

**MINUTES OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS/LOS ALAMOS BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY AUGUST 25, 2020  
VIA ZOOM DUE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

**Call to Order**

Barbara Calef called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

**Board Members Present**

Barbara Calef, Co-President  
Becky Shankland, Co-President  
Ellen Mills, Second Vice-President  
Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary  
Karyl Ann Armbruster, Lunch with a Leader  
Akkana Peck, Director at Large  
Lynn Jones, Voter Services  
Jody Benson, Publicity  
Leslie Wallstrom, Publicity  
Julie Williams-Hill, Webmaster  
Amy Birnbaum, Reservations

**Guests:** JoAnn Lysne, Newsletter  
Addie Jacobson, Special Projects

**Minutes**

The July minutes were accepted as presented.

**Treasurer's Report**

Rosmarie was absent but provided the treasurer's report. For July 2020, she reported a checking account beginning book balance of \$3,899.88 and an ending balance of \$4,653.49, which includes total receipts of \$936.98; disbursements of \$183.37; and \$.04 interest. Receipts included dues and donations. Disbursements included payments to JoAnn Lysne for Zoom and Barbara Calef for domain renewal. The savings account ending book balance was \$35,791.40, which includes \$.91 interest.

Rosmarie also included a separate notation in which she said she has written thank you notes for all donations from non-members, which also included a tax receipt. Becky writes the thank you notes for members and includes a tax receipt. Rosmarie has filed the required form with the Secretary of State and paid the \$10 fee. In addition, we received our PMP bill. It is not due until the end of the year but last year it was paid in July. This week, Rosmarie will file the IRS Form 990, which is due by August 31, 2020.

Leslie suggested that future treasurer's reports include a balance sheet to detail how much money is remaining and what our funds are used for. Barbara noted that our current treasurer's reports include that information, but not relative to the overall budget. Leslie knows this request would be more work for Rosmarie. Barbara will discuss this with Rosmarie.

Following Kathy's illness, Rosmarie took over the job of treasurer on a temporary basis. Since Kathy has since passed, Julie moved that Rosmarie become the permanent treasurer. Ellen seconded this motion and all voted in favor.

Regarding the LWVNM PMP bill referenced in Rosmarie's note, it was agreed that there was no advantage to delay the payment until its due date.

### **Lunch with a Leader**

The September Lunch with a Leader will feature nuclear engineering graduate student Bobbi Merryman. The November Lunch with a Leader will feature speakers from the new Racial Justice Action Advisory Council. For October, Ellen suggested a representative from the Los Alamos County Committee for the Health Security Act to discuss the presidential candidates' national plans. Following some discussion, it was decided this topic is a New Mexico legislative issue and would be better suited to an event after the November election and before the legislative session begins. It was agreed that this topic will be selected for the December 15, 2020, event. Karyl Ann will invite Liddie Martinez from Enterprise Bank, who is also on the Governor's Economic Recovery Council, for October. Barbara would like to know her position on public banking. Jody reminded the group that we also discussed having someone to discuss the schools' reopening plans.

### **Voter Services**

Lynn asked whether we should include responses from candidates who are unopposed in our printed Voter Guide noting that all answers will be included in Vote411. Addie added that the guide is intended to educate people and not everyone is digitally connected to access Vote411. Barbara said that before Vote411 we would only send questions to candidates facing opposition. JoAnn advised the group that she thought posing questions to unopposed candidates could be considered to be contributing to their campaign. Lynn said that the lawsuit that created this issue was against the LWVUS and does not apply to us. Lynn said that we print the answers from judges up for retention who need to secure 57 percent yes votes to keep their seat. She also said that all of the other Leagues in New Mexico print the answers from unopposed candidates. She also noted that her position on this issue has changed over time. Even if a candidate is unopposed and will win the election, it does not mean they will win it with her vote. Barbara asked for a vote on this but suggested we may need a legal or tax opinion if the vote was in favor.

Rebecca moved that we include the written responses from unopposed candidates in our Voter Guide and Akkana seconded this motion. All but one member voted in favor. If Lynn learns of any issues with our 501(c)(3) status because of the inclusion of questions to unopposed candidates, she will let us know. Lynn will also notify Christine Chandler of this decision since we did not include her answers in the primary election Voter Guide.

Barbara proposed that we hold two candidate forums - one for the two Congressional District 3 candidates and six County Council candidates; and the other for the two PRC candidates, the two PEC candidates, the two House District 43 candidates, and the three Senate District 5 candidates. These events will be held as webinars and everyone will be invited. JoAnn will have firm control over the events, which will be posted once they are concluded. Of the dates Barbara suggested, JoAnn preferred October 1 and October 5. Following some discussion, it was agreed that the October 1 event will feature the PRC, PEC, House 43, and Senate 5 races, while the October 5 event will feature the CD3 and County Council candidates. Ellen agreed to moderate one of these events.

Prior to this meeting via an email chain, Rosmarie suggested that we include a flyer about voting into the food boxes that will be distributed by LA Cares at the Lutheran Church on September 10 and 11. Akkana agreed and suggested the flyer also include information about the census. Jody noted that Sandra West has already created something like this, which we could use and revise, as necessary.

The flyer created by Sandra West for the Voter Guide publicity group includes information about how to register to vote and will be included in food boxes distributed by the Santa Fe Roadrunner Food Bank. Jody noted that there will also be a food distribution event at the Methodist Church, which is sponsored by Food Depot and our flyer should also be included during that event. Jody will find out how many people this event is expected to serve. Barbara would like voter registrars at these events to eliminate a step for those who wish to register.

