



UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos
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League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

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Calendar

June 7 Primary Election Day
June 16 Lunch with a Leader: Claudia Borchert, Zoom, noon
No Board Meeting in June

Lunch with a Leader: Claudia Borchert

On Thursday, June 16, Lunch with a Leader will be via Zoom from noon to 1:00. Claudia Borchert will be our speaker. (The Zoom address will be sent later.)

- Claudia Borchert joined the New Mexico Environment Department in November 2020 as the Environmental Protection Division's Climate Change Policy Coordinator. As a member of the leadership team of New Mexico's interagency [Climate Change Task Force](#), Borchert is developing a suite of climate action strategies for the state's 5-year climate action plan to achieve the statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction goal of at least 45% below 2005 levels by 2030. She is also implementing climate actions specified in [Governor Lujan Grisham's 2019-003 Executive](#)

[Order on Addressing Climate Change and Energy Waste](#), including cleaner tailpipe emission standards for passenger cars and reducing the carbon intensity of transportation fuels through a market-based clean fuel standard.

Borchert spent the previous three years serving as Santa Fe County's Sustainability Manager, where she implemented a plan for the County's operations to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2024 through a combination of behind-the-meter and utility-subscriber photovoltaic-sourced electricity. Other past work includes running the County's water and wastewater utility, planning for sustainable use of the City of Santa Fe's climate-change-impacted water supply, and creating laws that provide in-stream flow for the Santa Fe River.

She grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, attended Amherst College in Massachusetts to pursue her undergraduate degree in geology, and received a Master's degree in hydro-

geology from UNM's Earth and Planetary Sciences Department. After working in the private sector for several years, Borchert began her 20-year career as a civil servant, working in water resource and climate change planning for city, county, and state government.

The topics she will cover include:

- The NM Governor's climate change initiatives
- NMED's recent rules regulating the oil and gas industry and new motor vehicle emission standards
- The state's Climate Change Task Force climate action plan.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Welcome, New Member!

Graham Mark, a recent new member, writes:

I grew up in Los Alamos, went away to college, returned, and worked against the Vietnam War while employed at the Lab, went to grad school, returned with a PhD in evolutionary biology and programmed computers at the Lab for 27 years.

I retired eleven years ago. These eleven years have been marvelous. I am fortunate to be alive, to have health and leisure, to have time to read for pleasure, to have the internet at my fingers.

These eleven years have been catastrophic. The unimaginable has arrived: climate disaster, Trump, January 6, Covid, Ukraine.

Santa Fe Catches the Suffragist Fever

After countless hours of research, drafting, editing, and mounting, the League's 100th anniversary library exhibit was open to the public in August 2021--only one year late. We covered a time span from the earliest inclusion of women in the government of the Iroquois to our League's march in the local rodeo parade, decked out in suffragist white with gold and purple sashes. We were quite sad when our month was up and all our hard work was packed in boxes to rest quietly for who knew how long.

So, we were delighted when the Santa Fe Public Library asked to show part of the exhibit for the month of June. We took several boxes and a few artifacts to the Southside Branch Library (6599 Jaguar Drive) and hope the visitors there will have as much fun as we did learning about the suffragists and the League of Women Voters.

If you missed the Los Alamos exhibit, consider taking a trip to Santa Fe to enjoy a lovely new library with some of our favorite panels and activities.

Becky Shankland



Join Zero Waste Los Alamos!

Several LWVLA members are on the Environmental Sustainability Board's Zero Waste Team that works on various issues in the County:

Led by the County's Angelica Gurule, the focus since 2019 has been preventing food waste, which is a primary source of greenhouse gas emissions.

- 40% of food worldwide is wasted.
- Buy only what you need.
- Eat what you buy. Store it correctly. If you can't eat it right away, freeze it. If you can't freeze it, make it into soup. If you can't soup it, compost it.
- It doesn't matter if the fruit or veggies are ugly. Eat up!
- Share the harvest. If you have an excess of, for example, zucchini or apricots (in our gopher-infested, deer-hungry, bear-prowled neighborhoods), put up a sign to invite others to come pick.

County Council efforts:

- The County Council and staff are taking composting seriously and looking for a community-wide solution. In the interim, the County supports PEEC and Zero Waste with an annual distribution of backyard composting-tumblers with a companion countertop waste bin for scraps.
- NOTE: An excellent local example of community composting is the partnership among the Santa Fe School District, Santa Fe restaurants, and Reunity recycle. The clients pay for food-waste pickup, and Reunity composts it into the black gold of both compost and worm castings. Check out Reunity at <https://www.reunityresources.com>.

