



# UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544

[www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org)

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## Calendar

May 20 Lunch with a Leader, Zoom, noon  
May 10 Meeting with the LWVNM JEDI committee, Zoom, 6-7 p.m.  
May 27 Board Meeting, Zoom, noon

## ***Lunch with a Leader: Council Chair Randall Ryti***

Our May Lunch with a Leader will be on Thursday, May 20, from noon to 1 p.m. via Zoom. Randall Ryti, the chair of the County Council, will talk with us about broadband and other county issues that are coming up.

Ryti was elected to the County Council in the November 2018 General Election and elected Council Chair in 2021. He and his wife, Wendy Swanson, both League members, have lived in Los Alamos since 1992 when he started a small business, Neptune and Company, with four other scientists. In addition to helping lead a successful business in Los Alamos, Ryti has volunteered for community organizations such as the board of the Pajarito Environmental Education Center and the Los Alamos County District Science Fair Committee. He was a Los Alamos County

Transportation Board member from 2012-2016  
(Chair from 2014-2016).

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## ***Co-President's Message: 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women's Suffrage To Be Celebrated Only a Year Late***

Last year, just before the pandemic struck, our Committee for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women's Suffrage had assembled our material for a library exhibit. We found old newspaper clippings collected by the founders of the Los Alamos League of Women Voters in the Los Alamos Historical Society Archives, articles on women's suffrage in New Mexico in ancient *New Mexicans*; and old League handbooks from the last century in our files. We discovered that we had more than enough material for the library exhibit that we'd planned to do in 2020.

After waiting a year, we've naturally forgotten many of our amazing discoveries. But the library has reopened and the exhibit is scheduled for August 21 to September 21. Now as we search our computers and hard copies for the material, it's just as exciting as it was a year ago—what's a year's delay when the suffragists struggled for 70 years to get the vote?

Here are some thoughts so that you can reflect on this extraordinary piece of history that deserves to be memorialized in our heads and hearts.



One hundred years ago, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment guaranteed women across the country the right to vote for the first time. Men had had this privilege for many years. Well, some men. When the founding fathers were deciding who should be able to vote and make decisions affecting the government, they decided that only white men, actually only white men who owned property and paid taxes would be able to vote. As a result, in the very beginning of our country's government, only 6% of the population could vote.



100 years ago, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified by the required  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all the States, which was 36 states at the time. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment prohibits the states and the federal government from denying the right to vote to citizens of the United States on the basis of sex. This allowed women across the country to vote and to have a voice in how they were governed.

The Amendment was adopted on August 18, 1920.

The first state to ratify was Illinois. The last (#36) was Tennessee. New Mexico was #32.



More than 100 years ago, women hoped they would be given the right to vote when Congress was drafting the Amendments after the Civil War which gave the vote to former slaves. But, women, white and black, were specifically excluded in the language of these amendments.

Of course, the black male's right to vote was restricted as soon as the states resumed control after Reconstruction. Starting in the 1890's, poll taxes, literacy tests and the Ku Klux Klan kept black participation low at the voting booth. And, it wouldn't be until 1920 and the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment that women would get the vote.



US citizens can vote, yes? Not always. We're celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment this year because it gave women the right to vote.

But, the privilege to vote in 1920 was not extended to Native Americans, male or female.



*Miguel Trujillo, a WWII Marine Corps veteran from Isleta Pueblo, successfully fought in 1948 for the right of American Indians to vote in New Mexico. Associated Press file photo.*

They were not given citizenship until 1924, and even then they had to fight for the vote on a state-by-state basis.

In several other states, the right to vote was a sham anyway because it was made difficult or impossible due to poll taxes, literacy tests and intimidation.

*Becky Shankland with thanks to Susan Haase  
of LWV Santa Fe for sharing  
these "100 Year Minutes"*

## **Observer Corps Reports**

### **County Council**

#### **April 4**

Michael Weis, Los Alamos DOE National Nuclear Security Administration field office manager, gave an overview and update on what the field office does, which is primarily oversight of LANL. This report was followed by an update on PFAS: Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl, which are man-made substances called “forever” chemicals because of their carbon-fluorine bonds that bioaccumulate and are difficult to break down.

They’re in water and soil everywhere, including in Los Alamos, from many commercial products including building materials (weather resistant paints, stain-resistant coatings, fire suppression systems, plastics, and discharges due to maintenance activities. In Los Alamos they are mostly from the LANL cooling tower activities.

Since monitoring was initiated (2018), there have been minimal PFAS detections at LANL including:

- shallow groundwater (not drinking water sources)
- soils near high-explosive (HE) operations

- Outfalls and WWTP discharges.

