**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**NOVEMBER 19, 2022**

**SOCORRO PUBLIC LIBRARY and VIA ZOOM**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Hannah Burling, President and apprentice Action Chair

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

Barbara Calef, Second Vice President and LWVLA Co-President

Dick Mason, Action Chair and acting Voting and Elections Chair

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Judy Williams, Past President/Voter Services

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

Karen Douglas, LWVCNM Co-President and Spent Nuclear Fuel

Becky Shankland, LWVLA Co-President

Jody Larson, Archivist

Rebecca Álvarez, JEDI (via Zoom)

Ann LePage, Reproductive Rights (via Zoom)

Akkana Peck, Webmaster and apprentice Action Chair (via Zoom)

**CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**

Hannah called the meeting to order at 11:17 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their position with the LWVNM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The New Mexico Listens item was deleted from the agenda. Judy moved that the revised agenda be approved, and Jody seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Judy noted a minor correction to the September 24, 2022, minutes. Barbara moved to approve the corrected September 24, 2022, board meeting minutes and Karen seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Despite the chaos and fear that preceded the 2022 General Election, Hannah noted that it went well, and we had a successful social media campaign. Some challenges to the election results may be made. Fundraising for the Ed Fund will be very important in the coming year. Hannah and Dick have been scrambling for 501(c)(4) funding we can use for lobbying during the upcoming legislative session. Opportunities for future LWVUS grants include the 2023 Voter Registration Project, a New Citizens Voter Registration Project, and the Felon/Previously Incarcerated Voter Registration Project. Hannah will send out details of these grant possibilities to the local League presidents. She will also send out details of a webinar on United Nations elections observers.

Moving forward, we need to fill open board positions including Membership, Voter Services, and Fundraising. We also will need someone to draft our messages, whether that be through Constant Contact or Club Express. In order to stay relevant, we will need Fundraising and Communications groups made up of members from throughout the state. Hannah is hoping for sessions on these topics at our upcoming Convention. She also asks that each board member think of someone to replace us, as well as someone to maintain a “good ideas and resources” portfolio.

Hannah met with Khadija Ali Amghaiab, our legislative liaison with LWVUS, and requested 501(c)(4) funding. We need to summarize the priorities we approve today for submission to her. Hannah recently learned that several states have no lobbyists, and she has forwarded information from LWVNM for their review. Meredith mentioned that LWVUS uses legislative tracking software called “Quorum.” Hannah replied that she is very happy with the work Akkana is already doing in this area. Judy echoed Meredith and suggested that Quorum is professional and respected, and we should take advantage of it. Akkana agreed to research this further and report back at our January 2023 meeting.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Suzanne could not be present, but she submitted the Treasurer's Report via email. This report shows an ending balance of $32,642.41. The report reflects $2,173.50 in income and expenses totaling $16,832.90.

Judy would like to see the grant money received from the Thornburg Foundation, which is currently held by the Santa Fe League as our fiscal agent, transferred to the LWVNM Ed Fund. Dick thinks that a Memorandum of Understanding will be needed for this because the grant was made to LWVSFC.

**ACTION REPORT**

Because the 2023 Legislative Session is approaching, Akkana reported that we need to select our top three priorities. The Action Committee has selected the following priorities, in the order of preference:

Voting/Election Issues

Reproductive Rights

Taxes and Revenue Policy

Modernizing the Legislature

Ethics Legislation

Environment

Other Issues including nuclear waste and violent crime

Dick suggested that the board allow the Action Committee to select from these options. Judy had no issue with the priorities submitted. Hannah said that whatever decision is made, it needs to be done before our January board meeting.

Barbara moved that we not decide on the top three priorities until the first week of January 2023, because we must wait to see what bills are filed. Judy seconded this motion, and all voted in favor.

Hannah said that Action needs more people to go to the Roundhouse for lobbying efforts. Dick said that a Constant Contact message will be sent out asking for advocates.