Efforts delayed by the pandemic are now restarting. The Zero Waste Team is:

- Working at the summer concerts to educate people about separating their

trash/recycle/compost, and hosting sets of separation bins throughout the park. Educate the kids, and they'll be on patrol;

- Supporting efforts at three of the five elementary schools and the LAMS Environment Green Team along with their amazingly inspiring Green Team Teacher Sponsors. (Much of what the Zero Waste Team does is inspired by the Chamisa playbook, whose students go on to be Zero Waste leaders at LAMS and LAHS);
- Hosting the Recycle Fashion Show and the fourth grade Water Fest;
- Sponsoring a Zero Waste Business Champion, taking nominations from the community;
- Earlier, interviewing the twenty-plus restaurants who would like to become more "green" by reducing food and nonbiodegradable (plastic, Styrofoam) waste. To these ends, the Team is working with Ryn Herrmann and the Chamber of Commerce to create a local Green Restaurant Certification.
- Tabling at the Farmer's Market, Earth Day, and Bear Fest to teach about food waste and protecting animals from death by trash;
- Writing a monthly Zero Waste Article for the *Daily Post* and *LA Reporter* that we hope many of you have read;
- Presenting a drive-in movie in September.

The Zero Waste Team, along with many LWVLA members, also supported the Los Alamos Resiliency Energy & Sustainability Task Force (LARES).

If you would like to join the Team along with other LWVLA members to work on a specific project, please contact Angelica Gurule angelica.gurule@lacnm.us or Sonja Martinez sonja.martinez@lacnm.us.

Jody Benson

Observer Corps Reports – County Council, 5/3/22

The session was conducted in hybrid format and was attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Reagor, and Scott. Councilor Lepsch was absent.

Presentation by New Mexico Counties

Joy Esparsen (Deputy Executive Director) and Taylor Horst (Risk Management Director) provided an informational overview of New Mexico Counties (www.nmcounties.org), which has been meeting on an annual basis since 1936 to address county government concerns, collaborate on initiatives, share resources, and provide networking opportunities for counties and businesses. NM Counties is a professional association of elected officials and employees from all 33 counties in the state. Several councilors were familiar with the organization from attending the Better Informed Public Officials (BIPO) Conference held every two years, focusing on the education of newly elected officials and providing them with a better knowledge of their respective duties of office.

Approval of installation of two DC Fast Chargers

Council unanimously approved items in its Consent Agenda, including a request from DPU to authorize funds for the purchase and installation of two DC Fast Chargers, one each at the Municipal Building and White Rock Visitor Center parking lots. The Board of Public Utilities (BPU) had previously recommended that Council approve this request. These will be the first level 3 DC fast chargers in Los Alamos and will help meet the growing electric vehicle charging needs of residents, commuters, and visitors. Users will be charged a fee of \$0.30/kWh.

Proposed revision of Official Zoning Map of Los Alamos County

Council introduced an ordinance that would revise the zoning map by rezoning two parcels (approximately 4.75 acres combined) from Multiple-Family Residential, very high density

(R-3-H-40) to Mixed-Use (MU). The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended at a public hearing held on April 21 that this request be denied.

Inflation and COVID pay for County employees

Council unanimously passed a motion to tentatively approve the proposal outlined in the agenda package for one-time payments to non-union County employees and to direct management to discuss the concept with the four unions.

Steve Lynne began his presentation by noting that County employees are currently being negatively affected by inflation and by ongoing impacts associated with the COVID pandemic. During the past few months, inflation has more than doubled and fuel prices have almost doubled. To partially address these impacts, Lynne proposed a one-time lump-sum Inflation and COVID payment, with amounts based on a tiered structure that provides a higher dollar amount to those more greatly affected, i.e., lower paid employees as well as employees who commute from outside of the County. A third tier allows payments for temporary and casual employees.

- Tier 1 - \$2000 for non-exempt employees, and for exempt employees with base salaries less than \$80,000 (about two-thirds of the County's employees),
- Tier 2 - \$1000 for exempt employees with base salaries of \$80,000 or over, and
- Tier 3 - \$250 for temporary and casual employees.

The estimated cost of the outlined payments is about \$1,150,000. Lynne hoped to complete negotiations with unions so as to be able to return to Council on May 24 for approval of the payments and associated budget revisions.