District 43 Rep. Christine Chandler gave an update of all the bills that she supported and others that passed during what she calls a very productive 60-day NM Legislative session. Chandler spoke at length about her broadband bill for improving access to high quality broadband throughout the state. Later Steve Lynne presented a proposal for Los Alamos to hire a consultant to assess “enabling reliable high-speed broadband service throughout the county by determining appropriate investments (e.g., conduct a community needs analysis, evaluate technical options).”

Los Alamos County and Schools lobbyist Scott Scanland gave his report. A link to the list of the bills passed and signed as of 04/06 is available in the agenda at <https://losalamos.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=832543&GUID=8E83533E-25A9-4FAD-9964-9F85E53CF501&Options=info%7C&Search=>.

Angelica Gurule presented an update on the proposed contract with SCS Engineers, in an amount not to exceed \$270,000.00 (+Tax) for Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study and Design Services. The Council is still interested in moving this process forward.

PEEC presented its response to the Request for Proposal to continue to staff and operate the Nature Center in the County-owned facility. The proposal got a score of 100%.

New P&Z members were approved: Terry Priestley, Beverly Neal-Clinton, and Neal Martin.

Art in Public Places submitted a proposal for “Perspective,” a solar-driven onyx stone fountain in White Rock.

*Jody Benson*

## April 19

The Council tentatively approved the budgets for the various County departments and offices during the first night of budget hearings. They placed multiple budget options requested by departments on a “parking lot” list to be discussed and decided on later in the hearing process. As Maire O’Neill explained in the *Los Alamos Reporter*, “Los Alamos County does a two-year budget every other year with the first year being proposed and the second year being projected and then that subsequent year the projected budget is turned into a proposed budget. The Council per state statute can only approve the next fiscal year’s budget by June 1 of each year.”

## April 20

The Los Alamos County Council met for the second session of the Special Budget Hearing on Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. The Council heard budget highlights and proposals from Fire Chief Troy Hughes for the Fire Department, Police Chief Dino Sgambellone for the Police Department, Director Anne Laurent for the Public Works Department, and Utilities Manager Philo Shelton for the Department of Public Utilities. Deputy County Manager Steve Lynne reviewed capital improvement projects spanning several departments. The Council also discussed funding for several issues of interest corresponding to the Los Alamos LWV's recently readopted positions on the environment, preservation of dark skies, wildlife habitats, green infrastructure, and reuse of old buildings.

The budget hearing session included a public comment period before hearing budget presentations from departments. Two members of the community urged the Council to consider improvements for automatically turning off

Urban Park tennis court lights by 10 p.m. to minimize light pollution.

The Police Department's budget of \$10,428,992 was unanimously approved. The approved budget included options for improvements to the county's animal shelter and to move the department's victim advocate role to a full-time position. Police Chief Sgambellone noted that crime is at a historic low in Los Alamos.

The Fire Department's budget of \$36,552,149 was unanimously approved. Fire Chief Hughes noted that the department achieved international accreditation for the fifth time since 1997. The department also achieved an ISO fire insurance rating of “1,” one of three New Mexico fire departments to do so.

The Public Works Department budget of \$41,758,175 was unanimously approved with options for road projects associated with water line repairs and for a Ford Explorer for administrative use. Director Laurent noted that the road projects cover a public transit route in the neighborhood around 33<sup>rd</sup> St., 34<sup>th</sup> St., and Arkansas Ave. During the Public Works budget presentation, the Council also discussed funding for a budget option for county-wide distribution of bear-proof trash roll carts. The wildlife habitat around Los Alamos includes bears, and human / bear interactions can happen when bears get into household waste receptacles. The Public Works Department recently received a grant from US Fish and Wildlife Services to evaluate whether bear-resistant carts reduce these interactions.

The Public Utilities budget of \$83,091,266 was unanimously approved with options for road projects involving electricity and water distribution in the Canyon Road area. Utilities Manager Shelton noted that the department recently signed a 15-year power purchase that will see 76% of the county's power generated by



wind and solar resources, while the remaining 24% would come from the market. In addition, the department received a grant in 2020 for two DC fast-charging stations for the Los Alamos Municipal Building and the White Rock Visitor Center.

The budget hearing ended with discussion of capital improvement projects and general fund requests placed in the “parking lot.” Deputy Manager Steve Lynne presented appropriation requests for capital improvement projects involving improvements to urban parks and trails as well as projects for schools and economic development.

*Elizabeth Auden*

## **April 26**

On April 26 the Council met to discuss and vote on the “parking lot” budget items left over from previous budget hearings. Two controversial spending items, both proposed by James Robinson, were new to the County.

