



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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www.lwvlosalamos.org

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Calendar

October 5	Early Voting begins
October 6	Candidate Forum, Zoom, 7 p.m.
October 21	Lunch with a Leader, Marcela Diaz, Zoom, noon
October 28	Board Meeting, Zoom, noon
November 2	Election Day

Lunch with a Leader: Marcela Diaz on Immigration

Marcela Diaz will be our speaker for Lunch With a Leader via Zoom on October 21 at noon. Diaz is the founding Executive Director of Somos Un Pueblo Unido, a statewide immigrant-based organization that promotes racial and worker justice. With an active membership of close to 3,000 people in eight counties, including Santa Fe, Somos offers community education about rights and remedies, forges leadership opportunities for immigrants and low-wage workers, provides legal services to wage theft victims, and engages Latinos.

She will be discussing many issues dealing with immigration, such as current immigrants in the

United States and what Somos does to assist them in transitioning to life in the United States.

Somos has launched a new naturalization program for city and county residents in an effort that organizers hope will reduce the anxiety of non-citizens in an era of capricious immigration crackdowns and enhance immigrant participation in the community and democracy at large.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-president's Message: The Equal Rights Amendment —Our Next Centennial!

One guestbook comment at our exhibit on the centennial of women's suffrage read: "Next step: RATIFY THE ERA, which was started so long ago! Read about it under the Alice Paul panels!"

Most of us know that the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) has been hovering around our consciousness for most of our political lives. Where is it? What's the problem? Let's try to untangle the issues.

What does it say? "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Who wrote it? Alice Paul presented the Equal Rights Amendment in Seneca Falls in 1923, and it was then introduced in Congress. She said, "We will not be safe until the principle of equal rights is written into the framework of our government." Alice Paul revised it again in 1943—this text was the wording of the 1972 version passed by Congress. Alice Paul wanted it to be called the Lucretia Mott Amendment in order to honor the well-known suffragist who fought for the abolition of slavery as well as votes for women.

What happened to the ERA in the years before 1972? Many progressives like Eleanor Roosevelt, the American Civil Liberties Union, trade unions, and the League of Women Voters opposed it because they feared it would force women to join the military, do heavy work, make child custody difficult in divorce cases, and so on. But later, Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, and Carter supported it. Alice Paul continued to lobby for women's issues, such as their inclusion in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

What happened to the 1972 Equal Rights Amendment? The bill passed both houses of Congress, but it contained a deadline of 1979 for state ratification. By 1979, 35 states had ratified, which was three states short of the 38 required. At that point, Phyllis Schlafly mobilized opposition, and five states revoked their ratification. The deadline was extended to 1982, but no further states ratified.

Where does the ERA stand today? Since 1982, the fate of this amendment has gone up and down like a seesaw. Sufficient additional states have ratified but, of course, without meeting the previous deadline; a lawsuit has tried to pronounce the revocations illegal; a joint



Meredith Machen joins Alice Paul in jail as Alice fights for women's right to vote. Photo by Becky Shankland.

resolution to remove the deadline has been introduced in Congress – but the ERA still stands in limbo.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who wanted to show her granddaughters that “the equal citizenship stature of men and women is a fundamental human right,” concluded that the best path for the ERA is to start over with a new deadline for ratification. [CNN Politics, February 10, 2020]

If we could pass and ratify the Equal Rights Amendment by 2023, we could call it the Alice Paul Amendment, commemorating its first introduction to Congress in 1923. Or, with the 99% certainty of that proposal’s failure, could we try to honor her 1943 revision with ratification in 2043?

Or should we wait for 100 years after its first passage in Congress in 1972 and celebrate in 2072?

Becky Shankland

Sources: Wikipedia, “Equal Rights Amendment”

www.equalrightsamendment.org

Alice Paul Institute, alicepaul.org



*Seeking input on the future at the LWVLA exhibit.
Photo by Barbara Calef.*

Be Prepared for the November 2 Election!

Be Knowledgeable

The 2021 LWVLA Voter Guide was delivered to every household in the *Los Alamos Daily Post* on Thursday, September 30. The Voter Guide is also available for download at: https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/%5Bcurrent-user%3Aog-user-node%3A1%3Atitle%5D/voter_guide_2021-lr.pdf.

Check out vote411.org, too.



Watch our candidate forum on Zoom at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, October 6. Register in advance at: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMrcuutqz4tH9P8apQl2_Rf4x5Jl6rj8ZqO. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. A recording of the forum will be posted on our website.

Be Ready

If you need to register to vote or update your registration, you can do so online using the New Mexico Secretary of State's (NM SOS) portal www.NMVote.org, or by mail until Tuesday, October 5.