Golf course design and construction

Following clarification of the scope of work, Council unanimously approved a services agreement for \$393,000 with iConsult (dba iCon Golf Studio and GrassRoots Golf Design) for golf course design and construction

administration services. At the request of Councilor Reagor, this business item had been removed from the Consent Agenda at the beginning of the session to allow for discussion.

During the public comment period at the start of the session, resident Kurt Anast had noted that the scope of work listed in the bid package specified various improvements only for existing greens, tee boxes, sand traps, and specific areas in disrepair but did not mention new ones or improvements. Anast asked whether the bid provided for any flexibility. Later in the discussion Eric Martinez confirmed this would be possible and that additional public meetings would be held to obtain such input.

Presenters Eric Martinez (County Engineer) and Juan Rael (Public Works Director) reviewed Council's prior discussions on this project. At its 1/4/22 meeting, Council had directed the County Manager to move forward to develop bid-ready documents to provide for golf course improvements. Two proposals were received. The Statement of Work includes Phase I (holes 4-18) to upgrade tee-box design, construct restrooms, with all improvements to be in accordance with United States Golf Association and Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Phase II (holes 1-3) would include a redesign of those holes and the driving range.

Councilor Reagor said he believed Council's intent in approving the budget for this project was that the architect would develop Phase II, but that Phase I could be considered maintenance tasks to be developed in-house by the greenskeeper and golf course manager. Councilor Scott said that proposal reflected the intent of Council as she understood it, but requested confirmation that Phase I of the project would include improvements to the course and not just maintenance of existing features. Martinez confirmed that it would include improvements, and that golf course-specific expertise was required to design and construct the proposed improvements.

Community Services Director Cory Styron added that the ADA requirements need to be addressed by a design professional and that

there are not enough staff to maintain regular golf course maintenance while overseeing the proposed improvements. Councilor Izraelevitz asked for clarification on why the ADA requirements require a design professional, and Styron answered that currently the tee boxes are not accessible to mechanical golf carts, and the proposed improvements to fairway and bunker slopes and the construction of handicapped accessible restrooms would require new designs.

Quorums on County commissions

During the Councilor Comments section of the agenda, Councilor Reagor noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission would have insufficient members to constitute a quorum while its chair was on temporary leave of absence. He felt that the county should develop a policy about having temporary commissioners as needed to have a quorum.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council Work Session, 5/17/22

The session was conducted remotely via Zoom, attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Lepsch, Reagor, and Scott. Our observer report is based upon discussions during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda packet for the meeting.

CodeRED Telephone Emergency System

Beverley Simpson, Emergency Manager for Los Alamos County, reported on CodeRED, a communication system that allows individuals to receive county-wide emergency alerts. Use of the CodeRED system has assisted in keeping the public informed. Through the first weeks of the Cerro Pelado Fire, the CodeRED system sent approximately 5,000 emails, made about 26,500 phone calls, and delivered about 9,500 texts. Councilor Izraelevitz asked how many people have not signed up with

CodeRED to receive messages by any of the three mechanisms (phone, text, email). Simpson did not have an answer but said she would reach out to the company to provide that data. She also noted that telephone landlines are automatically registered.

Transportation Board update

David North, Board chair, summarized the board's major focus areas of the past year, with follow-up comments and details provided by Juan Rael, Public Works Director. North elaborated on many of the projects, noting that "now that we have full Board representation across most areas, we actually do have eyes and boots on the ground. ... This is further helped by the fact that staff at all levels have been extremely helpful, and that can't be overstated."