The first was for \$2.4 million for fully automated locking bear carts for some 7,000 customers in Los Alamos and White Rock as well as 260 dumpsters. (“Fully automated” means they will stay locked when the lid is closed, but will open when the truck empties them.) The Council agreed that it’s essential to have bear-proof roll carts for “The Hill,” but why White Rock when last year only two bears had been spotted: one in El Mirador and one around Smith’s? The argument for bear carts and bear-proof dumpsters is that bears’ territory has been destroyed by the two catastrophic wildfire; that bears in Los Alamos quickly habituated to garbage and settled in town; and that bear territory already extends down the canyons; and when Los Alamos garbage is gone, bears will head down to White Rock as quickly as they came down from the

mountains when the fires took their habitat. The Council voted 4 to 3 to approve.

The second controversial item was recurring support for UNMLA, just as the County has a recurring spending partnership for LAPS. The pro arguments focused on the fact that the community supports UNMLA as evidenced by passing the bond. The con arguments were that CEO Cindy Rooney hadn’t come to the Council to ask for the funds. In the end, the County granted UNMLA a single \$200,000 capital grant.

The County also budgeted \$150,000 for design of eight new tennis courts with lights, and \$10,000 for membership in the Coalition of Sustainable Communities New Mexico and other entities.

*Jody Benson*

## **April 27**

The final budget meeting was held on April 27. Our report will be published in the June *Update*.

## **Board of Public Utilities**

The Board of Public Utilities held its monthly meeting virtually on Wednesday, April 21. Utilities Manager Philo Shelton reported to the board that the Department of Public Utilities has finalized a Power Purchase Agreement with Uniper Global Commodities. Per the agreement, Uniper will supply Los Alamos County with 15 megawatts of firm energy primarily coming from wind and solar facilities being built in New Mexico. Power will be less than four cents a kilowatt hour and is expected by January 2022.

DPU staff also discussed with board members what to do with the modest profits derived from the LA Green program. The department is no longer purchasing renewable energy credits since the low-flow turbine at the Abiquiu hydroelectric

facility and the solar array on the closed landfill were installed. BPU members directed Mr. Shelton to draft a policy that would seek input from LA Green subscribers on how they would like to see the profits spent.

Deputy Utilities Manager Jack Richardson gave a detailed presentation to the board on the financial and physical condition of the wastewater collection and treatment system. While he explained that the current condition is fair, the programs, projects and plans that are in place now will see the condition improve to good in coming years.

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## ***April Lunch with a Leader: Representative Christine Chandler Discusses 2021 Legislative Session***

Holding a legislative session during the COVID crisis was difficult, Representative Christine Chandler told her Zoom audience. Entry to the Roundhouse was restricted to legislators and some members of the press. No public was allowed. With the threats of violence after the storming of the Capitol in Washington, there were officers everywhere. Even though it was not required, Chandler was at the Roundhouse almost every day for access to information and the benefits of live interactions with fellow legislators. Some legislators stayed home, but they were also effective.

The House and Senate operated under different rules; however, all committee hearings were remote. The Senate had live floor sessions, while a physical presence was optional in the House. Chandler remarked that she felt like a performer in a rock concert with her face projected onto two huge screens when presenting bills on the floor.



*Representative Chris Chandler speaking at the April LWL. Screenshot by Barbara Calef.*

Overall, the public participation was great, with thousands attending the hearings. Members of the public had almost as much opportunity as the professional lobbyists to be heard. They could go on Zoom or call in with their comments. A hybrid approach may be used for future sessions to give residents more opportunity to participate.

Chandler remarked that, according to many experienced legislators, it was “the most productive session in decades.” Of the more than 700 bills, memorials, and resolutions that were introduced, about 140 were passed. The budget was approved, increasing spending on education by 5.8% and by 2.8% for higher education. The major pieces of legislation that passed include SB 10, the decriminalization of abortion and HJR 1, the early childhood constitutional amendment, which must be approved by voters in 2022 and would provide millions of dollars for early childhood education and care programs and additional funding for K-12 education by taking

an additional 1.25% of revenues from the land grant Permanent Fund.

Also passed were bills that Chandler sponsored, including HB 20, the Healthy Workplace Act, which will give hourly workers some of the benefits of professionals; SB 34, known as Roxy's Law, which prohibits the use of traps, snares, and poison on public lands; HB 291 Working Families Tax Credit and Low-Income Comprehensive Tax Rebate programs, which will provide more money to low income families; HB 10, the Connect New Mexico Act, which will provide a centralized, comprehensive framework to deliver internet to every home and business in the state.

