



# 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)

Volume 74, Number 10  
February 2022

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## ***Calendar***

February 17 Lunch with a Leader, Bandelier Superintendent Patrick Suddath, Zoom, noon  
February 17 Legislative Session ends at noon  
February 24 Board Meeting, Zoom, noon

## ***Lunch with a Leader: Patrick Suddath***

Lunch with a Leader will be on February 17 via Zoom from noon to 1 p.m. Our leader will be Patrick Suddath, the Superintendent of Bandelier National Monument since mid-August 2021. Suddath has most recently served as the Deputy Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia. Prior to that, he served as Chief Ranger at the Park. He has also served as the Branch Chief of Ranger Activities at Glacier National Park and has held leadership roles at Joshua Tree and Grand Canyon National Parks. Suddath began his career as a fire lookout and wildland firefighter in Mesa Verde National Park in 1989.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## ***Welcome, New Member!***

**Mitzi Boswell writes:**

In 2016 my aunt showed me my great grandmother's suffragette pin, and ever since then I've just been feeling like I need to do more. I started volunteering as a poll worker and trying to find other ways to be a more engaged voter. Of course it's hard because I work at the lab full time, and I'm the mother of two young children. I'm excited to be able to join the league and hopefully become more involved in the process. I'm super excited about all the lunches that are offered and I can't wait to start attending those and meeting all of you.

## ***Farewell to Nick Mezins***

Nick (Nicolajs) Mezins has been a faithful member of the League for many years. A lovely obituary ran in the newspapers, but I'll just mention a few items. I always wondered about the spelling of his first name, Nikolajs. It turns out to have been Latvian. After immigrating to the US, he earned degrees in Electrical Engineering and Industrial Engineering. He joined the Army and won a number of meritorious medals. He was a 50-year member of the American Legion.

*Compiled by Becky Shankland*

## ***Observer Corps Reports***

### **County Council**

#### **January 4, 2022**

The Los Alamos County Council meeting on January 4, 2022, was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Israelevitz, Reagor, Scott, and Williams. Councilor James Robinson had previously resigned effective January 1. The following summary does not include all Council agenda items but focuses primarily on items of broad community interest or that triggered discussion or debate.

**Election of Chair and Vice-Chair.** By a vote of 4-2, Councilor Ryti was reelected as Council Chair through the end of 2022. The other nominee for Council Chair was Councilor Izraelevitz, who advocated for stricter adherence to the Courtesy and Decorum chapter of the Council Procedural Rules, which he felt had been ignored at times during sessions in the previous year. Councilor Derkacs was unanimously

approved to serve as Council Vice-Chair after Councilor Reagor withdrew his nomination.

**Redirecting transfers of remaining DPU profits from the General Fund to the Joint Utility System Fund.** By unanimous vote, Council approved an amendment to an ordinance extending the joint agreement between the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) and the County Council regarding the transfer of DPU profits in the General Fund beyond the ordinance's expiration in 2022. The joint agreement allows the Council to redirect money in the General Fund derived from the remaining profits of utility operations to the joint utility system fund to be used for purposes designated by the Council. The adopted amendment establishes a five-year timeframe for the agreement that the Council may extend in one-year increments. In addition to other economic benefits, the rolling five-year timeframe facilitates better coordination with Public Works for roads projects.

**Advance public notice of County meetings.** By 5-1 vote, Council approved a resolution to provide reasonable notice to the public for all meetings of the County Council, Boards, Commissions, and appointed County committees. Councilor Williams opposed the motion because the resolution did not apply to subcommittee meetings, an exclusion which he felt evaded the County's transparency policy.

**Revised scope of work for Golf Course site improvements project.** By a vote of 4-2, Council approved a revised scope of work for County staff to use the existing budget of \$1.8M of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) funds to continue improvements of the Los Alamos Golf Course, with an additional \$0.7M available if improvements cost more than projected. Council directed staff to return with a budget revision. The original scope of the project, approved in

2017, funded the installation of a new irrigation system at the course and was also intended to finance improvements to the rest of the course, most notably the driving range. This part of the original scope was put on hold when the contractor pulled out recently because of conflicting views with the golfing community about how to approach these improvements. The approved motion directs staff to revise the scope of work in order to move forward quickly on uncontested portions of the project, such as tee box improvements and installation of restrooms. In parallel, staff will secure the services of a new golf course design professional to find an acceptable concept design solution for improvements to holes 1 and 3 and the driving range/practice tee areas. The objective of the new design is to address safety issues at the driving range while not shortening the course itself. This will likely require an expansion of the course into surrounding open space and would require a zoning change from PD-5 (a residential district set aside long ago for housing that was never built) to PL (Public Land). The approved motion also stipulates that the design must minimize impacts to existing trails and open space to the greatest extent possible. Councilors Reagor and Williams opposed the motion.