Addie was contacted by Bernadette Lauritzen who asked that our flyer be passed out during lunches at the senior centers before early voting begins. Everyone agreed this is a good idea and Addie noted it is also good advertising for the League.

Barbara asked Jody to be in charge of organizing the outreach plan at the senior centers and food distribution events by mid-September. Jody and Leslie can decide the best way to move forward and ask for help.

Barbara confirmed that the online voter registration portal will be open on September 1 and that our county clerk has hired a vendor to send absentee ballot requests to all registered voters in Los Alamos County on September 14. They will be pre-stamped.

## **Local Studies**

JoAnn was pleased to announce that the digital privacy group decided to fast track the study to be in a position to advise the county on some of their RFPs and documentation. It was decided to convert from a local study to the formation of a standing education/advocacy committee.

Dave North said he still has not done anything on the landfill study because there are too many meetings since COVID hit. He expects this to drop off after the election. He added that bandwidth is not big enough for something that is not urgent.

## **Downtown Development Plan**

Jody wants to write up a draft for comment on the Downtown Development Plan to encourage/demand that the plan include a very strict development code. Such a code should require that all future appliances and utilities be made with renewable electricity. This would be in line with what Kathy Taylor had advocated for. Barbara supports this but noted that LWVLA does not have a position on a code but we do have positions on development and the environment. Jody will submit the LWVLA comments to the county and the planner.

## **BPU Observer Corps**

Julie reported on the August 19 BPU meeting during which they had a presentation from a consultant hired to do a gap analysis on the energy imbalance market which the PNM recently joined. Last week there was a constraint on the western energy grid because of a heat wave in California. The energy imbalance market was developed by California to deal with such constraints. During this time, electricity that usually costs us \$30-\$40 a megawatt hour was going for \$3,000 a megawatt hour. Over a two-day period, Los Alamos County spent close to \$2 million on electricity (80 percent of which was covered by the Lab). Also last week, San Juan was off-line. During this time we paid \$1,600 a megawatt hour and PNM alerted us that we might need to issue rolling blackouts. While this did not occur, it is clear that increased renewable energy, including hydroelectric power, needs to be considered.

During the meeting, the BPU also voted 3 to 2 in favor of continuing the Carbon Free Power Project. Carrie Walker and Steve Tobin voted against continuing because they felt that the project benefitted Idaho communities and created jobs in Idaho. They would have been interested had the project been in our own backyard.

## **Council Reports**

Barbara sent the board written reports by Ellen (who covered the council meeting on August 4, 2020) and Rosmarie (who covered the county council meeting on August 18, 2020). Ellen noted that the predominant theme of the meeting she

covered was housing. Two new projects are currently underway, on DP Road and Arkansas. She also learned during this meeting that 13 percent of the Los Alamos population is considered financially insecure or poor. Mental health services are also difficult to come by in Los Alamos and the question remains what does the county do moving forward to address these issues.

### **LWVNM Education Committee**

Ellen and Karyl Ann recently joined the newly formed LWVNM Education Committee and Ellen participated in her first meeting. Members from around the state have each chosen a topic on which to do further research in preparation to focus lobbying efforts during the upcoming legislative session. Ellen also noted that school districts across the state are doing everything possible to provide educational services with limited resources in a limited time frame. Unlike colleges, public schools do not have a history of online learning. There is not a great solution to this, hopefully, temporary problem.

Albuquerque and Las Cruces schools will continue virtual learning until at least January and Santa Fe is talking about doing the same. In Los Alamos, teachers are physically in their classrooms and the students are signing in. The Navajo Nation does not have consistent Internet services and this group of students is being left out.

### **Kathy Taylor Memorial Bench**

Becky reported that more than enough money was raised to install the bench in Kathy's memory. The remaining funds will be split between LWVLA and the Garden Club. Becky asked if anyone had strong feelings about where the remaining funds should go. Ellen moved that the extra funds go to Self Help due to the food insecurity issues facing many in our community. Lynn seconded this motion. Leslie abstained from the vote because she is on the Self Help board. All other members voted in favor. During this discussion it was learned that several board members did not receive the request for donations. The information will be resent and Becky will ask that the account remain open for new donations. Becky said there would also be a dedication of the bench for those who have donated.

### **Membership Report**

Becky reported that we have one or two new members, details of which will be published in the next newsletter.

### **Gallery Exhibit Planning**

Becky said the basic material for the exhibit is ready but we still do not have an idea about a time frame for the exhibit. Furniture and display cases will be available for when this occurs. There is little more we can do until we know when the library will

reopen. Rebecca noted that during a recent Friends of Los Alamos County Libraries board meeting Eileen Sullivan announced that the first phase of reopening is likely to be limited to computer use (three terminals in Mesa and two in White Rock) and the second phase will be limited to very quick in and out visits.

Barbara mentioned the article J.J. wrote about our exhibit for the local papers. Julie offered to post this to our website.

### **Other News**

Becky reported that a small group painted the White Rock rock. Akkana took a video of the event which she will send to Julie to post on our website. Becky thought it would be fun if League members took "selfies" in front of the rock for posting in a gallery on our website.

### **Important Dates**

The deadline for the next newsletter is September 1.

The next board meeting will be September 22, 2020, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Rebecca Chaiken*