Akkana added that the Action/Legislative Calendar was also submitted to the board in writing. Those important dates are as follows:

January 3 – Legislation can be early filed

January 7 – Advocacy Workshop

January 11 – Action Committee meeting

January 12 – LWVNM Legislative Prep

January 17 – Legislature convenes at noon

January 21 – LWVNM board meeting

February 15 – Legislative Reception

February 16 – League Day at the Legislature

March 4 – LWVNM board meeting

March 18 – Legislature adjourns at noon

Beginning on January 13 and continuing through March 19, the Action Committee will hold a zoom meeting every Friday at 6:00 p.m.

**COALITIONS REPORT**

Judy reported that LWVNM is part of several coalitions including, but not limited to, the Democracy Project, two Ethics Coalitions, Modernizing the Legislature, and the Hydrogen Working Group.

The Democracy Project coalition is hosted by New Mexico First and it works on messaging about the election, including how it is managed and how secure it is. PBS is also a member of this coalition and its director helped secure TV spots for our election videos.

Members of the Modernizing the Legislature coalition, which includes ten legislators, meet every two weeks to work on two constitutional amendments dealing with paying legislators, lengthening the session, and hiring more staff.

On November 21, 2022, the UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) will brief the Courts, Corrections, and Justice Committee on Modernizing the Legislature. During the public comment period after the presentation, Judy will speak on this issue on behalf of the League.

On December 1 from 1:00 to 4:00, New Mexico In Depth is hosting an event at the Santa Fe Farmer’s Market [according to the event description, it does not appear that it will be a hybrid event]. The first hour topic is Ethics with Jeremy Farris, executive director of New Mexico’s independent ethics commission. The second hour topic is Modernizing the Legislature with two legislators, a political science professor from UNM, and Judy Williams. The third hour topic is Money in Politics with the director of New Mexico Ethics Watch, the director of Common Cause, and a political science professor from UNM.

Judy noted that the two Ethics Coalitions, one convened by Common Cause and the other by Ethics Watch, are duplicative. Judy attends both as does Jeremy Farris. Farris’s three priorities are the Reporting Act (financial reporting for all officials), Campaign Financing, and Governmental Conduct Act.

**REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE**

If reproductive rights becomes one of our legislative priorities, the meetings Ann has been attending suggest that the regulation of Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPC) and the regulation of birth control pills (which some states want to restrict) may be our focus. A Crisis Pregnancy Center Workgroup Member Agreement and 2022-2023 Charter were sent out to various organizations by the Southwest Women’s Law Center. ProgressNow NM, a liberal and partisan group, provides access to the workgroup website. The partisan nature of ProgressNow NM may be an issue for LWVNM joining this coalition, according to Dick.

During a meeting with the Southwest Women’s Law Center, Ann learned that unbeknownst to her, Los Alamos has a Crisis Pregnancy Center – Hope Pregnancy Center. She was disturbed by this because her church has ties to Hope Pregnancy Center. She subsequently reviewed its website and concluded that it meets the definition of a CPC because it is non-medical, they do not provide abortions, and will not provide referrals for abortions. Unlike some CPCs however, Hope is honest about these details on its website. Ann is unhappy with the Southwest Women’s Law Center because it paints all CPCs with the same brush. Many CPCs are deceptive, but Hope is not.

Barbara subsequently moved that we not join this coalition but instead request to be kept abreast of their actions. Meredith seconded this motion, and all voted in favor.

**TAX and BUDGET**

According to Akkana’s Action Report, there has been discussion of changing the personal income tax rates to better separate different levels of income. We should guard against permanent changes to taxes that we might regret later. A lot of what the League will be doing is defensive, guarding against changes we disagree with. We support the child tax credit. We also have a position that allows us to support taxes that will achieve a socially desirable objective.

Kathy had nothing to add to Akkana’s summary.