- *Sherwood Boulevard roadways and utilities improvement project.* — North commented that "We did hit a bit of a delay and it has to do with the fact that our knowledge about where the utilities actually are is not that great. There are some mapping errors." Encountering subsurface rock, as is common for underground construction in White Rock, has also delayed work.
- *Street lighting.* — North said the Board has also had lengthy discussions about dark skies and street lighting. "Street lighting is still controversial, and that's probably going to go on for quite some time," he said. He explained that part of the problem is that the State has jurisdiction over State highways in town, such as lighting along the entrance to town leading up to the traffic circle. "That's not anything that our County people can do anything about, that being a State road," he said, "but we could perhaps open up a dialog with them about their standards and whether there could be a little more flexibility where it's appropriate."
- *Airport safety and development project.* — A proposal for upgrades to the airport to eliminate safety concerns is moving forward. North added: "The other thing that is definitely part of the issue is having fuel available, Jet A and Av gas and upgraded facilities, especially the Jet A because that is what the emergency helicopter uses. But there's also the issue, for example, right now, that we can't adequately support fire operations at that airport. In an emergency, we'd do whatever we could, but it's not really set up to do all of the things that it would be good for it to be able to do."
- *Cumbres del Norte road improvements project.* — North said the Cumbres del Norte road improvement project generated more public input than usual and, "it turned out that that public input greatly improved the project and how it's being done. But the real point is, the more public input we can get, there are a lot of people who know little details about what's going on with these projects, and it's extremely helpful in finetuning them in these processes."
- *Canyon Road reconstruction.* — "On Canyon Road, the public input again had an effect on the speed limits there," North said. "There's concerns about crosswalks and what can be done."
- *33rd/34th & Arkansas Road & utility improvement project.* — North explained that the project has been delayed because contractors are flooded with contracts. Also, the water line work for this project will be delayed because bids are coming in higher than expected.
- *Lab coordination (NM 4, Truck Route, buses).* — Better Lab coordination is needed to increase the use of public transit by Lab employees. Otherwise, if the Lab continues to expand, we're going to face some severe problems on our roads. Encouraging increased use of public transit by Lab employees is hampered by the absence of internal movement within the Lab for people who've arrived on public transportation.
- *Concerns about rush hour traffic flow.* — Councilor Izraelevitz asked about projections for traffic flow when the Lab returns to full onsite work, specifically traffic flow near the Medical Center where

the traffic pattern has been reduced to one lane in each direction with a center turn lane. “We haven’t had any regular rush hour activity there since the road diet went into effect; we really don’t know,” North said. “The good thing about the road diet portion of Trinity is that, if we do see a significant amount of traffic in a short period of time, we can always revert to the four-lane section,” County Engineer Eric Martinez said. North noted that rush hour in White Rock near the truck route would get worse during the upcoming redesign and construction of the intersection there.

- *Bicycle Transportation Plan.* — The Board continues to work with county staff on a Bicycle Transportation Plan.

Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) update

Dina Pesenson, Board Chair, summarized the ESB’s accomplishments over the past year, including:

- participating in the Waste, Consumption, and Natural Resources Subcommittee to the Los Alamos Resiliency, Energy and Sustainability (LARES) Task Force, and reviewing the LARES Final Report,
- providing guidance for the Food Composting Feasibility Study Project,
- conducting education outreach on use of the Recycle Coach app, food waste, and zero waste initiatives,
- presenting and making recommendations to Council regarding a glyphosate ban on County land, which was subsequently incorporated into the County’s Integrated Pest Management Plan updated by the Community Services Department, and
- packing and distributing 150 backyard composting bins in effort to reduce food waste sent to the landfill.

Ongoing challenges —

In addition to the impending closure of the Rio Rancho landfill in about 5 years, Pesenson pointed out that the county is facing another challenge in that landfill and transportation costs increase yearly by 3%. “In this case, any

sort of diversion from our landfill would be very useful.”

Councilor Izraelevitz complimented the ESB on its role in the community. “The Environmental Sustainability Board is not only a great board because of what they do but also their outreach and their educational processes. I think it is a model for any other boards.”

Councilor Scott asked about the ESB’s promotion of backyard composting kits and the interest that people had in getting those. She asked how many people would continue to compost in their backyard if the county had a centralized composting system. Pesenson explained that a commercial composting or food composting system in the county could accept things that cannot be composted in the backyard. “One would not replace the other,” she concluded. “They are complementary and they work together.”

Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study overview

Angelica Gurule, ESB Staff Liaison, provided an overview of the final Food Waste Composting Feasibility Study report prepared by SCS Engineers. Michelle Leonard and Craig Coker from SCS were also present to answer technical questions. ESB unanimously accepted the draft report at its meeting on March 17, 2022, and unanimously approved the report’s recommendations to implement a food composting system at Bayo Canyon using a windrow system and for the county to provide drop-off sites for residents and curbside collection for businesses. Following the presentation, Chair Ryti summarized the concerns he had heard from Council during the question-and-answer session. “The current plan was to vote on this next week, but I think the questions raised by Council will require additional time to answer,” Ryti said. He asked that the list of follow-up items be addressed before staff returned to Council with the proposal for approval.

Study goals and objectives. —

The goal of the study was to identify the most cost-effective location, technology, and collection plan for food waste processing. The report provides a roadmap of what is best for

the County and the environment and can be used as a decision-making guide.

