**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**JANUARY 21, 2023**

**6739 Academy Road NE, Albuquerque and via Zoom**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Hannah Burling, President and Action Co-Chair

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

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

Dick Mason, Action Chair and acting Voting and Elections Chair

Suzanne Ronneau, Treasurer

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary (via Zoom)

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

Eileen Van Wie, LWVSNM Co-President

Karen Douglas, LWVCNM Co-President and Spent Nuclear Fuel

Becky Shankland, LWVLA Co-President (via Zoom)

Janet Blair, Communications (via Zoom)

Akkana Peck, Webmaster and Action Co-Chair (via Zoom)

Jody Larson, Archivist (via Zoom)

Donna Sandoval, LWVCNM Co-President and Treasurer

Ann LePage, Reproductive Rights (via Zoom)

Akkana Peck, Webmaster and Action Co-Chair (via Zoom)

**CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**

Hannah called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m. All members introduced themselves and explained their position with the LWVNM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA and APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Meredith moved that the agenda be approved, and Karen seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Becky moved to approve the November 19, 2022, board meeting minutes and Karen seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Hannah was excited to report that the LWVNM and our Ed Fund have recently received donations to help fund our important work. Hannah wants state-wide Fundraising and Communications committees to develop through sessions held at our upcoming Convention. Both fundraising and using social media are time-consuming and encouraging League members to participate will help further our goals. Additionally, the 2023 Legislative Session has begun, and Hannah reported that we have a good lobbying team on the ground.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer's Report shows an ending balance of $34,700.72. The report reflects $2,717 in income and expenses totaling $658.69.

Suzanne reported that we have received the PMP from Southern New Mexico. In addition, we received a $10,000 grant from New Mexico Voices for Children which has been deposited into our Ed Fund. While these funds are not restricted, Dick said the funds should nominally be used for advocating for legislation supported by that organization including the Child Tax Credit.

Suzanne also noted that KTMN-FM, a radio station in Alamogordo, ran our Public Service Announcements 91 times during the election cycle. At a value of $10 per segment, the $910 in advertising value should be somehow included in a fundraising report. Hannah thought they could be considered donations in-kind, and Dick added that this shows community support for our Ed Fund. Meredith wondered if we should also calculate the numerous hours board members spend on League work and include the thousands of dollars of value in our fundraising reporting.

**ACTION REPORT**

Akkana reported that the Legislative Session has recently begun, and we are still waiting for key bills to be filed. Our top priorities are Voting and Elections, Reproductive Justice, Budget and Taxes, Legislative Modernization, and Ethics. We also have lobbyists working on secondary priorities including Education, Health Care, Criminal Justice, and the Environment. The Action Committee welcomes new lobbyists.

Dick added that the Native American Voting Rights Act and Felon Restoration of Voting Rights are going to be included in the larger New Mexico Voting Rights bill. The League supports this. Making Election Day a school holiday will also be pursued, but we do not have a position on that issue. HJR1, the Constitutional Amendment creating an Independent Redistricting Commission, has been filed. Polling shows that New Mexicans are in favor of this. Numerous people are lined up to testify in favor in addition to our subject matter experts. With the balance of the Thornburg Foundation grant ($5,000) and the funds recently received from New Mexico Voices for Children, we have adequate funding for lobbying on behalf of this bill.

The Legislative Reception is scheduled for the evening of February 15 at Rio Chama and Senator Bingaman will be the keynote speaker. League Day at the Legislature is set for February 16 at the State Land Office. Speakers will include Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard, Jeremy Farris, and Amber Wallin. Dick expects approximately 60 attendees, but he noted that some legislators may not be able to break away because the event is late in the session.

Hannah solicited volunteers to help set up and staff tables in the Roundhouse, including a table for the history of the League of Women Voters. Set up can begin at approximately 7:40 a.m. and staffing is needed between 8:00 a.m., and 3:00 p.m. Jody and Meredith offered to help, along with Hannah, Dick, Barbara, and Becky. An email will be sent to these volunteers with details on setup including the need for tables, chairs, location, and the like.

**WEBSITE and DOCUMENT STORAGE**

Janet had nothing of substance to report, but she asked for funding to purchase yard signs for Vote411 for the next election cycle.

Hannah noted that the photo on our website is of the 2018 board, and she asked if this could be updated. Janet will take care of this with photographs taken during our March board meeting.

Akkana said that her bill tracker is up and running, but it is not posted on our website because our hosting plan does not allow it. She is concerned if too many people access the tracker that it might not be able to keep up. However, it is open-source material, and she is fine if small numbers from our ally organizations use it.

Akkana has not been able to explore Club Express yet and now she will not be able to do it until the end of the Legislative Session.

Hannah needs those board members who have password to send her, in a safe manner, their user names and passwords. She will then share this information, also in a safe manner, with the First Vice President, Webmaster, and Archivist. Those board members who have passwords include Suzanne, Akkana, Hannah, Judy, and Janet. Maia Pugh and Kathleen Burke may also have passwords they will need to share with Hannah.