Same-Day-Voter Registration (SDVR) will be offered through the Clerk's Office between Tuesday, October 5 and Saturday, October 30, for new voters and those needing to update their address.

Use www.NMVote.org to verify your registration information, view precinct and voting district information, and download a sample ballot. Visit the County Clerk's webpage https://www.losalamosnm.us/government/elected_officials/county_clerk/election_information to view a detailed map of precincts, school districts, and vote centers.

Vote in Person

Early/Absentee In-Person voting will begin on **Tuesday, October 5**, in the Municipal Building, and continue Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Additional site and extended days/hours begin **Saturday, October 16**, and end **Saturday, October 30**, at the Municipal Building and the White Rock Town Hall, Monday thru Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

All Early/Absentee In-Person voting ENDS **Saturday, October 30** at both locations.

Vote from Home

If you wish to vote from home, you must complete an absentee application requesting that a ballot be mailed to you.

Absentee applications are available through the following methods:

- applications can be mailed by request;
- apply online at www.NMVote.org;
- download from the County Clerk's webpage; or
- pick up in person in the County Clerk's Office.

Absentee applications from within the United States will begin to be processed in early October, and ballots will be mailed beginning Tuesday, October 5.

Federal/Overseas Citizen absentee applications are already being processed, and ballots have been being mailed since September 18. These registrants can request an absentee ballot at: <https://www.fvap.gov>.

The last day to request an absentee ballot (Federal or Domestic-within the United States) is **Thursday, October 28**. All absentee ballots are physically due back to the County Clerk's Office **no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day**.

Vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 2

The following Vote Centers will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.:

- LAC Municipal Bldg. - Council Chambers, 1000 Central Avenue
- White Rock Town Hall - Conference Training Rooms, 139 Longview Drive
- LAC Golf Course Community Bldg. - Multi-Purpose Room, 4244 Diamond Drive
- University of New Mexico – Los Alamos, Bldg. 6 Room 631, 4000 University Drive
- Betty Ehart Senior Center - Downstairs Classroom, 1101 Bathtub Row

Observer Corps Reports

County Council

August 31

The approximately four-hour meeting was attended in person by Councilors Ryti, Robinson, Derkacs, and Williams. Councilor Scott attended a portion of the meeting via Zoom. Councilors Israelevitz and Reagor were absent.

Topics of interest included:

- The Council heard a report on the North Mesa-Middle School Campus Joint Recreational Facility. The County will look at two sites on the Middle School Campus to locate a community recreation facility that would house a multi-use basketball court and associated locker, meeting, and storage rooms. The project timeline targets an RFP for design services issued in the fall of 2021, bid documents in the fall of 2022,

and construction in the fall of 2023. The inclusion of two sites in the planning phase rather than one will necessitate a look at the impact the design/construction of the facility may have on the Capital Improvements Budget because of expected cost increases.

- The LEDA agreement with Pebble Labs was terminated, so the County will need to address the use of the real property formerly occupied by Pebble Labs.
- Community Development presented a new Policy 1735, which addresses the use and fees of County facilities, including the North Mesa Stables, Golf Course, Aquatic Center, Ice Rink, and Ashley Pond Park. The Policy was approved. Ashley Pond Park will be available for reservation and rent in its entirety or one of three sections by entities including commercial enterprises, a change from existing policy.

- The County received an allocation of American Rescue Plan funds of \$3,762,201 which will be used to:
 1. Respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality (Range to earmark-70%-90%, \$2,633,541-\$3,385,981).
 2. Make necessary investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure (Range to earmark-10%-30%, \$376,220-\$1,128,660)

The funds must be spent or encumbered by December 2024.

- The following individuals were appointed to Boards/Commissions: Wendy Staples - Environmental Sustainability; Mike Adams - Racial Equity & Inclusivity Task Force; Oral Saulters - Resiliency, Energy, & Sustainability Committee. Note that Saulters also serves on the Racial Equity & Inclusivity Task Force.
- The Bluffs Housing Development completion deadline was extended to December 31, 2022.

Adelaide Jacobson

September 7

The Los Alamos County Council meeting on September 7, 2021, was shorter than usual. The meeting began with a COVID update from emergency manager Beverly Simpson. Pending the release of additional information expected on September 20, Ms. Simpson said that she has nine booster vaccine clinics scheduled. The auxiliary gym has been reserved for those clinics.

A proclamation approved by the Council declared the month of September as Voting Rights Month and Tuesday, September 28 as Voter Registration Day in Los Alamos County.

The Council voted in favor — by a vote of 4 to 2 — to approve an application for New Mexico Department of Transportation Funds for crosswalk and trail improvements in White Rock. Councilors Reagor and Williams were opposed.