HJR 9 called for a constitutional amendment that would have allowed the state to invest in internet hookups and provide direct assistance to homes. The amendment, if passed, would allow exemption from the anti-donation clause for essential services, including water, wastewater, gas, and electricity as well as broadband. It would allow the state to make payments for low-income people. Chandler said that an error in reporting had killed the bill, but she will "clean it up and re-file."

Among the other bills Chandler discussed was SB 304, which she described as a "smallish bill" to make GIS information available to the public. She was going to carry it in the House. However, Speaker Egolf wanted it to include the redistricting bill (filed as SB 15) and essentially turned SB 304 into a dummy bill. She does not know what happened on the Senate side, but noted that crazy things are added to bills in the last few days of the session.

Responding to questions, Chandler said she believes it is a losing battle to try to keep cannabis illegal; that it's better to regulate it to be sure the packaging is correct and that it can

actually help with opioid problems. She explained that the "predatory lending" bill, which would have cut the maximum rate for loans from 175% to 36%, failed due to fear that 36% was not high enough for small loans (less than \$1100) and the money would not be available. An amendment calling for a rate of 99% for small loans failed in the Senate. She said the issue would be studied during the interim.

*Barbara Calef*

## **LWVNM Board Directorships Open**

There are several positions open on the LWVNM Board, and we are inviting members to consider nominating themselves or other interested members with their permission. We would like to find younger members, but youth is not a requirement. We will be happy to train volunteers. We especially need a first vice-president, who would take over the position of president in two years and a director of voter services to oversee the state's voter guide work starting in 2022.

Directors participate in setting priorities and goals, voter education activities, advancing civil discourse, determining positions, and advocacy efforts. Directors are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and non-partisanship.

Learn more about empowering democracy through education and policy advocacy based on League positions. See more in the Member Documents section of our website, [lwvnm.org](http://lwvnm.org).

Write to [nominations\(AT\)lwvnm\(DOT\)org](mailto:nominations(AT)lwvnm(DOT)org) for more information or to nominate yourself or others. Thank you!

*Meredith Machen,  
Nominating Committee Chair*

# **LWVLA Board of Directors 2021-2022**

## Officers:

- Co-president: Barbara Calef
- Co-president: Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: *Unfilled*
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Rosmarie Frederickson

## Directors:

- BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill
- Director at Large: Addie Jacobson
- Director at Large: Felicia Orth
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones

## Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- County Council Observers: LWVLA Board & League Members
- Fundraising: Ellen Mills
- Membership: Jean Dewart & Dotty Reilly
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- Nominations: Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, & JoAnn Lysne
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 9, or visit [www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org).



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS

## MEMBERSHIP FORM



Mail to: LWV Los Alamos  
P.O. Box 158  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Check here to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage.

\_\_\_\_ OR Check here if you prefer the newsletter mailed in hard copy.

\_\_\_\_ Check here to receive occasional friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

**Membership Categories: all checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are now tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deductible statement. If you prefer to pay via Paypal, visit [www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org).**

\_\_\_\_ Single membership: \$45

\_\_\_\_ Household membership (two+ people at the same address): \$70

\_\_\_\_ Single Sustaining membership: \$75

\_\_\_\_ Household Sustaining membership (two+ people at the same address): \$95

\_\_\_\_ Student membership: \$0 (must be 16 or over)

\_\_\_\_ Contribution to support League work: \$\_\_\_\_\_

### Interests and Ways to Help the League (check as many as apply)

#### Topics of Interest

- \_\_\_\_ Affordable Housing
- \_\_\_\_ Local Government
- \_\_\_\_ Education
- \_\_\_\_ Elections, Voting Rights
- \_\_\_\_ Water Issues
- \_\_\_\_ Land Use
- \_\_\_\_ Health Care
- \_\_\_\_ Money in Politics
- \_\_\_\_ Sustainability
- \_\_\_\_ Living Wage
- \_\_\_\_ Public Transportation
- \_\_\_\_ Environment
- \_\_\_\_ Other topics (please suggest):  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Ways to Help with League Activities

- \_\_\_\_ Set up Refreshments at Forums
- \_\_\_\_ Observer Corps (County Council, BPU, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_ Nominating Committee
- \_\_\_\_ Voter Guides Committee
- \_\_\_\_ Voter Registration
- \_\_\_\_ Publicity
- \_\_\_\_ Website, Social Media
- \_\_\_\_ Newsletter
- \_\_\_\_ Membership
- \_\_\_\_ Fund-raising
- \_\_\_\_ Budget Committee for LWV
- \_\_\_\_ Lunch with a Leader (assistance)
- \_\_\_\_ Fund-raising Committee for LWV
- \_\_\_\_ Participate in board meetings or join board

***The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy***

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