**Service agreement with LACDC for Visitor Center operations (pulled from Consent Agenda for discussion).** By a vote of 4-2, Council approved a seven-year Service Agreement with Los Alamos Commerce and Development Corporation (LACDC) for \$2M to continue operating the County's visitor centers and related services. Councilor Williams questioned why this service is contracted out rather than done with in-house staff. Staff responded that operating the centers with in-house staff would be more expensive because it would require hiring additional personnel. Councilors Reagor and Williams opposed the motion.

**Approval of Public Works Director.** Council unanimously approved the appointment of Juan Rael as Public Works Director. Mr. Rael had served as interim director after the previous director, Anne Laurent, was appointed Deputy County Manager.

**Action on filling Councilor vacancy.** Council agreed to accept letters of intent to fill the Council vacancy left by the resignation of Councilor Robinson and to interview the candidates at its meeting on January 25 and appoint one to Council who would serve out the remainder of the term of the vacated seat.

*June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin*

## **January 25, 2022**

The Los Alamos County Council meeting on January 25, 2022, was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Israelevitz, Reagor, Scott, and Williams. The following summary does not include all Council agenda items but focuses primarily on items of broad community interest or that triggered discussion or debate.

**Proposed new ordinances to amend the County Code.** Council introduced two ordinances to amend the County Code of Ordinances. The first proposed ordinance would amend the sewage service rate schedule and the method used to determine sewer charges. This proposed multi-year rate increase would cover additional repayment of principal and interest resulting from an increase in the loan principal for building the White Rock Water Resource Reclamation Facility (WRRF). The second proposed ordinance would correct minor technical errors in portions of the Fire Prevention and Protection Code. Public hearings on these proposed new ordinances will be held later.

**Public petitions regarding the Nuisance Code survey.** Council heard a public presentation concerning two petitions critical of the nuisance code survey conducted by an outside consultant in December. The first petition requested that the Council reject the consultant's survey, which the petitioners felt had been heavily biased, and conduct a new survey to statistically determine the community's desire to include aesthetic considerations in the nuisance code. The petitioners felt that aesthetic considerations had been an unwarranted assumption on the part of the consultant, as opposed to a desire that the nuisance code and code enforcement focus solely on health and safety concerns. Petitioners also felt that the government did not have the right to regulate aesthetic issues. Petitioners objected to the use of Los Alamos properties in photographs intended to illustrate examples of nuisance issues, arguing that the pictures constituted an invasion of privacy. These photographs had been provided to the consultant by County staff from those taken by Code Enforcement staff. Previously, Community Development Advisory Board (CDAB) members voted (3-2) to retain the survey results and forwarded its recommendation to Council. During discussion, Council members commented that:

1. Survey results will be presented at a future meeting, following which there will be an opportunity to ask questions,
2. No statistical measure is available for judging the bias of qualitative results, and
3. Council will have the opportunity to request an additional survey in a future meeting, if needed.

On a final motion, Council voted (4-2) to acknowledge the first petition, thank the petitioners, and take no future action. Councilors Ryti and Williams opposed the motion.

The second petition extended the demands of the first petition by requesting that the Council not only reject the survey results as being tainted and unrepresentative of community values but also fire or sanction the survey consultant. County staff advised that firing or sanctioning the consultant was a contract management issue outside the purview of the Council. Councilors largely agreed with the staff's opinion and passed a motion (5-1) to acknowledge the second petition, thank the petitioners, and take no future action. Councilor Williams opposed the motion.

**Filling of Councilor Vacancy.** Council interviewed eight candidates for the seat vacated by Councilor Robinson on January 1: Steven Booth (DEM), Brandi Engeman (DEM), Andrew Fraser (DEM), David Hampton (REP), Melanee Hand (DEM), Keith Lepsch (DEM), Antonio Maggiore (DEM), and Aaron Walker (DEM). Public comments emphasized the desire that the selected candidate be one who would best represent the concerns of young parents and small-business owners. To be seated, an applicant needed to receive at least four votes by roll-call vote, with this process continuing after eliminating the candidate with the fewest number of votes until a final selection was reached. After two rounds of roll-call voting, Melanee Hand was selected to fill the vacancy and serve out the remaining term of the vacant position. The other candidates were encouraged by Councilors to consider running for one of the four Council positions opening in November.