Food waste processing technologies. —

SCS Engineers evaluated five technologies: windrow composting (i.e., turned windrows), aerated static pile composting, covered aerated static pile composting, aerobic in-vessel composting, and dry anaerobic digestion. The report rated windrow composting as the preferred method because of its lower capital and unit operating costs although this technology also requires more space than the other methods.

Compost recipe. —

A compost recipe was developed by SCS to evaluate the relative quantities of food scraps and yard trimmings necessary to build a sustainable compost system. The carbon:nitrogen ratio is a critical criterion for the recipe. The bottom line, however, is that the amount of yard trimmings currently collected by the county's environmental services may be insufficient to compost the food waste predicted to be generated if the participation rate exceeds about 50%.

Composting locations. —

The report evaluated four locations for a food waste composting facility: Bayo Canyon, two locations at Overlook Park, and the Eco Station. The Bayo Canyon site was ranked as the preferred site although it would require rezoning of the land and negotiations with San Ildefonso Pueblo.

Collection options. —

Curbside collection and drop-off sites were both evaluated. The report recommended that the county provide drop-off sites for residents and curbside collection for businesses, in part because the consultant's survey of other municipalities found that many residents do not want to store their organic material inside their homes in-between curbside collection or drop-off days, which affects participation rates.

Councilors raised questions and expressed concerns on several aspects of the report:

- Public participation rate and implications for the compost recipe

- SCS estimated that 50% of residents would use the food-waste program based on participation across the country and existing County participation in the Green Waste Program. Councilor Izraelevitz was concerned that the 50% estimate might be too high because residents may be deterred by the inconvenience of taking food waste to drop-off boxes. He requested statistics for resident participation in the glass recycling program to provide another point of comparison.
- The SCS report estimated that the County currently doesn't generate enough yard waste for a sustainable compost recipe, being short by about 300 tons/yr. Councilor Scott asked how the county might obtain such material to get a good recipe. SCS listed some hypothetical options, but Scott concluded, "So we don't have a specific path forward."
- Water use
 - Councilor Reagor asked about the amount of water needed to make this decomposition process work. Craig Coker of SCS responded that the desired consistency is that of a wet kitchen sponge, i.e., not quite dripping. "Fortunately, food waste has about 75% moisture content. We think that there is enough water in food waste and yard trimmings such that no additional water is required," Coker said.
 - Councilor Hand asked if non-potable water can be used. Coker replied that, yes, any pathogens in the non-potable water would be destroyed by the extended period of time (at least 15 days) at which the windrow pile is kept at a minimum temperature of 131°F.
- Acceptable food waste and food waste containers
 - Councilor Reagor questioned why food waste needed to be collected in plastic bags instead of paper. "Aren't paper

bags biodegraded more readily?" he asked. Gurule responded that the current plan required food waste be manually separated from yard trimming because you don't want food to go through grinder, and paper bags would become soggy and disintegrate.

- Councilor Derkacs asked how residents would be expected to transport their food waste to a collection site. Michelle Leonard answered that there are a lot of options such as biodegradable bags provided by or sold by County. "Most communities advise residents to store food scraps in the refrigerator or freezer until they are ready to go to the collection site," said Leonard. "The County would need to provide education on options."
- Councilor Reagor asked about cardboard or other materials currently not accepted by the recycling program, for example, pizza boxes. Will such items eventually be able to go into the composting stream? Coker said the problem with composting food packaging is that, whereas paper cartons used to be lined with wax, nowadays they are increasingly lined with polyethylene, which is not degradable.
- Windrow technology
 - Councilor Derkacs asked about the environmental impact of windrows, which is listed as being highest among the alternatives. Leonard acknowledged that odor impacts can be high depending on the proximity of "sensitive receptors" like hikers or homes.
 - Chair Ryti asked, "We've heard some of the issues being raised, such as odors emitting from the sewage sludge. Who runs the biosolids program now?" We wondered whether there are lessons learned that we could take advantage of. Gurule said: "The current composting program is run by DPU. Philo Shelton and Jack Richardson run probably the most pristine compost operation that I've seen in the State of New Mexico. I don't have any concerns about the odors from biosolids or food waste if the site is managed properly. Of course, that will take staff training and we're willing to take on that additional education and knowledge level for our staff."
 - Councilor Hand wondered how the program would prevent dispersal of windrows by high winds. Coker explained that a powdered crust forms on top of the windrows during decomposition, so wind dispersal is only an issue when the compost is being turned as part as the curing process. The solution he recommended is to install a weather station which the operator monitors for wind speed and direction to indicate when specific activities can safely be done.
- Market for compost — One point made in the report is that the resulting compost can be sold to help offset the costs of the facility. Councilor Izraelevitz asked if there is a local market for 7,000 cubic yards per year of compost. Gurule replied, "Right now, the compost that we do generate, we can't keep it on the shelf long enough; it's a hot commodity locally. Not only do our own residents request it constantly, but we also typically don't have any available because it's gone. We have vendors from off-site the Hill coming to purchase the compost. So, I don't think we'll have a problem marketing the compost."
- Economic costs —
 - Councilor Scott asked for additional information based on a holistic approach to economic costs that includes the costs of no-action compared to the options presented, the effects on carbon emissions, and the shipping costs of unused mulch. "I just want to show that we looked at options

