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

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Monday March 18, 2024**

**UU Fellowship Hall**

**1738 North Sage Street**

**Los Alamos**

**Call to Order**

Felicia Orth called the meeting to order at 12:02 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

Amy Birnbaum, Reservations

**Guests** – Wendy Swanson, Leslie Wallstrom, and Lisa Hampton

**Minutes**

The February minutes were accepted as presented.

**Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report dated March 15, 2024, showed a checking account checkbook balance of $7,793.64, which includes total receipts of $2,323.22 and disbursements of $16.65. Receipts included transfers from PayPal, donations, dues, and interest. Disbursements were to Aspen Copies. The savings account ending bank balance was $25,622.31, which includes $1.62 interest.

The Treasurer’s Report was accepted as presented.

**Lunch with a Leader**

Karyl Ann said that the speaker for the event immediately preceding our Annual Meeting on April 18 will be Rachel Mohr-Richards from JJAB. Karyl Ann will select a speaker for May from the list she keeps of possible speakers. The event will be held in person. Zoom meetings will be reserved for seasons with inclement weather.

Jody asked that our outgoing County Clerk, Naomi Maestas, also be invited for our May meeting. Barbara expressed some concern about this because early voting will be underway. Karyl Ann will ask her anyway.

**Membership**

Jean’s report indicated that we have 122 individual members. New members since our last meeting include Beverly Neal-Clinton and Ryn and Hans Herrmann. Members who have renewed in advance of our April annual meeting include Lisa and David Hampton. Felicia added that Bill Priedhorsky and Melissa Bartlett also recently joined the League.

Bob continues to work on the membership spreadsheet/database. Bob described this as frustrating, but he is making progress.

**Fundraising**

Ellen said the first phase of our new fundraising efforts concluded with 53 letters requesting donations being sent to Friends of the League. The second phase of fundraising will be outreach to local businesses. Furthermore, at the last Lunch with a Leader event, donations were solicited and $161 was raised in that way. We will continue this practice at future events, including at candidate forums. Ellen said that these new fundraising efforts have thus far raised nearly $1,000.

The fundraising calendar is as follows:

April – membership drive

May – candidate forums

June – nothing planned because of the focus on getting out the vote.

July – small house party at Ellen’s for individuals who may be able to contribute larger amounts

August – reaching out to larger organizations and businesses

September – grant writing requests

October to December – no plans yet

In response to a question posed by Bob, it was explained that we currently do not have official categories of donors or “giving circles.” Felicia said this can be effective, but it is also easy to overdo it and it is not necessarily egalitarian. The fundraising committee plans to explore this further.

Lisa noted that she mailed six fundraising letters to large LANL contractors, and she plans to follow up with a phone call. Lisa has also prepared fundraising letters to be mailed to approximately 50 prospective businesses asking them to purchase ads to be placed in the Voter Guide. Ellen and Leslie were not aware of this development. It was later decided that the gathering planned for 7:00 p.m. on March 25 at Ellen’s house would be used to discuss the annual fundraising plan going forward and assign individual tasks.

Paid ads for the Voter Guide will range in cost from $50 (name only) to $700 (half-page ad in both primary and general election Voter Guides). It is difficult to speculate how ads will affect the layout of the Voter Guides until we know how many ads are requested. Lynn does not think prospective advertisers would like all ads to be placed at the end of the Voter Guide, but interspersing ads throughout the Voter Guide interferes with reading the election content.

**Voter Guide Questions**

The committee in charge of developing the questions to be posed to candidates in the Voter Guide for the primary election sent proposed questions to the board. Barbara noted two minor changes which no one opposed. Jody moved that we accept the questions, with Barbara’s changes, and this was seconded by Akkana. All voted in favor.

Akkana noted that Jean did a fabulous job keeping the meetings on track. Jean also deserves credit for the decision to interview former County officials for ideas about questions to be posed to candidates. This was echoed by others who served on this committee.