Hannah would like to see a “listserv” on our website on topics for discussion. Akkana also would like to see this, and she can set it up. Akkana prefers listservs that are not private (such as the Action listserv), but an administrator would be needed. Jody expressed concern that our non-partisan status could be compromised when partisan comments are made, and she maintains that we will need defined ground rules. Akkana assured the board that the subscription page would include the rules, which would include limiting discussion to non-partisan issues and no criticism of either a specific legislator or party. Furthermore, any questionable post can be removed. Hannah added that removing a post and banning the poster is enough to prove we are non-partisan. Akkana will set this up and Karen will send ground rule language drafted by CNM to Hannah for review by the Executive Committee.

**PROGRAM**

According to Kathy’s report, the Call for Convention appeared in the Winter 2023 *La Palabra*. Under the bylaws, “the boards of local Leagues, LWVNM committees, and member-at-large units may make recommendations for program including amendment of a state League position or adoption of a position by concurrence. Recommendations must be sent to the state board at least ten weeks prior to the Convention.” Because the Convention is scheduled for April 29-30, 2023, any suggestions for program must be submitted to Kathy by February 18, 2023.

A position on Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) was proposed to the 2019 LWVNM Convention but was not adopted by Convention delegates who felt that more information was needed. RCV was adopted by the City of Santa Fe in 2018 and in the City of Las Cruces in 2019. A statewide webinar on RCV was held for LWVNM members on August 31, 2022. Speakers included Mario Jimenez of Common Cause, who described his organization’s support of RCV, and Lonna Atkeson from Florida State University who reported on her research surveying voters who have used RCV.

The League of Women Voters of Vermont (LWVVT) has a position in support of RCV, as does LWVSNM. The LWVVT position reads as follows: “The League of Women Voters of Vermont (LWVVT) will support ranked choice voting for all statewide elections.” Kathy said we could either bring this issue to a consensus meeting in February or vote on it now as a board and then take it to Convention. Dick moved that we concur with the Vermont position on RCV, and Meredith seconded this motion. Barbara said that Dr. Atkeson’s research showed that only white, educated voters used RCV, but Hannah recalled that the research showed only that it didn’t increase voter participation. Eileen did not like Dr. Atkeson’s logic and she herself did not vote for all ten mayoral candidates during the last Las Cruces election. Out of those 13 board members present, 11 voted in favor, 1 voted no (Jody), and 1 abstained (Barbara). The motion passed and it will be taken to Convention for ratification. Dick noted that we can now support RCV if it comes up during this legislative session.

**GOVERNANCE**

Barbara proposed a board policy on emergency voting. Because it was inadvertently left off the agenda, the board cannot vote on it today. However, Barbara noted that during our most recent emergency vote via email, votes were cast before there was an opportunity for discussion. Barbara’s proposed policy reads as follows:

The president will contact the board, explaining the issue as fully as possible. She will inform them of the deadline and a proposed timeline. It should include time to ask questions, a motion, a second, a specified period for comments, and a period to vote. No motion will be accepted until the time for questions has expired. No vote will be taken until the comment period has expired.

Hannah wants to add headers for emergency votes via email and allow time for discussion. She will present this at the next board meeting.

**CONVENTION**

Barbara reported that the LWVLA report included in the board packet contains the information about the block of rooms reserved at the Holiday Inn Express, and she urged all delegates to Convention to reserve a room as early as possible. The deadline is March 29, 2023. Because the hotel was charging us too much to use their meeting rooms, the Convention will be held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. At Hannah’s request, sessions will include Fundraising and Communications. Any other areas of interest should be submitted to Barbara. The banquet will again be held at Pig and Fig. The Governor will be invited to be our speaker.

**ELECTORAL STANDARDIZATION**

Karen and Kerry Bass presented a proposed pilot project between LWVNM and ASQ Government Division Center for Electoral Quality and Integrity. The goal of this pilot project would be to implement ISO 54001, a quality management system for electoral organizations at all levels of government. According to the Power Point presentation, the International Standards Organization (ISO) includes 165 member countries and 23,574 International Standards and standards-type documents. Numerous sectors are standardized in terms of services, items, products, and processes.

The Center for Electoral Quality and Integrity, ASQ Government Division, would approve the LWVNM Electoral Plan and evaluate the electoral procedures pilot project. Draft audit checklists and certified quality auditors would be provided and LWV evaluators would be trained. Karen proposes that one of our local Leagues with a strong Voter Services chair and familiarity with county/municipal voting protocols should serve as the pilot. The goal would be to develop a general plan/manual for local electoral practices aligned with ISO 54001; verify with electoral officials that the plan is accurate; and develop specific procedures with detail sufficient to ensure the alignment with ISO 54001. The local League pilot would then compare project results for standardization/variation in respective local governments. The final goal would be to consider the value of ISO 54001 for concurrence by other Leagues.

Karen then ran through numerous sections of ISO 54001 describing key points and differences from ISO 9001 (basic standards). The proposal is for the pilot local League to ensure that its local entity is complying with these standards. The hope would be that the local government entity would use these standards to validate their adherence to the standards or where they may vary.