**VOTING and ELECTIONS**

According to Dick’s report, three voting and elections bills are expected in the 2023 session – Protection of Election Administrators and Workers; Clarifying Restoration of Felon Voting Rights; and Technical Fixes to Voting and Election Rules. Dick recently learned that the Secretary of State has added the Native American Voting Rights Act to her list of priorities. Furthermore, Senator Pope will reintroduce a bill ensuring that a voter only needs to request an absentee ballot one time. Common Cause is not planning on putting forth a bill on Ranked Choice Voting.

Dick’s report also covered Redistricting. Representative Natalie Figueroa, who was reelected, was the lead sponsor on the 2022 House Joint Resolution to put the question of creating an Independent Redistricting Commission on the 2024 ballot. Representative Figueroa agreed to be the lead on this issue during the 2023 legislative session. According to the legislative calendar in Dick’s report, the draft of the joint resolution on redistricting is due on December 2 and early filing is on January 3. Fair Districts Day, part of League Day, is on February 16.

**WEBSITE and DOCUMENT STORAGE**

Akkana has not yet begun her review of Club Express. The trial period is for 60 days, and she wants to wait to begin her review when she has the time to fully utilize this trial period.

**PROGRAM**

Proposed Concurrence on Violence Prevention

At our last meeting, Meredith volunteered to research violence prevention positions of other Leagues. She submitted the LWVMN position on Violence Prevention and proposed that we concur with this position. Meredith noted that she has worked with a trauma-informed victim advocacy group. The Minnesota position includes an updated firearms position as well as a local League position on breaking the cycle of violence. Meredith moved that we concur with the LWVMN position on Violence Prevention and Rebecca À. seconded this motion.

Hannah questioned why we would need such a detailed position. The LWVNM and the LWVUS positions allow us to advocate broadly. Meredith responded that it is important to let people know what our values are. Dick suggested that we move this discussion to January because we have the flexibility we need already, and he added that the Minnesota position is both detailed and complex. Judy reviewed our current positions and does not see anything coming up in the 2023 legislative session that we cannot already advocate for, and she added that the details of our positions already demonstrate our values. Jody would have liked to see what other League positions are as well as a more in-depth background. Rebecca À. suggested that it is important to communicate to younger people and other organizations that this is something that is important to us. Whether or not we concur, it should be made clear on our website.

Three board members voted in favor and 10 voted against Meredith’s motion. Meredith then moved that LWVNM list the LWVUS position on violence prevention on our website and Becky seconded this motion. The LWVUS position reads as follows, *“The League of Women Voters of the United States supports violence prevention programs in all communities and action to support: public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence; the active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior; and the allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence.”* All voted in favor.

Meredith subsequently brought up the issue of firearms, noting that we only have the LWVUS position to rely on. She prefers the Minnesota position. Dick said we have our own position on gun safety. Taken together with the LWVUS position, we have the latitude to support anything we want. Jody noted that we also have a concurrence procedure and policy most recently revised in 2020. Based on this, it would be inappropriate for us to vote on this today because there is no rationale for emergency action.

Hannah ended the discussion by noting that our eyes have been opened to the need to have our website be clear, attractive, and educational.

Proposed Urgent Study on Nuclear Issues

Karen proposed that LWVNM undertake a study on nuclear issues for concurrence by other state Leagues during the 2024 LWVUS Convention.

The LWVPA presented a proposed Nuclear Issues Resolution during the 2022 LWVUS Convention to consider nuclear energy among climate change initiatives. This proposal referred to nuclear power as a “clean” energy source. The proposal was denied by the Resolution Committee, which said that a study would be needed. The bylaws of Pennsylvania, and several other states, do not allow for them to approve a study or even concur with another state League between state conventions. Even though New Mexico does not have a nuclear power plant, Karen maintains that if we want this issue pursued, we should take it upon ourselves to lead. Hannah added that this issue came up during a LWVUS board meeting and engendered a lot of discussion. Two main issues discussed were that nuclear power is a national issue rather than a state issue, and whether non-state members could participate in another state’s study. The goal is to have a new position brought to the LWVUS Convention in 2024 for concurrence. Hannah and Karen referred to it as a climate change emergency study.