and we are picking the most cost-effective and efficient option,” she said.

- Councilor Izraelevitz echoed Councilor Scott’s thoughts. “We’re not going to make money on this. It’s going to cost us some money. I understand that, I appreciate that, that it’s a community value. I’m not scared of spending money, but I just want to have a realistic view of what that cost will be so that we can communicate it to the community. But I think the community will accept it, even if it’s a larger cost than we think now but not if we come into it without this additional information.”
- Partnerships with other communities. — Councilor Izraelevitz said, “I’d be interested in an exchange on partnering with other communities, and it may be relevant, because of space or transportation, to have this compost facility offsite, such as in Santa Fe, Espanola, or Rio Arriba County, so I’d be very interested in continuing this conversation, asking these other communities if they’d be interested in participating.”

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Reports – County Council, 5/24/22

The session was conducted via Zoom and attended by Council Chair Ryti and Councilors Derkacs, Hand, Izraelevitz, Lepsch, Reagor, and Scott. Our observer report is based upon discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda packet for the meeting. Not all agenda items are covered in this report.

Public hearing on Mobile Food Vending Ordinance

Council unanimously approved the Mobile Food Vending Ordinance and its incorporation into Chapter 16 of the County’s Development

Code. The Planning & Zoning Commission had recommended approval of this ordinance at its May 1 meeting. It was presented by Senior Planner Sobia Sayeda of the Community Development Department.

Sayeda said that the next step is to look at possible permanent locations that might be available to food truck vendors, for instance, setting aside some parking spaces in larger, county-owned parking lots that would be available on a first-come basis, or working with private owners to set up mobile food vending parks.

Councilor Derkacs said, “I’d just want to point out that the survey and the other forms of public input indicate there is community support for mobile food vending. This service is especially important for events and on weekends when many of our local restaurants are closed, but I think it is important to balance the location of the vendors with our established restaurants, so that it doesn’t interfere with their businesses. We want to make sure that the community can support all of these things.”

Some findings and comments from public survey conducted October 8 to November 8, 2021:

- 90% (585) of people surveyed consider food trucks to be a good way to test out new restaurant concepts in Los Alamos.
- “It’s an excellent introduction to the community, and an excellent way to bring new options to Los Alamos. There isn’t enough business to have new full-time establishment restaurants, but food trucks could have enough clientele.”
- “I would love more diverse food, even the basics. I’m from a big city and this is the main thing that bothers me about living in White Rock and Los Alamos.”

Canyon Road and utility upgrades project

Council unanimously approved funding for the joint roadway and utilities project to re-pave Canyon Road from Diamond Drive to Oppenheimer Drive. A total of 1,100 feet of the 1950’s waterline will be replaced, three electric conduit crossings will be installed and 700 feet

of sewer mains below and adjacent to the road will be replaced.

Inflation pay

Council unanimously approved the distribution of inflation pay in a one-time lump sum for non-union employees and for union groups that have agreed with the proposal (three of the four union groups at the time of the Council meeting). Expanding on the support expressed by other councilors, Councilor Izraelevitz said, “I also appreciate the consideration of the fact that we have quite a large percentage of our staff that commute to Los Alamos and we want to make sure we are able to compensate them for the extra expenses and maintain the attractiveness of working here in Los Alamos.”

Outreach to communities affected by the Calf Canyon/Hermit Peak fire

“We have begun the process of doing outreach to other communities that have been affected,” reported Lynne. “Other communities are much more impacted and experiencing a little bit more of what we have experienced in the past... I just want you to know we’re concerned about our neighbors.”

