**League of Women Voters of New Mexico**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**January 20, 2024**

**Via Zoom**

**Board Members Present**

Kathy Brook, Co-President

Hannah Burling, Co-President and Ed Fund President

Barbara Calef, Second Vice President

Judy Williams, Past President

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Kim Sorensen, Treasurer and Ed Fund Treasurer

Dick Mason, Voting and Elections

Akkana Peck, Action Chair and Webmaster

Meredith Machen, Special Projects

Edwina Jaramillo, Voter Services

Karen Douglas, Nuclear Issues

Janet Blair, Communications

Felicia Orth, LWVLA President

Kathe Kanim, LWVSNM Co-President

Jo Galván Nash, LWVSNM Co-President

Jody Larson, Archivist and LWVSFC Liaison

**Guests**

Starlyn Brown (sitting in for Donna Sandoval)

George Chandler

Lani Desaulniers

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Kathy called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and a quorum was established. 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.

Edwina asked for clarification on the term CD2 under the Redistricting section, and Rebecca agreed to spell out Congressional District 2 in the November 18, 2023, minutes. Jo moved to approve the amended board meeting minutes and Meredith seconded this motion. Except for Judy, who abstained, all voted in favor.

Jody moved to approve the January 9, 2024, special board meeting minutes, and this motion was seconded by Barbara. All voted in favor.

**Co-Presidents’ Reports**

Hannah noted that Ann LePage resigned from the board, but she will remain a member of the Action Committee. Hannah also asked for volunteers to staff the tables at the Roundhouse on Wednesday January 24. The three tables will cover Redistricting, general League information, and Election Integrity. A social media contractor has been hired to post League-related materials on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Outreach Circle. Following the end of the legislative session, she will also do some work for the Ed Fund. The Election Integrity Project has recently gathered some momentum, and we will continue this project with New Mexico First, the Secretary of State (SOS), and other organizations and businesses. Hannah also reported that LWVUS President Virginia Kase Solomón has resigned to become the CEO of Common Cause.

Kathy reminded the local Leagues that a point of contact needs to be designated for Chapter Spot, the new member dues processing organization. She asked that someone be identified and entered into the national roster. Hannah and Kathy have not yet discussed who the point of contact will be for LWVNM, but Kathy was hoping that Lynn Jones would do it. Barbara said that Lynn is stepping back from League duties, and she suggested that Kathy be the point of contact. Both Kathy and Hannah agreed. Starlyn noted that this new process will be a challenge because much has yet to be figured out. Kathy also reported that the LWVUS “moonshot” to do away with the Electoral College will be launched in May. Dick added that *The Economist* considers the United States a failed democracy because of the Electoral College and gerrymandering.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Kim provided the January 20, 2024, excel spreadsheet documenting income, expenses, and net income. She described the way she set up the spreadsheet with columns for November 18, January 18, and year-to-date, compared to budget estimates. Barbara and Rebecca asked for minor spelling error corrections.

Kim said that significant donations have been received which are earmarked for our support of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Act. Hannah said that more funds will be forthcoming. With respect to the $85.02 Zoom expenditure, Hannah clarified that this was a one-time expense for the Advocacy Workshop webinar.

Kim said that the $55,517.52 cash balance does not include the new donations she described or the Zoom expenditure. The Make Democracy Work 501(c)(4) grant balance is $15,131.04.

Putting some of our funds into a Certificate of Deposit will be discussed under Financial Procedures later in the agenda.

**Action Committee**

Akkana reported that the Action Committee has prioritized Voting and Elections and Ethics; Modernization of the Legislature; Budgets and Taxes; and Gun Safety for this legislative session. According to her report, we will also be advocating for and against bills on the Environment, Education, Healthcare, and a few other topics. The tracking sheet is up on the website and will be maintained during the session. Several events are coming up, including the Legislative Reception and League Day at the Legislature. The Action Committee will be meeting on Mondays at 6:00 p.m. In response to a question posed by Meredith, Akkana said that there is a link to join the Action mailing list on the LWVNM website. Furthermore, it will be published in the next edition of *La Palabra* and may go out as a Constant Contact reminder. Dick added that advocacy emails go out to those who have signed up to advocate. He asked Hannah to send an updated list of those registered as lobbyists with the SOS to Akkana.