**Preparations for the Annual Meeting**

***Nominating Committee Report***

Becky and Ed Santiago secured volunteers to serve as League officers, directors, and committee members. Their final report is as follows:

**Officers 2024-2025**

* President: Felicia Orth
* 1st Vice-President: [open]
* 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
* Past President: Barbara Calef
* Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
* Treasurer: Addie Jacobson

**Directors:**

* Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
* Newsletter Editor; Archivist: Robert Williams
* Publicity: Jody Benson
* Voter Services/Voter Guide: Lynn Jones
* Community Health and Wellbeing: Lisa Hampton
* Reservations and Refreshments: Wendy Swanson
* Director at Large: Akkana Peck
* Director at Large: Becky Shankland

**Off-board Directors**

* Membership:Jean Dewart
* Website/Social Media: Madhavi Garimella and Helena Whyte
* Observer Corps: June Fabryka-Martin, Craig Martin
* Nominations: Becky Shankland, Ed Santiago
* Fundraising: Ellen Mills
* Video: Ed Santiago

**Committees**

**Voter Guide, Voter Services**: Lynn Jones, chair, Cynthia Biddlecomb, Judy Prono, Jody Benson

**Voter Guide Questions**: Jean Dewart, chair, Akkana Peck, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Jody Benson, June Fabryka-Martin, Craig Martin, Lisa Hampton, Wendy Swanson

**Fundraising:** Ellen Mills, chair, Jess Taylor, Lisa Hampton, Tracy McFarland, Leslie Wallstrom, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Jody Benson, Felicia Orth

**Membership**: Jean Dewart, chair, Lynn Jones, Addie Jacobson, Becky Shankland, Tracy McFarland, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Helen Carpenter, Bob Williams

**Lunch with a Leader**: Karyl Ann Armbruster, chair, Elaine Deschamp

**Community Health and Wellbeing**: Lisa Hampton, chair, Cam Counters, Akkana Peck (awaiting her response)

**Budget**: Julie Williams-Hill, chair, Jeffrey Howell, Addie Jacobson, Jean Dewart

**Advocacy**: Felicia Orth, Barbara Calef, Jody Benson, Gwendolyn Gallagher (awaiting her response), and Ann LePage (awaiting her response)

**Voter Registration**: many members have volunteered; some are certified by the County Clerk

**Refreshments**: many members have signed up and should volunteer when needed

Jody moved to approve the slate of proposed nominees and Barbara seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

***Budget Committee Report***

Addie, Julie Williams-Hill, Jeffrey Howell, and Jean Dewart met at the end of February and prepared the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Addie explained the line items in the proposed budget and answered questions from the board. The only figure which required modification was the proposed expenditure for the LWVUS Convention. The budgeted amount of $5,500 was increased to $8,000 to account for a third delegate’s expenses. Addie also noted that the committee budgeted $10,000 for printing the Voter Guides this year.

During the budget discussion, Felicia offered her business Zoom account for the League to use. Our current Zoom account will be allowed to lapse. The payment to GoDaddy for our domain was previously paid by Barbara. The next bill will be due in July. Addie suggested that the League credit card needs to be switched from Barbara to Felicia.

The discussion of dues, including increasing household sustaining dues, was placed on hold because of the significant changes LWVUS is making to dues beginning in January.

Barbara moved to approve the proposed budget as amended and Bob seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

***Speaker***

As previously noted, Rachel Mohr-Richards will be invited to speak at the Lunch with a Leader event which precedes the Annual Meeting.

***Program***

Barbara described the program matters that need to be sent to League members on Thursday in advance of our Annual Meeting. Specifically, the board already approved changes to our Environment position and our Sustainable Water position. In addition, the board previously approved moving forward with a Health Care Forum.

Barbara and Jody proposed that we also hold a forum on County Leadership and Governance, but others suggested this would be better as a Lunch with a Leader event. A vote was taken on this. All but two board members voted for a Lunch with a Leader event rather than a forum.