Updated FY2022 Los Alamos federal priorities

Council unanimously approved the updated 2022 Los Alamos federal priorities as presented by Councilor Ryti:

- *Legislative support for appropriations to fund LANL missions and environmental cleanup at LANL* — The County’s high priorities include cleanup of key land transfer parcels, moving TRU waste from Los Alamos (Area G on TA-54) to WIPP, cleanup of the chromium plume, and protection of PM-3 drinking water well.
- *Legislative support for extending the expiring Los Alamos law on land conveyance* — The existing legislated deadline for NNSA to clean up and transfer previously identified parcels would be extended from 2022 to 2032.

- *Support for additional land transfers to the County* — These are critical to support the needs of both the community and LANL by enabling workforce housing, opportunities for new and existing businesses and recreation, and off-LANL campus relocation of NNSA support facilities.
- *Secure funding for the County to support improved infrastructure projects that serve the County* — Potential infrastructure projects for which funding could be sought as opportunities arise:
 - Sustainable energy projects: purchase of Solar Plus Storage (batteries), purchase solar development (a photovoltaic array in northern New Mexico), construction of a local pumped hydro storage facility in conjunction with a local solar site, and purchase of a small modular reactor under development in the Carbon Free Power Project.
 - Housing and economic development, and social services projects: completion of DP Road infrastructure projects, and development of a one-stop Community Health Services hub.
 - Transportation projects: construction of commuter transit centers in Los Alamos, White Rock, and Española, which would include electric vehicle charging and hydrogen refueling capabilities.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with City of Española and Rio Arriba County

Council unanimously approved MOUs with the City of Española and Rio Arriba County for a Regional Strategic Projects Fund and instructed the County Manager to pursue discussions with the partners for potential regional capital projects and regional partnership proposals to bring to the Council. The Española City Council and the Rio Arriba County Commission are also considering approval of these MOUs this month. Councilor Derkacs expressed her appreciation that the MOUs have been broadened to include social services projects and other strategic projects as well as capital projects.

County Boards and Commissions

Council unanimously approved FY23 work plans submitted by 11 County boards and commissions and approved the following appointments to fill vacancies in board memberships:

- *Board of Public Utilities (BPU)* — Council interviewed three candidates to fill the upcoming vacancy for the BPU position currently held by Carrie Walker, whose term ends on June 30: Robert Gibson [R], Daniel Leonard [D], and Charles Nakhleh [D]. Council selected Charles Nakhleh (vote 4–3) to fill the vacancy for the 5-year term ending June 30, 2027.
- *Valuation Protests Board* — Council approved the appointments of Wendy Keffeler as Valuation Protests Board (VPB) Professional representative, Richard Klamann as the VPB Community representative and Kevin Talley as the VPB Community representative alternate, all for the term July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024. County staff is continuing the effort to recruit a qualified fourth member.
- *Board of Registration* — Council approved the appointment of Heath Davis [L] to fill the vacancy of the County's Board of Registration for the remainder of the term, which ends on June 30, 2023.

Consent agenda

Council unanimously approved the consent agenda, which included the award of a bid for constructing a new filtration building and filtration treatment process at the Los Alamos Wastewater Treatment Plant. The new filtration process will improve the water quality of the effluent to achieve Class A effluent, which will allow Los Alamos County to expand the use of effluent water and conserve potable water. The higher quality water can be used in closer proximity to populated areas and with fewer restrictions on the times when irrigation can occur.

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

May's Lunch with a Leader: Representative Christine Chandler

Speaking from Seattle where she was attending a tax conference, Representative Christine Chandler opened her talk with a few remarks about the 2021 redistricting in New Mexico. She said the Independent Redistricting Committee (IRC), which was created to advise the legislature, had worked well. The House enacted the IRC recommendations as far as they went, but the committee had not been able to reach consensus among the tribes, so the House sought their input and then adjusted the maps. Redistricting was a success from the House perspective.

Our district, HD 43, is now more compact, with a population of about 29,500. Gallina and Cuba are no longer in the district, but some of Sandoval County is still a part of it. HD 43 now contains all of La Cienega in Santa Fe County. Chandler commented that Los Alamos and Santa Fe are growing, while the rural communities are contracting. The district is now more cohesive in terms of policy, but it is useful to have input from communities that are not like us, she said.

During the 30-day session 505 bills were filed, 250 in the House and 245 in the Senate. Of those, 64 passed. The final budget was \$8.4 billion, about a 14% increase. A \$15/hour minimum wage was budgeted for state employees. A 7% wage increase was budgeted for all state employees, including those in the public schools, and higher education funding was increased by 4.7%. In addition, teachers will get a \$10,000 increase at each level. Even with those increases, the legislature was able to maintain a 30% reserve. "It was a strong and successful session," Chandler said. Nevertheless, we need to find ways to move away from our reliance on oil and gas. She is working on how to diversify revenue streams and remarked that she had some ideas from the tax conference in Seattle.