Judy said that a lunch reservation has been made at Rio Chama at noon on January 25. There is space for 14 people.

**Program**

Judy reported that the LWVUS survey is due by March 10. She will fill it in, but she asked for input from the board.

Following a meeting by the Executive Committee and task leaders, it was determined that there was no consensus on a position on Nuclear Power. Karen was under the impression that there was consensus on three positions she proposed and a counter proposal by Barbara. Hannah confirmed that there was no consensus and there can be no new position. We can still advocate for or against any new nuclear power plant. Kathy agreed but indicated that the entire Executive Committee had not participated. Still, it was determined that no consensus was reached and no LWVNM Nuclear Issues Position resulted. LWVNM Nuclear Issues task leaders may finalize their reports and prepare an Executive Summary for distribution to interested state Leagues in the winter of 2024. Karen asked that the entire LWVNM board consider this issue. Dick opposed this and noted that we have already spent a great deal of time on this issue. Kathy added that this study proposal was challenging from the beginning. Still, it is an important topic, and we learned a lot.

In response to a question posed by Jo, Barbara said that there is a document on how to conduct a study. Akkana posted a link to this document in the chat but said that it would not hurt to have the steps laid out.

Meredith suggested that a motion on this issue be made so we have closure at the board level. Judy subsequently moved that the task leaders revise/update their papers as they wish and to make them available via our website to other state Leagues, along with the criteria to decide whether to support or oppose a nuclear power installation. Meredith seconded this motion. Jo, Karen, and Edwina abstained, otherwise all voted in favor.

Because local Leagues are starting their annual program planning activities, Judy said it is time to review LWVUS positions to see what changes we may wish to recommend. Barbara suggested that LWVUS work on a Constitutional Amendment granting the right to vote. Meredith said that passing a Constitutional Amendment is too hard of a process and is not politically viable. Judy agreed. The suggestion did not engender much enthusiasm.

Judy asked if there are any studies being undertaken by local Leagues. Barbara said that Los Alamos has a study on pit production that is not going anywhere. Karen said there may be a study proposed in Central New Mexico. Judy said that Santa Fe did a study on voting issues, but no conclusion was reached.

**Governance**

Hannah submitted Portfolio Descriptions for Environment Chair, Women’s Issues Chair, and Education Chair which were updated by Barbara. Meredith moved that we accept the updated job descriptions and have them posted on our website and Jody seconded this motion. Other than Kathe, who abstained, all voted in favor.

**Executive Committee**

Our bylaws require any decision made by the Executive Committee be ratified by the board.

Norm Gaume, president of Water Advocates, recently asked whether LWVNM would be willing to be added as a co-sponsor of the monthly Zoom meetings of Water Advocates of New Mexico and the Middle Rio Grande. The organization is nonpartisan. The name is being changed from Middle Rio Grande Water Advocates to broaden the focus on the entire state. The Executive Committee unanimously agreed to the request on October 9, 2023, via email. Kathy moved that this decision be ratified, and Barbara seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

The Executive Committee met via Zoom on December 29, 2023. A motion was made by Barbara and seconded by Akkana that LWVNM serve as the recipient of funds to hire Linda Siegle to lobby for passage of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Act contingent on receiving $5,000 for that purpose. Meredith moved that this decision be ratified, and Dick seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

In response to questions posed by Edwina and Jo, Hannah explained that we were asked by Representative Ferrary to hold funds as the fiscal agent for a coalition that does not have a bank account. We will merely deposit the funds and write one check, as such we will not be charging an administration fee. Judy added that this is evidence-based and something we support.

