

**MINUTES OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/LOS ALAMOS BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY APRIL 22, 2021
VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Call to Order

Barbara Calef called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

Board Members Present

Barbara Calef, Co-President
Becky Shankland, Co-President
Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary
Akkana Peck, Director at Large
Addie Jacobson, Director at Large
Amy Birnbaum, Reservations
Julie Williams-Hill, Webmaster
Jody Benson, Publicity
Felicia Orth, Director at Large

Guest: JoAnn Lysne, Newsletter

Introductions

Barbara welcomed our two new board members - Addie Jacobson and Felicia Orth. The other board members then introduced themselves to Addie and Felicia.

Minutes

The March minutes were accepted as presented.

Lunch with a Leader

Barbara reported in Karyl Ann's absence. The May Lunch with a Leader will feature Council Chair Randall Rytty to discuss current events in the County. We can ask him about the status of the expansion of broadband. For June, we will invite Maggie Toulouse-Oliver to speak about the special election for Deb Haaland's replacement and new elections legislation. Becky suggested that new League member Maxine McReynolds could speak during another event to cover issues of law she recently presented at LANL. Barbara added that Maxine has Tewa relations and it would also be very interesting to hear about San Ildefonso, how they make decisions, and how we might get access to their trails.

Amy suggested that the timing is right to invite Stephanie Garcia Richard to talk about the environment and ecology in New Mexico. Felicia added that a discussion about the new methane rule with SGR would be interesting. Akkana suggested a

speaker on the new redistricting bill would also be timely so we can learn about what is in the new bill and information on the redistricting commission.

Membership

Becky reported that Jean Dewart and Dotty Reilly have taken over the membership duties. In the future, Barbara will invite them to board meetings to address the membership report. Becky said there was one new member - Bettie Bedell - since the last meeting. Becky added that Jean has created a new and superior spreadsheet for tracking membership, which will be updated regularly.

Library Exhibit

Becky said that we have been scheduled for our exhibit between August 21 and September 21, and that we will have only four days to get everything ready. Becky was told that we can get into the space now and she would like as many people on the committee as possible to preview the space again. Amy agreed to contact the library and find out when we can get into the gallery, and how many people will be allowed in. Several people on the committee still have not been vaccinated so delaying this preview might be warranted.

Barbara suggested that getting into the library space might not be necessary. We have the plans and could lay out the materials in another space, such as a garage. Becky agreed. She added that we need to provide the gallery with the title of our show and this needs to be done promptly. She will send out some suggestions via email.

Nominations Committee

JoAnn reported for the Nominations Committee. The other two members, Ellen Mills and Leslie Wallstrom, could not be present. JoAnn praised Ellen and Leslie for the amount of time they put in making direct contact with potential nominees, which allowed for follow up questions. Many people they contacted were concerned about too much work and ill-defined tasks. The committee believes that it is important to make serving on the board more manageable, but that task is beyond the reach of the Nominations Committee.

The "elephant in the room" is the open 1st Vice President position. They worry that if something does not change, we will be in the same position next year. It is important to find a way to pass on the cultural and institutional knowledge possessed by Barbara and Becky. The committee suggests that we look closely at succession planning and identify people who can absorb their institutional knowledge. The committee also emphasized that we need to improve the diversity of our board. They suggest we form a group to look into these issues including League development, board development, and creating a mentorship program.

Felicia has done a fair amount of *pro bono* work in the non-profit world with a focus on capacity building, which is a huge area that can cover things such as board governance, staff development, strategic planning, fundraising, and succession planning. She suggests scheduling a meeting with Barbara and Becky so she can learn about League priorities going forward. JoAnn will also share some comments the committee received from prospective board members with Felicia. At the next board meeting, Felicia will be prepared to make some suggestions on how we can move forward.

LWVUS Council

During odd years, LWVUS has what is referred to as a Council during which they catch up with state Leagues and make sure that their budget is sound. New Mexico is allowed four delegates and LWVNM President Hannah Burling has decided that each of the four local Leagues can send one delegate. The Council will be held virtually June 24 to June 27 and Barbara asked for a volunteer. No one present was able to volunteer during that time frame so Barbara will inquire with Ellen.

Follow Up on Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held last week and all proposed bylaws and positions were approved. She will send this information to Julie for posting to the website.

Barbara asked for an update from Dave North, via Akkana, on the previously approved study on Alternatives to Landfills. Akkana advised the group that he will schedule meetings once they can be held in person.

