create neutral language for the questions. Regarding the issue of gun safety, someone suggested the question, “Do you support an assault rifle ban?” and another proposal was, “What new gun safety laws would you support?” A board vote will be required, but because of the timelines it will need to be done electronically.

Hannah reported that we applied for a $25,000 grant from LWVUS for our get out the vote (GOTV) efforts. We only received $15,000, so she will continue to solicit for the rest of the funds. Our GOTV efforts will include the distribution of materials, registrar training and mentoring, a tutorial on how to register to vote, absentee voting, public service announcements, ways to combat voter intimidation, help lines, and printing the Native American Voter Guide to distribute in all counties with a significant Native American population.

A GOTV meeting will be held on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. (a Constant Contact invitation has already been sent). Multiple organizations have been invited with the hope of developing organizational relationships rather than duplicating efforts. The meeting will address data collection.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

CNM will be featured on Searchlight New Mexico on the topic of disinformation.

Barbara asked for summaries from the Convention workshops.

Hannah said that the Alliance for Just Money requested delegates to attend a caucus and she has the recording. Kathy, who is an economist, will view the recording.

Bobbi Riedel, Susan Haase, and Renny Ashleman all recently resigned from the board for personal reasons. Ann will be the new Director of Reproductive Rights, but Women’s Issues remains unfilled. Portfolio positions vacated by Susan and Renny, Membership and Events and Voting and Elections, also remain unfilled. Dick will be the interim director of Voting and Elections until Renny’s replacement is found.

The deadline for *La Palabra* is July 23, 2022.

The next board meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2022, and it will be held in Los Alamos and via Zoom. Kathy will preside.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (July 27, 2022)

Edited by Barbara Calef (July 27, 2022)