**Financial Procedures**

Kathy submitted the proposed revisions to our Financial Policies. This document was reviewed by a subcommittee of our group, including Hannah, Dick, and Kim. Kathy said that Barbara suggested changing “its” to “LWVNM’s” under Authorities and Responsibilities item 3, and there are a few stray parentheses to be corrected. Kathy acknowledged that a few additional changes will be needed, but she asked that the board approve the changes made thus far.

Meredith moved that we approve the updated financial policies document and Dick seconded the motion.

Kathy explained the changes which will be needed, including the suggestion made by Barbara and correcting the stray parentheses. Regarding item 2 under Financial Reporting, Edwina asked why it refers to applications for funding. Hannah said that LWVNM may apply for funding to the Ed Fund for things such as publicity for Vote411. Later, Edwina suggested that the word “applications” be replaced with “requests.” Meredith added that LWVNM should be included here. Meredith also suggested that dates, such as “the May LWVNM Convention,” be changed. Dick agreed that in any of our documents, reference to a specific date be excluded because any future date changes would make our policy ineffective. In response to a question posed by Starlyn, Kathy agreed that the word “system” be deleted in item 2 under Operating Procedures. Judy asked if we decided there should be line items for grants. Kathy agreed that should be included, which she will do, and then she will run it by the subcommittee.

Starlyn asked about the addition of debit card in item 4 under Operating Procedures. Hannah said we need to have a debit card and Dick suggested that the Executive Committee should approve any electronic transfers out of the LWVNM account. Starlyn added that use of a debit card constitutes an electronic transfer, and she was unsure of the intent of this change. It was explained that LWVNM was scammed out of $10,000 several years ago (and does not affect the current budget). The funds were transferred to the scammer without any approval. We need checks and balances to make sure this doesn’t happen again. Dick added that there is likely to be more demand for electronic transfers and that such transactions should be approved by the full LWVNM Executive Committee. Edwina asked if this conflicts with the language in item 3 under Operating Procedures. Meredith said the President has the authority to approve up to $250 without prior approval of the board, and the Executive Committee should not have to be convened for such an expenditure. Dick said he is referring only to electronic transfers.

Starlyn asked if LWVNM has a credit card, and if not, we should as they provide more protection against fraud. Starlyn added that we would be tying our hands if we require the Executive Committee to approve electronic transfers, because many payments are becoming automatic, electronic transfers.

Akkana is not opposed to any of the suggested changes, but she questioned whether any would protect against fraud. Regarding our requirement that two signatures are required for checks written for more than $1,000, Barbara said that two signatures could not be secured for a debit card transaction. Hence, Edwina, Meredith, and Barbara liked Starlyn’s idea that we obtain a credit card. Kim said that if we had a credit card, a debit card would not be necessary.

Jo moved to call the question and Meredith seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Meredith said she made the original motion, which she reiterated was to approve the updated financial policies document and to send out a finalized draft with the revisions we discussed. She added that this document should be posted on our website. Except for Barbara, who was opposed, all voted in favor. Kathy will make the changes we discussed and, if necessary, this can be revisited at the next meeting.

Dick then moved that the board ask the Treasurer to apply for a credit card. Meredith seconded this motion. Except for Jo, who was opposed, all voted in favor.

**Voter Services**

Edwina sent a letter to the SOS requesting a meeting to discuss several issues which were encountered with files needed for Vote411 during the last election. Her letter included a proposed agenda, which she provided to the board. The meeting has been scheduled for January 30. Edwina is hoping that Hannah, Judy, Akkana, and Kathy will join her during this meeting. Jo suggested Tom Krajci from Otero County be included. Meredith suggested that Kari Fresquez, the SOS right-hand person, also be included. Hannah suggested a briefing of League attendees before the meeting. Barbara asked for a report to the board following this meeting.