*June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin*

# Planning and Zoning Commission

**January 26, 2022**

All nine Commissioners attended the meeting. The Commission approved its FY23 work plan, modified with a request to work on improving its communication with the County Council.

County Councilor David Reager, the Council's liaison with the P&Z Commission, likewise resolved to ensure better feedback from the Council to the Commission.

*June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin*

## **January Lunch with a Leader: Economic Development Coordinator Dan Ungerleider**

Dan Ungerleider moved to Los Alamos from the Chicago suburbs in July to serve as the County's Economic Development Coordinator in the Community Development Department. His focus is on the need for housing and jobs and supporting the changing business environment. In addition, he is tasked with marketing the community as a good place to visit, live, and start a business. He is assisted in his work by a specialist in marketing and one in housing.

Ungerleider listed the current housing projects underway, stressing that they were already underway when he arrived. The projects are:

- Canyon Walk, 70 affordable 1, 2, and 3-bedroom apartments on DP Road will be available next month;
- The Hill, 149 apartments with a pool and other amenities east of LAMC will be completed later this year;

- The Bluffs, on DP Road, will contain 64 units of senior housing;
- Mirador subdivision in White Rock has 161 homes but an additional section of mixed-use development with apartments and retail stores is planned;
- Arkansas Place, in the North Community, will include 44 townhomes.

Ungerleider noted that Arkansas Place is behind schedule due to the pandemic, the need for a general contractor, and the rise in prices for construction materials. He said that, despite the long list above, there is still a need for housing for the "missing middle." The Schools and the County are currently discussing the North Mesa Housing Project, to be built on land adjacent to the Middle School.

In addition to the projects in Los Alamos, some of his work is off the hill, looking at properties in other locations in an effort to help the whole region by advising developers and investors.

Ungerleider is preparing a comprehensive Business Assistance Program for the Council in February. He coordinates with LACDC, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Small Business Development Center at UNM-LA. He also works with the Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board; the Tourism Implementation Task Force; and the Economic Vitality Action Team, which includes LANL and other entities working to improve the economy of northern New Mexico.

Other current work in Los Alamos includes a proposed ordinance for addressing the excessive number of vacant commercial properties; the Metropolitan Redevelopment District for White Rock; the update of the Development Code; and an outdoor recreation plan being developed by the Community Services Department.

*Barbara Calef*



## Help Wanted

**LWVLA Board of Directors:** Board elections will be held at the Annual Meeting in April. If you would like to serve on the board or have recommendations, please contact the Nominating Committee Chair, Ellen Mills.

Remember, board meetings are open to all League members. Let Barbara Calef or Becky Shankland know that you'd like to drop in, and you'll receive a Zoom link for the next meeting.

**Projects, Services, Ideas, and Logistics:** The Nominations Committee also helps to coordinate non-board positions and projects. If you would like to contribute to the League as an off-board volunteer or as an understudy to a more intensive undertaking, contact Ellen Mills, Barbara Calef, or Becky Shankland for more information.

**Newsletter Editor:** The newsletter editor formats, edits, and exports three pdf versions of the newsletter each month (one for general distribution, a greyscale version for our print subscribers, and web-friendly version for the website). Templates and checklists are available for the Mac word processor, *Pages*. These templates could be used directly or serve as examples for a different software platform. If you have questions or are interested in editing the newsletter (by yourself or as part of a team) please get in touch with Barbara Calef or Becky Shankland.

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## 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: *Unfilled*
- Nominations: Ellen Mills & Leslie Wallstrom
- 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 7, 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***

<i>In This Issue</i>	<i>Page</i>
Calendar	1
Lunch with a Leader: Patrick Suddath	1
Welcome, New Member!	1
Farewell to Nick Mezins	2
Observer Corps Reports	2
County Council	2
Planning and Zoning Commission	5
January Lunch with a Leader: Economic Development Coordinator Dan Ungerleider	5
Help Wanted	6
LWVLA Board of Directors 2021-2022	6