Jody reported on one aspect of our new Program - capturing methane in composting. Both the County and PEEC are very serious about reducing food waste in order to reduce methane. Recently, there were approximately 300 compost kits distributed to Los Alamos households. The County is still discussing curbside pick-up for composting but she does not know if this item is included in the current budget discussions.

Regarding the Digital Privacy Committee, both JoAnn and Akkana said they have had no time to schedule any further meetings. JoAnn added that she is not likely to have the time or energy to co-chair the committee much longer. Barbara asked that they notify us if a future meeting will be scheduled. Jody noted that the Sierra Club has taken issue with expanding electricity if done via a new route. Julie believes that the planned route will impact about 12 new miles of land in an already disturbed area.

National John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Day

Addie reported on this event, which is scheduled to take place on May 8. LWVNM, along with each local League, has been invited to participate in this event. The organizers are asking for a local "voter-cade" to be scheduled, essentially a car

parade for which banners and other supplies will be provided. Addie is not able to spearhead this event and she asked if there were any volunteers. Becky suggested we find out what Santa Fe has planned and join in with them and Addie agreed to inquire with Santa Fe. Addie will write up something to be sent out as a friendly reminder to the membership to enlist volunteers to organize and participate in this event. A letter to the editor will also be written.

LWVNM Convention

The Convention is scheduled for April 24 and 25. Our local delegates include Becky, Ellen, JoAnn, Felicia, Maxine McReynolds, and Jeffrey Howell. Barbara, Akkana, and Rebecca will participate as state board members. All League members are invited to register for this event. Barbara noted that it is important to read the provided materials in advance of the convention. A link will be sent to all registered participants.

BPU Report

Julie reported that the Board of Public Utilities met last night. Cornell Wright took over for Kathy but has finished the term. The deadline to apply for this opening is April 30. The BPU also discussed the LA Green Program. The County used to purchase energy credits, but haven't since the installment of the low-flow turbines and the solar array. We are selling these credits and making a small profit. The utilities department will suggest to the BPU how to spend this profit. The BPU also entered into an agreement for the restoration of a solar array, which is expected to provide power by January 2022. The BPU also received the quarterly update on the wastewater utility system. The deputy utilities manager plans to identify problem areas to help move the County from fair to excellent.

Council Reports

Jody reported on the April 6 meeting during which the Council discussed several items of interest to the League. The Los Alamos DOE National Security Administration field office manager provided an overview and update on what the field office does, which is primarily oversight of LANL. An update on man-made substances, referred to as "forever chemicals," was also provided. It was noted that these chemicals are difficult to break down and they are found in water and soil everywhere. Their source includes building materials but the largest source in Los Alamos is from LANL cooling tower additives. District 43 Representative Christine Chandler provided an update of the legislative session and she spoke at length about a bill she sponsored which would improve access to high quality broadband throughout the state. A proposal for Los Alamos to hire a consultant to assess broadband service throughout the county was also presented. The County is also still interested in moving forward with a contract to investigate composting feasibility. PEEC was selected to continue to operate the Nature Center and new members were appointed to the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Maire O'Neill covered the April 19 meeting with a report in the LA Reporter and Elizabeth Auden covered the April 20 meeting. Lynn will be covering the April 27 meeting. Their reports will be published in the next *Update*.

Jody volunteered to cover the remaining April meeting (April 26). Volunteers are needed to report on the meetings in May (May 4, May 18, and May 25).

A discussion of our coverage of County Council meetings followed. Barbara explained that we only need to focus on areas of interest to the League but she added that we have not been good about training observers. It was suggested that we might have better luck enlisting volunteers if the agenda was provided in advance. Akkana noted that sometimes something interesting pops up in a meeting that was not anticipated by the agenda, but she is not sure covering every meeting is worth the extra work. It was agreed that it would be helpful if we knew a vote was pending on an area of interest.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for March 2021 was sent to the board via email. It reported a checking account beginning book balance of \$2,018.91 and an ending balance of \$5,790.95, which includes total receipts of \$3,880.03 and disbursements of \$108.70. Receipts included dues, donations, and \$.03 interest. The savings account ending book balance was \$33,298.26, which includes \$.85 interest.

Important Dates

The deadline for the next newsletter is May 1, 2021.

The next board meeting will be May 27, 2021, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Rebecca Chaiken