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

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday October 26, 2023**

**UU Fellowship Hall**

**1738 North Sage Street**

**Los Alamos**

**Call to Order**

Felicia Orth called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**Board Members Present**

Felicia Orth, President

Ellen Mills, Second Vice President

Barbara Calef, Past President

Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary

Akkana Peck, Director at Large

Becky Shankland, Director at Large

Lynn Jones, Voter Services

Karyl Ann Armbruster, Lunch with a Leader

Jody Benson, Publicity

Amy Birnbaum, Reservations

Bob Williams, Newsletter

**Guest** – Jean Dewart

**Minutes**

The September minutes were accepted as presented.

**Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report for September 20 to October 19, 2023, showed a checking account checkbook balance of $6,424, which includes total receipts of $1,519.56 and disbursements of $3,307.90. Receipts included donations, dues, and interest. Disbursements were to Aspen Copies, PAC-8, and LWV for PMP. In her report, Addie noted that the bank balance shows a higher balance, which she will attempt to reconcile when she returns to town. The savings account ending bank balance was $26,831.83, which includes $1.76 interest.

**Fundraising**

Tracy McFarland, who currently volunteers to keep our spreadsheet containing donor contact information, has also volunteered to keep track of the associated financial information as well. She will keep track of all donations. Ellen and Becky asked that the board be kept informed about incoming donations. Jean will ask Tracy to send a monthly report to Felicia, who will then forward it to the board before each board meeting.

Jody suggested that we send thank you notes promptly, and she added that these notes should be specific (e.g., spreading democracy). Since Felicia will be the first person to receive the report from Tracy, she will write the thank you notes. Barbara will look in her materials to locate League thank you notes.

Ellen and Leslie Wallstrom recently attended a fundraising workshop in Española. They learned that thanking a donor before asking for additional donations is an important part of getting donations. Because we will need substantially more funds next year for our Voter Guides (perhaps as much as $10,000), Ellen and Leslie will be looking to donors with deep pockets, such as N3B, a contractor for the Lab, as well as the Delle Foundation.

**Lunch with a Leader**

We had a good turnout for the September Lunch with a Leader which featured Eric Peterson. Karyl Ann will try and help Eric secure student volunteers for trail maintenance.

Our November event will feature representatives from both Food Depot in Santa Fe, and LA Cares in Los Alamos. Felicia will not be able to attend, so Barbara agreed to open the church for set-up and Bob agreed to help with recording the event. We should ask the speaker to repeat any question posed by an audience member.

In December, our “lunch” with a leader will be in the evening, on December 14. Our guest will be outgoing county manager Steve Lynne. This event will take place via Zoom.

**Report on the Pit Study Committee Formation**

Jody had nothing new to report.

**Membership**

Prior to today’s board meeting, those individuals involved in different aspects of membership met, along with Felicia. Lynn keeps track of our members for LWVUS; Becky sends Friendly Reminder and newsletter emails to our members; Karyl Ann sends emails to our members regarding Lunch with a Leader; and Jean tracks our membership. All the various lists have been reconciled, and we currently have 114 individual members. This includes those who have yet to renew, including the Gislers, Bev Cooper, and Maxine McReynolds.

Our membership meeting, held on October 20, was very successful. We had 19-20 participants, even though only 14 RSVPs were received. There were several new faces in the crowd, such that introductions and/or name tags will be included for future events. Jody’s talk about being a Donut Dollie during the Korean War was very interesting and well-received.

**Voter Services**

Lynn reported that the Voter Guide has been published and distributed.

Jody said that she helped contact candidates for Vote411, and she described the project as difficult. Ellen heard Vote411 advertised on the radio, but the League received no credit. Jean used Vote411 to help a friend in Santa Fe, and she thought it was great. Akkana noted that you do have to go through several screens to get to the information you are seeking. Akkana helped LWVNM intern Maia Pugh with checking GIS data, and our county GIS specialist helped fix some associated issues.

Akkana said that we have yet to advertise Vote411, and she suggested that our press releases should include this information. Everyone agreed with this. In the future, Vote411 will be included in any press releases and news articles.

Regarding the Candidate Forum, which was held on October 5 and was well-attended, Felicia learned a few things which will be corrected in future forums. First, the written statements she read for candidates who did not appear will need to be timed. Second, she will rotate the order of questions posed to candidates, rather than go in ballot order. Third, a hot water setup with paper cups for beverages will be provided along with the desserts. Felicia will also explain to candidates that questions posed by the League are vetted, but questions posed by an audience member are not. That said, if a question posed by an audience member is irrelevant or inflammatory, as the moderator she will not allow the question. It was noted that it has been some time since we have had an in-person forum because of Covid, so these types of issues need to be revisited. Akkana suggested that we prepare a Frequently Asked Questions sheet for candidates, and this suggestion was agreed to by all.

**Email Aliases and Phishing**

Felicia said that each time she receives an email from the League “alias” email, president @LWVLA.org, it is either spam or phishing. One such email she received was a very sophisticated email purportedly from Addie (perhaps done with Artificial Intelligence?). Because of this, Felicia wondered about the utility of using these alias emails. Barbara said that one advantage is when the person filling a position changes, and Akkana noted that email addresses are easy to forge. Based on these responses, Felicia will not ask us to do away with alias emails but will distrust any messages she receives.

**Legislative Preview**

Barbara reported that each year we hold a legislative preview before the legislative session. Prior to Covid, these events were held at Fuller Lodge and were preceded by a dinner. We ask our representative, currently Christine Chandler, to select a date, usually a Thursday. We then invite our senators and the representative to explain their priorities for the session and invite another speaker to talk about a topic of interest to the League that will be addressed during the session. This session will be a short session dealing with the budget and the Governor’s call. Some of the issues on the Governor’s call may include gun safety, paid medical leave, solar credits, and modernizing the legislature.

At Felicia’s request, Barbara will determine the date, venue, and whom to invite. Barbara will contact AAUW, our usual cosponsor and the organization which usually provides the moderator. Barbara asked Amy to check into the Fuller Lodge schedule for early January. Barbara will write to the board when she learns more, after which Felicia will write to AAUW.

A dinner will precede the legislative preview. Barbara said that usually we have 10 to 15 participants. This year we will try Blue Window. Ellen offered her house as Plan B.

**Chamber of Commerce**

Last month, Felicia suggested that the League join the local Chamber of Commerce as a non-profit member. She wants a way for our League to become more up close with members of our community and to attract more members. Felicia received both positive and negative responses regarding this proposal. A discussion and vote on this issue will be delayed until our next meeting.

**Miscellaneous**

The LWVNM is holding a forum on gun safety on December 5, beginning at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Representative Christine Chandler will be the principal speaker.

Rebecca asked permission for the League to send a flyer prepared by the Los Alamos Health Council to our members. This flyer will advertise community meetings which will discuss needs identified in the community. This was agreed to.

**Important Dates**

The deadline for the next newsletter is October 31, 2023.

The next board meeting will be December 7, 2023, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Church Fellowship Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

*Minutes submitted by Rebecca Chaiken*