Jody and Barbara asked if Mr. Bass’s organization has inquired with any Secretary of State (SOS) to see if these standards have been adopted. Mr. Bass responded that no state has a certified standard for quality management and his organization has not had any interaction with the National Association of Secretaries of State. Barbara added that what is being proposed would entail an enormous amount of work. Hannah noted that LWVNM cannot mandate that a local League take this on, but the issue could be taken to each local League to see what interest there may be.

Because the list of standards Karen discussed was so lengthy, Barbara suggested that the list could be provided to the SOS who could then check off those standards they follow, and then see what standards remain. Suzanne said that it is not in the Voter Services chair’s purview to look at how elections are conducted. Hannah suggested that this project may be better suited to a coalition such as the Democracy Project. Jody expressed concern that this could negatively impact our relationships with local election officials if we were to be seen as an oversight body. Eileen noted that MIT has an administration of elections review process which she promised to share with the board.

Hannah concluded that each local League can discuss this matter further and the issue will be included in the March agenda for feedback.

**ED FUND**

Hannah provided an update of the Ed Fund. The board met on December 8, 2022, at which time Rebecca and Meredith were elected to the board. At that time, the fund balance was $6,891 but another $10,000 from New Mexico Voices for Children was subsequently deposited. We received thanks for producing the Native American Voter Guide and there is interest in doing this again in 2024. It was reiterated that we cannot fundraise within the four local Leagues. During the December 8 meeting, Meredith suggested that we approach tribal organizations for printing expenses related to the Native American Voter Guide. Karen Wentworth suggested that we solicit donations from the oil and gas industry to pay for Vote411. Meredith would like to use Ed Fund monies to fund New Mexico Listens. The next Ed Fund board meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2023.

**NEW MEXICO LISTENS**

A video produced for New Mexico Listens was shown during the lunch break. Eileen maintains the real value of New Mexico Listens is supported by this video in the project’s ability to reach out to diverse groups of people who can come together in a safe space. The strength of this project is real world access to our mission, which includes educating voters and strengthening our democracy. The League’s goals of educating and advocating should now also include listening. Hannah added that New Mexico Listens could be a possible project for fundraising.

Eileen moved that New Mexico Listens be an official, ongoing LWVNM project model and Meredith seconded this motion. Eileen said that if this is adopted, it would be up to each local League if and how they would use this as a model for outreach. No local League would be required to participate or to contribute funding. It would still be important to have statewide connections and Eileen could see LWVNM sponsoring some sort of event. Hannah noted that LWVNM has had little success recruiting volunteers because potential volunteers are already members of local Leagues. A local League member could participate in New Mexico Listens even if their local League is not participating.

Meredith added that New Mexico Listens has not cost LWVNM any money, because of the grant provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Furthermore, the only costs she foresees would be limited to such things as stipends for trainers and video production. Hannah asked for a budget breakdown for our March board meeting. Eileen’s motion passed unanimously.

**SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL**

Karen reminded the board about what was discussed during the previous board meeting. 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. Because of bylaws issues with Pennsylvania and other states, LWVNM is the logical choice to pursue this study. The goal is to have a new position brought to the LWVUS Convention in 2024 for concurrence. This proposal will be discussed in upcoming program planning meetings in both Pennsylvania and Illinois.

Barbara asked Karen to explain the bill submitted by Senator Steinborn. He had been told last year that the League could not support the bill as written. Hannah, Kathy, and Karen reviewed his amended bill and provided Senator Steinborn with what would be required for League support. The bill he submitted demands powers that are not allowed by the State. Our League position will not allow us to support this bill.

**STUDIES UPDATE**

Suzanne reported that Representative Christine Chandler has introduced HB 113 which, if it passes, will negate the need for the Judicial Selection study. Our current League position would allow us to support this bill, which increases qualifications for magistrate judges. Currently, the only requirements to be a magistrate judge in New Mexico are a high school degree and a residency requirement. This bill would increase qualifications to age 30, at least eight years relevant experience or a college degree with relevant experience. The bill still includes a residency requirement, which could prove problematic for smaller, rural counties. However, the bill does allow for a magistrate judge to be appointed from another area.

Rebecca Álvarez was not present to provide an update on the Tribal Law study. Meredith noted that the committee has not met recently.

**LOCAL LEAGUE REPORTS**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS, INITIATIVES, AND OTHER BUSINESS**

Meredith said that AAUW will hold Advocacy Day at the New Mexico Land Office on January 30 from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Land Commissioner Stephanie Garcia Richard will address environmental challenges and protections on state lands, and Dede Feldman will discuss proposed legislation to modernize the legislature. A Constant Contact notice will be sent.

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2023, and it will be held at a location to be determined by Meredith in Santa Fe and via Zoom. Because Rebecca C. cannot be present for this meeting, a volunteer was solicited to take the minutes. Kathy volunteered.

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

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (January 24, 2023)

Edited by Barbara Calef (January 25, 2023)