Judy asked whether Arizona would be a participant because their Palo Verde nuclear power plant provides power to New Mexico. Hannah liked this angle, which supports the idea that nuclear power is an issue for New Mexico. Other state participants in our study, such as Pennsylvania and Arizona, should provide information only, and would not have voting rights. Dick reminded the group that if we are proposing a state study, it would need to be approved by the board in March and submitted to our members during the April 2023 Convention.

Karen said that her next steps are to present this study proposal to CNM for their February program planning meeting and to assemble a study group to bring the proposal to the board in March.

**GOVERNANCE**

Barbara said that she was disturbed during our last meeting that a proposal which required a vote was not received until the night before the meeting. Barbara maintains that any issue with actionable items should be submitted to the board well in advance of the meeting. Barbara then moved that the agenda and full text of actionable items be submitted to the board in advance and Akkana seconded this motion. The details of Barbara’s proposal were discussed in detail and the following language was voted upon: *“When a board meeting has been scheduled, the agenda must be sent out at least 72 hours before the scheduled board meeting. It must include the motion and the full text and background of all actionable items to be considered by the board. The agenda may be updated later in the week, but no vote will be taken on any item that was not in the original agenda.”* All voted in favor.

At our last meeting, the board approved a land acknowledgment statement drafted by JEDI. Barbara submitted alternative language but that was not received by everyone timely. Barbara subsequently did further research on the issue and submitted new language for the board to consider. Barbara moved that the new language she drafted replace the language which was approved at the last meeting. Ann seconded this motion.

Rebecca À. said that the language drafted by JEDI was done with care and included the participation of active younger members of JEDI. She is not in favor of changing the language. Prior to the vote on this motion, there was discussion of the terms “unceded” and “First Peoples” which Barbara removed or replaced in her draft.

Three board members voted in favor of Barbara’s motion, seven board members voted against Barbara’s proposal, and three board members abstained. The motion failed.

On October 17, 2022, the LWVNM was asked by the LWVUS to join the *amicus* brief in the case of Moore v. Harper before the Supreme Court of the United States. On this same date, Hannah submitted this matter to the board electronically along with the legal summary. Rebecca C. made the motion to join the brief, Meredith seconded the motion, and 16 board members voted yes. Our bylaws require a ratification of this electronic vote.

Judy moved to ratify the electronic vote and Dick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Due to confusion about the procedure for an electronic vote, Barbara will write a policy on emergency votes to submit to the board for consideration.

According to our bylaws, the nominating committee consists of five members, two of whom shall be members of the state board. The chair and two members, who shall not be members of the state board, shall be elected by the Convention. Nominations for these offices shall be made by the current nominating committee. The other members of the committee shall be appointed by the state board.

Two of the three current members of the nominating committee (Karen Wentworth and Rosmarie Frederickson) agreed to participate again. The third declined. Meredith and Dick agreed to participate as members of the state board. Hannah asked for the fifth member to come from Southern New Mexico. Kathy and Hannah will review the membership rolls to find this fifth member. Dick suggested that we seek participation from our membership via *La Palabra*, local League meetings, or Constant Contact.

**CONVENTION**

Barbara reported that the last Convention held in Los Alamos was at the Holiday Inn Express. This hotel now wants $600 per day to use their meeting rooms, up from the $200 per day they charged in 2019. The only way to reduce this charge to $200 per day is if we book 20 hotel rooms for two nights. Dick thinks this is unlikely. The hotel room charge was also increased from $99 per night to $119 per night. We will book the hotel rooms but pursue meeting rooms elsewhere.