With respect to the request for contact information from judicial candidates, Edwina is asking the SOS for the information to be provided automatically when the Proclamation comes out. Edwina noted that, for the last election, a special request for the information was sent to the SOS which slowed the candidate letters to the judicial candidate during a time crunch for the information. Judy said that we have had luck getting this information because we do not publish the details, but she doubts it will be automatic.

Edwina is also planning on sending a letter to New Mexico party chairs asking them to encourage their candidates to respond to questions posed by the League via Vote411. She hopes to rebut Republican allegations that the Voter Guide is partisan. Meredith, Barbara, Jo, and Janet offered Edwina some suggestions on this letter. Edwina will send a final version of the letter to Kathy and Hannah for their approval.

On behalf of the Los Alamos Voter Services Committee, Barbara asked what races they will be required to cover. Edwina said that those decisions will be made during Voter Services Committee meetings, which will be held once per month beginning in a couple of weeks. Judy said that there has been a spreadsheet of race assignments by local Leagues (and those covered by LWVNM) on this issue agreed to long ago by all the local leagues. Edwina, along with the contractor, will review the protocol for assignments to make sure it is still accurate.

Edwina expects to have candidate questions submitted to the board for approval by the March 2 meeting. She has not yet put together a timeline. Hannah will be interviewing a potential contractor to help with Vote411.

CNM sent a message to Edwina that they were not going to participate in Vote411 for the primary election because of several issues. They have since reconsidered but have some stipulations. Lani Desaulniers , the Voter Guide chair for CNM, spoke to the board on these issues. They question participating in Vote411 during the primary because the election is run by and for the parties. Two years ago, they ran into several issues, including complaints from candidates, the huge amount of work, a compressed time frame, and issues with Vote411. They have since been persuaded to participate and will do their best. The addition of a contractor to help with the data should help. Because of exceptionally high printing costs, printing will not be an option for the municipal and primary election. Judy thanked Lani for CNM’s agreement to participate. She hopes that some of the issues experienced in the past will be corrected during this election cycle. One issue that caused a lot of confusion last year was the addition of questions between the primary and general elections. Candidates complained that they already answered the questions and were not aware that new questions had been added.

Edwina wants the Voter Services Committee and the contractor to meet with the Communications Committee to discuss communications and publicity for Vote411 and Get Out the Vote efforts. Hannah noted that last year we did a small amount of publicity in some rural counties, and Janet added that we did some news releases and public service announcements. Edwina and Judy added that we will need additional funding for more robust publicity.

**Local League Reports**

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

**Announcements, Initiatives, and Other Business**

Starlyn noted that CNM’s Annual Meeting will be held on April 20, at which time they need to submit a two-year budget. They would like to know what to expect from Chapter Spot in this regard. She also noted that the LWVNM board has discussed putting its excess funds into a CD. She suggested instead that some of these funds be funneled to the local Leagues to pay for things like publicity for local elections. Kathy said that is a good point, and she added that we all need to understand our budgets better (e.g., what is earmarked and what is available).

Dick said that 15 years ago, LWVNM proposed reducing the amount of PMP paid by local Leagues. The local Leagues pushed back and instead asked LWVNM to do more.

Hannah reported that the LWVUS Convention will be held June 27 through June 30 in Washington D.C. Each local League gets one delegate for every 50 members, and three additional delegates will be chosen by LWVNM.

The next board meeting will be held on March 2, 2024. Barbara asked that the meeting be held in person, or at least hybrid if the technology works. Dick suggested that those who participate virtually are unable to fully participate. It was agreed that Albuquerque is the best location for a hybrid event. Starlyn confirmed that March 2 is available, but she noted that sometimes the technology in the conference room is changed and we won’t know until the meeting. The meeting will be held from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., in Albuquerque and via Zoom.

Dick moved that we adjourn the meeting, and this was seconded by Barbara. The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

Written by Rebecca Chaiken (January 24, 2024)

Edited by Barbara Calef (January 25, 2024)