**The League of Women Voters/Los Alamos**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday January 18, 2024**

**UU Fellowship Hall**

**1738 North Sage Street**

**Los Alamos**

**Call to Order**

Felicia Orth called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

**Board Members Present**

Felicia Orth, President

Ellen Mills, Second Vice President

Barbara Calef, Past President

Addie Jacobson, Treasurer

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Lynn Jones, Voter Services

Karyl Ann Armbruster, Lunch with a Leader

Jody Benson, Publicity

Akkana Peck, Director at Large

Becky Shankland, Director at Large

Bob Williams, Newsletter

**Guests** – Jean Dewart, Wendy Swanson, and Leslie Wallstrom

**Minutes**

Barbara moved to accept the December minutes and Becky seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report dated January 17, 2024, showed a checking account checkbook balance of $5,134.38, which includes total receipts of $182.38 and disbursements of $48. Receipts included a transfer from PayPal. Furthermore, a transfer from savings in the amount of $1,218.32 was initiated to begin 2024 with a $5,000 balance. Disbursements were to Aspen Copies. The savings account ending bank balance was $25,618.91, which includes $1.82 interest.

The Treasurer’s Report was accepted as presented.

**Lunch with a Leader**

Karyl Ann said that she does not yet have a guest for either February or March. She identified several possible speakers including Ellen Specter, Maxine McReynolds, Luis Reyes, Tom Solomon, Taraka Dale, Tracie Stratton, Kathleen Sabo, and Christa Slaton. It was suggested that Abby Hayward be added to the list. She is a good speaker who would discuss water and electricity conservation efforts for the County. Another new name suggested was Jessica Strong, the Director of Social Services for the County. Jean suggested that Teresa Cull, vice chair of the County Council, also be added. It was concluded that Karyl Ann will invite Abby Hayward and Jessica Strong for our February and March events. Suggestions for the speaker for our April event, which immediately precedes our Annual Meeting, include Kathleen Sabo, Jeremy Ferris, and Christa Slaton. Laura Paskus had been suggested for the April meeting, but she does not want to travel here so she will need to speak on Zoom another month.

**Membership**

Jean indicated that we have 118 members. We have had no new members since November. She noted that some current members have already begun to renew their memberships in advance of annual renewals in April.

Jean wants more people to become members. She noted that the dues collected go to LWVNM and LWVUS. Both organizations support things important to us like fair districting and lawsuits against gerrymandering. Donations stay local, so Jean likes the idea of sustaining memberships. She will write an article for the *Update* to explain the different ways to support the League.

It recently came to Jean’s attention that our website notification system (which she receives) is not connected to PayPal (which Addie receives). Hence, the data she provided to Julie Williams-Hill for previous budgets was not entirely correct.

Barbara said that LWVUS is planning to roll out a new system for collecting dues. An organization, similar to Club Express, will handle memberships and the dues collected will be divided among the local, state, and national Leagues. Jean said that this could be a positive move because currently Lynn, Becky, Karyl Ann, Tracy McFarland, and Jean herself all keep different data bases. One universal data base should be able to accomplish all that we need it to.

Lynn and Barbara noted that LWVNM bills us for dues in the fall, but they base the bill on January membership lists.

Jean received a suggestion from a member on a modification to PayPal. Currently there is no option to both pay dues and donate. Unfortunately, Julie Williams-Hill is no longer able to help us with this, so Jean is looking for someone who speaks that language. Barbara suggested that she check with the member who made the suggestion.

**Timeline for Primary Election Voter Guide**

Lynn provided the timeline for the 2024 primary election Voter Guide. Because the LWVLA board needs to approve questions at the March 28 board meeting [date changed to March 18 later in the meeting], Jean’s timeline for developing questions with input from LWVLA members is fast approaching. Jean and Becky will work on a Friendly Reminder to invite members to participate. Lynn wants to know what input we will be receiving from LWVNM. Barbara noted that our local League overlaps to some extent with the Santa Fe League, and LWVNM covers all counties where there is no local League. Jody, Akkana, and Karyl Ann all volunteered to help Jean develop questions. June and Craig Martin have also volunteered to help.

**Legislative Preview Report**

The Legislative Preview was to have been held in person at Fuller Lodge, but a snowstorm forced the county to close the venue. The event was held via Zoom. Barbara said that Margo Batha did a great job as moderator, as did her two timekeeper students. Christine Chandler was outstanding. The turnout was very good.

**Legislative Reception and League Day**

The Legislative Reception will be held on January 24 and League Day at the Legislature is January 25. Barbara and Becky plan to attend, as do Ellen, Karyl Ann, and Leslie Wallstrom. Becky suggested that a Friendly Reminder be sent because it has not been well publicized. She suggested that we encourage members to participate by offering a tour of the Roundhouse and/or lunch. Barbara said that LWVNM will have three tables set up at the Roundhouse on January 24, but members of the Santa Fe League will be staffing.

**Program Planning Meeting**

This event will be held at Ellen’s home on January 29, 2024. She drafted an invitation for our members, but it was suggested that an extra line containing lively language might entice people to participate (e.g., please join the meeting, tell us what you’re thinking.) Barbara will send suggestions to Ellen. The meeting will begin at 5:30 and will be a potluck. The invitation will be sent via a Friendly Reminder and was previously published in the *Update*.

**Annual Meeting**

Barbara said that the Budget Committee will include Julie Williams-Hill, Addie, and Jeffrey Howell. The Nominating Committee will include Becky, and she has asked Eduardo Santiago to help. Becky has done the first request to current board members, most of whom had said they will recommit for another year.

**Chamber of Commerce Membership**

We previously discussed joining the local Chamber of Commerce, but the vote was put off until today. Felicia explained her reasoning behind her suggestion that we join as a nonprofit member. Benefits include weekly emails in which grants and other funding opportunities are detailed. Several other local nonprofits are already members. Felicia spoke to two former and two current County Council members, and asked if they thought there would be a conflict of interest if the local Chamber took a position on a topic the LWVLA would oppose. All four told Felicia that the local Chamber does not take positions on political matters, and instead their focus is solely on community boosterism. The cost to join would be $114 per year.

Addie noted that she is opposed to this proposal. She does not join one organization to have that organization join another. She maintains that this should be a decision made by our members. Addie also does not see any reason to join the local Chamber of Commerce, because most people already know what the League stands for. Ellen said that 2024 is going to be a very expensive year, and joining this organization could increase our presence in the community which could in turn increase donations. Ellen added that our biggest funder, the Delle Foundation, is slowly winding down (by 2030) and we will need other sources of funding. Addie noted that we should continue to seek funding from Delle until it ceases.

Felicia moved that LWVLA join the local Chamber of Commerce for one year. If we determine that it is not worthwhile, we would not renew our membership. Rebecca seconded this motion. In response to Addie’s objections, Barbara noted that the LWVNM participates in several coalitions. Felicia noted that LWVNM also works with the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce. Lynn said that she has not found any connection between the local Chamber of Commerce, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Metrics that can be used to determine the benefit of our membership in the Chamber of Commerce could include increased membership, exposure of the League in Chamber emails, and individuals who learned about the League from the Chamber. Other than Addie, all board members voted in favor of this motion.

**Miscellaneous**

The March board meeting needs to be rescheduled because of conflicts for Felicia, Barbara, and Akkana. The date of March 18 was selected.

**Important Dates**

The deadline for the next newsletter is February 1, 2024.

The next board meeting will be February 23, 2024, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Church.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Rebecca Chaiken*