The Friday night reception will be held at the home of Ellen Mills. There is also a concert that night that participants may wish to attend at their own expense. The Call to Convention will be published in *La Palabra*. Barbara asked for possible speakers for April 29 and April 30 to be submitted to her.

**ED FUND**

Due to the resignation of one member of the Ed Fund board, Rebecca C. was electronically approved to become a board member. Meredith was also approved. Hannah would like an attorney to join the board as well, and Mary Wilson was suggested.

Meredith asked for donations to be made from the board to New Mexico Listens. She was reminded that the board would need to approve this. It was also noted that we need to be very strict in our separation of 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) funds.

**JEDI**

Rebecca À. did not have enough new information to justify a written report. She noted that the mentorship program which was previously approved by the board will move forward in January.

Since our membership in the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women was approved by the board, Rebecca À. has served as our liaison. Rebecca C. agreed to email the group with the minutes from when we joined explaining why we are not listed on the coalition website. Hannah thinks it was the coalition’s decision. Rebecca À. will email the board with details concerning how much and when we owe our dues.

Akkana noted that our website does not include a list of the coalitions of which we are a member. This will be discussed at the next Action Committee meeting.

**SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL**

Karen reported that the Department of Energy (DOE) is offering $16 million in funding to provide resources to communities interested in learning more about consent-based siting, management of spent nuclear fuel, and interim storage siting considerations. Furthermore, Karen said that DOE is conducting public outreach to communities that may be willing to host consent-based storage of spent nuclear fuel. Karen added that this is still 20 years on the horizon.

**STUDIES UPDATE**

Rebecca Á. had no updates to the Tribal Law study. Suzanne was not present to provide an update to the Judicial Selection study.

**VOTER SERVICES**

Judy submitted a written report detailing the work of the Voter Services Committee during the recent election. Grants from the Thornburg Foundation and LWVUS enabled us to retain the services of a contact worker, Maia Pugh, who was invaluable to the effort. The Voter Guide and Vote411.org covered all races throughout the state. An additional grant from the Thornburg Foundation furthered our voter education efforts enabling us to print 15,000 Voter Guides for distribution to the 12 New Mexico counties with significant Native American populations. These guides were distributed with the help of volunteers who drove all over New Mexico. Additional grant funds were received, allowing us to create a 5-minute video on what happens to our ballots and related election security issues. This video was subsequently cut into 60-second segments for airing as Public Service Announcements (PSA). Hannah contacted 200 radio stations to place these PSAs.

Judy also reported on the statistical comparisons for Vote411.org between 2020 and 2022. A majority of users (55 percent) aged 18 to 44 liked the format. The bounce rate (those who initially logged onto the site but did not go further) was reported to be 43 percent in 2020 and 0.44 percent in 2022. Judy thinks this may be a mistake and she has asked for clarification.

Judy added that she will be stepping down from this position and we need a new Voter Services chair. Hannah hopes that we can secure the necessary funds to hire someone for this position.

**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 holding a general meeting on December 8 with Peter Madalena, Senior Voting Rights Coordinator for Sandoval County, Tribal Liaison Program, and Martin Aguilar, Native American Election Information Program Liaison for the Office of the Secretary of State. They will discuss Native American Voter Education and Outreach in New Mexico. At Hannah’s request, Karen will send the Zoom link to the board.

Los Alamos will have a new president in April (Felicia Orth). Barbara will remain on the LWVNM board, but Becky will be leaving us.

We gained eight new League members from Otero County.

PSAs were broadcast in English, Spanish, and Navajo.

Hannah received two responses from media outlets regarding our PSAs. An outlet in Otero County told her that they would be delighted to broadcast our message.

The deadline for *La Palabra* is December 8, 2022.

The next board meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2023, and it will be held in the conference room at 6739 Academy Road NE in Albuquerque, and via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (November 26, 2022)

Edited by Barbara Calef (November 27, 2022)