Jody has not made progress on the previously approved Pit Production study. She agreed with removing it for now.

Felicia moved to approve the four program matters to be brought to our members (Environment, Sustainable Water, Health Forum, and Pit Production) and Jody seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

**Candidate Forum**

A discussion was held on whether a candidate forum should be held for the primary election. There is only one race with competition (two Libertarians running against each other for House District 43). Fuller Lodge told Wendy that they could accommodate a forum on either May 2 or May 9. UNM-LA needed more time to respond to Wendy’s request. Barbara moved to hold a candidate forum in May and Addie seconded this motion. Six voted in favor, four were opposed, and one abstained. It was agreed the forum will be held at Fuller Lodge on May 9. Barbara will invite the nine candidates and Wendy will ask Pac-8 to film the event. Refreshments will be provided beginning at 6:30 and the event will begin at 7:00.

**Digital Matters**

LWVUS has told all the Leagues that in January 2025 a new membership platform and dues structure will be rolled out. Barbara agreed to be the point of contact for ChapterSpot, the organization which will process memberships. We will need to activate a Stripe account (like PayPal). Barbara has drafted the necessary changes to our bylaws, and we will consider them for the 2025 annual membership meeting. LWVUS wants each local League to have a roster manager keep track of members and when they pay their dues. Dues submitted through ChapterSpot will be split between LWVUS, state Leagues, and local Leagues. We will learn more as time progresses.

LWVUS also wants Leagues to participate in League in Action (otherwise known as Outreach Circle). This is a digital organizing platform which will allow bulk texts to be sent to legislators and others. Jody attended the question-and-answer session and still has questions including what this is for, how much it costs, and how it would improve the League’s ability to advocate. Felicia said it is premature to discuss this and added that no one wants these bulk texts.

**Ratification of Email Vote on Vermont Privatization of Health Care Position**

In early March we held an electronic vote on the request by LWVVT to concur with their Privatization of Health Care Position. The motion to concur did not pass. Our bylaws require this electronic vote to be ratified. Addie moved that we ratify this vote and Ellen seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

**LWVNM Council**

The LWVNM Council will be held in Santa Fe on April 27. Felicia will attend this event and she asked for another volunteer to be a delegate. Lisa said she would like to attend.

**LWVUS Convention**

The LWVUS Convention will be held in Washington D.C. from June 27 to June 30. Felicia will attend this event and she asked for two additional volunteers to be delegates. Both Leslie and Lisa said they would like to attend.

**Miscellaneous**

In response to a question posed by Akkana, Lisa explained her vision for the Community Health and Wellbeing Committee.

Felicia received a request from the Los Alamos Retired and Senior Organization for the League to participate in a Senior Health Fair on May 14 from 10:00 to 1:00.

Rebecca volunteered to staff a table at this event.

At the Program Planning event, it came to light that we should be advocating for our positions more. On Tuesday night, the County Council will be hearing about two topics important to the League – the work plan from Parks and Recreation, and a presentation on further work on the Development Code by the Community Development Department. One of the items listed in their presentation is review of specific parcels for open space zoning or change in open space zoning. Our League recently sent a letter to the County Council about the need to address rezoning of seven parcels of land. A Friendly Reminder will be sent to our members with the information they will need to call the County Council or speak on behalf of our position.

Lisa said that DEI is also on the agenda, along with issues related to barking dogs and feeding wild animals. There is an opportunity for public comment.

Amy Birnbaum was thanked for her many years of service to the League, and she was presented with a flowering plant as a gift.

**Important Dates**

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

The Annual Meeting will be held on April 18, 2024. Lunch with a Leader begins at noon and the Annual Meeting will begin shortly after, at 1:00.

The next board meeting will be April 25, 2024, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Church.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:04 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Rebecca Chaiken*