County staff presented the 2023-2027 State Infrastructure and Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) for submission. This is an annual, lengthy list of all capital improvement projects for which the County may apply to the state legislature or that have other grant possibilities for funding. County staff does not expect all projects to be funded, and their ranking is not a factor, but for them to be considered, they must be on this list, which is due to the state by September 17. The motion to submit was approved by a vote of 5 to 1. Councilor Reagor was opposed.

Rebecca Chaiken

September 21

This County Council meeting was held in person and was open to the public; it was also available via Zoom.

Council heard from Ted Wyka, the NNSA Los Alamos Field Office Manager. The takeaway was that they plan to produce 30 pits per year by 2026 at LANL, requiring 2,000 additional personnel. This presentation was followed by Brian Harcek, Senior Health Physicist with the DOE Environmental Management Los Alamos Field Office. Contamination cleanup work along DP Road is ongoing, and the final report is due in the spring of 2022.

Cornell Wright, chair of the Board of Public Utilities, reported in depth about the status of the many utilities run by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). All new residential water, gas, and electric smart meters have been installed (around 7,100 in total). He reported that the El Vado hydroelectric plant would be offline for about 18 months for dam face repairs.

The Council once again discussed the Regional Capital Projects Fund. This is the fund being established to support our neighbors in northern New Mexico. One set of councilors wants to “just give them a check”; the other set feels that some form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would better serve the interest of both parties.

Finally, the Council discussed the format for setting the County Manager’s performance goals. Some councilors wanted the discussion to take place in an open meeting, while others felt that performance goals intersected with performance appraisal, warranting a closed session. In the past these meetings have been conducted in a closed session, and a closed session is called for in the Council Procedural Rules. After much discussion, the Council voted 4 to 3 to hold a closed meeting. Councilor Williams, who was opposed to a closed meeting, then declared that he would not attend the closed session and encouraged the two colleagues who voted with him (Councilors Robinson and Reagor) to boycott the meeting also. The three public comments that followed, which were in opposition to the closed meeting, were vitriolic and personal to an extent that has no place in our public discourse.

Lynn Jones

September 28

At the beginning of the meeting, Council Chair Randall Ryti announced that he planned to end

Council meetings at 10 p.m. The consent agenda was approved without change. The major discussions of the evening concerned the adoption of an ordinance to regulate cannabis cultivation and manufacturing and the adoption of the Los Alamos and White Rock Master Plans.

During the 2021 legislative session, the State government passed a statute legalizing the cultivation, manufacture, and sale of cannabis. However, the State has not yet begun issuing licenses, and the Council was advised to pass an ordinance for the benefit of staff and the community. The Planning and Zoning Commission asked staff to bring a new proposal regarding retail sales at a later date. After much discussion, by a vote of 5-2, the Council passed an ordinance adopting local cannabis cultivation and manufacturing regulations.

The Council then took up the Los Alamos and White Rock Downtown Master Plans, which have been previously presented to the community and approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Councilors had some questions and some concerns. In the end, they voted to accept the plans with some amendments.

Besides emphasizing that the plans are vision statements and that not all options will be undertaken in the near term, they noted a lack of consensus in the community regarding the height of buildings. DPS, the consultant, recommended a height limit of seven stories plus up to two bonus stories in downtown Los Alamos. The Council removed the bonus stories and may revisit the seven-story limit. The limit for White Rock is four stories.

The Council also expressed dissatisfaction with the DPS omission of a parking requirement for residential development in the White Rock downtown and requested an update to the text regarding overlays. The amended plans will be

published and brought back to the Council for adoption, probably on October 19.

Barbara Calef

Board of Public Utilities

The Board of Public Utilities met virtually on Wednesday, September 15, 2021, at 5:30 PM. Board members voted to endorse a contract amendment to the Munis Tyler software agreement to purchase additional products that would permit County staff to manage and track customer inquiries from start to resolution. The contract amendment will be forwarded to the County Council for approval.

Since the Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is a member of UAMPS, Ms. Monthey of UAMPS presented “Smart Energy Rebate Programs” to the BPU for consideration as a tool in the DPU conservation plan. Ms. Monthey would administer a rebate program on behalf of the DPU, based on DPU initiatives to lower energy demand for its customers. BPU members made no decision. As funding for the rebates would come from the DPU, department staff will investigate whether or not rebates would violate New Mexico anti-donation laws.

Board members also approved the DPU’s Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Objectives Goals.

Julie Williams-Hill

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
- Fundraising: Ellen Mills
- 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
- Membership: Jean Dewart & Dotty Reilly
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- Nominations: Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, & JoAnn Lysne
- Special Projects: Maxine McReynolds
- 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.

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.

____ 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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