Chandler, who is the chair of the House Taxation and Revenue Committee, was the

lead sponsor of HB 163, which provides tax relief by increasing the child tax credit, lowering the state GRT, providing a tax rebate, and expanding and extending the solar market development tax credit as well as other measures. The bill also provided a one-time \$1,000 tax credit for nurses working in hospitals.

Another achievement of the legislature was to finally cut the interest rate for payday loans from 175% to 36%. Tremendous effort went into passing the legislation, but it succeeded at last thanks to efforts by Rep. Susan Herrera and Speaker Brian Egolf.

Chandler is very excited to have sponsored HJR1, a constitutional amendment that, if passed by the voters in November, will create an exemption to the anti-donation clause so that the state could invest directly in programs to help low-income households with hookups for broadband and other essential services.

During the Special Session in April, the legislature “renegotiated the relationship with the Governor,” who had vetoed the junior bill. That is a supplemental budget bill, Chandler explained; HB 2 is the main budget bill. Part of the junior bill consists of earmarks. During the Special Session it was cleaned up and passed along with a requirement that the earmarks be published. The legislature also passed another rebate package. Residents will receive three rebates in all, one in May, a second in July (income tested), and a third in August (part 2 of the May rebate). Chandler commented that giving rebates is not a policy; it’s a quick way to address some of the budget surplus.

During the 2023 legislative session, there will be a push to lower income taxes. Chandler is reluctant to do so. She said that oil and gas income won’t last forever and it’s not easy to raise taxes once they have been cut. She and other legislators will work on taxes over the summer.

In response to questions, Chandler agreed that the state needs a better trained workforce and noted that there has been an effort to provide more jobs training programs. Employers are having difficulty finding workers in part because of inadequate childcare. In the

hospitality and tourism industries, she thinks employers need to make the jobs more attractive by providing benefits as well as higher wages. It would be to their advantage, she said, noting that employees are more productive if they are not distracted by family concerns. She supports legislation to require paid family and sick leave.

Asked whether she will support a constitutional amendment to create an Independent Redistricting Commission during the next legislative session, Chandler said she needs to see the bill. In response to another question, she said that ranked choice voting makes her nervous because it’s complicated and there are already attacks on the voting system. She does favor runoff elections and increasing access to the ballot.

Barbara Calef

Board and Off-Board Officers and Directors Enjoy a Retreat

These board and off-board members had an inspiring time brainstorming ideas for our coming year after an entertaining warm-up exercise led by Felicia. We focused especially on the current issues raised by the Development Code Update.



Figure 1 Clockwise from the back left: Ellen Mills, Rebecca Chaiken, Jean Dewart, Becky Shankland, Felicia Orth, Bob Williams, Wendy Swanson, Barbara Calef, Jody Benson.

LWVLA Board of Directors 2022-2023

Officers:

- Co-president: Barbara Calef
- Co-president: Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: Felicia Orth
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Rosmarie Frederickson

Directors:

- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones
- Newsletter Editor: Robert Williams
- Director at Large: Addie Jacobson
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- County Council and P&Z Observers: June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin
- Membership: Jean Dewart & Dotty Reilly
- Nominations: Ellen Mills & Leslie Wallstrom
- Website and Facebook: Madhavi Garimella & Helena Whyte
- Video Editor: Eduardo Santiago



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail to: LWV Los Alamos / P.O. Box 158 / Los Alamos, NM 87544

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone(s): _____ E-mail: _____

_____ Check here to receive our Newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving postage and paper.

_____ **OR** Check here if you prefer to have a hard copy of the newsletter mailed to you.

_____ Check here to receive occasional friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

Membership Categories: all checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are now tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deduction statement.

_____ Single membership: \$45.

_____ Household membership (two or more people at the same address): \$70.

_____ Single Sustaining membership: \$75.

_____ Household Sustaining membership (two or more people at the same address): \$95.

_____ Student membership: \$0 (must be 16 or over).

_____ Contribution to support League work: \$ _____.

Interests and Ways to Help the League (check as many as apply)

Topics of Interest

- ___ Affordable Housing
- ___ Local Government
- ___ Education
- ___ Elections, Voting Rights
- ___ Water Issues
- ___ Land Use
- ___ Health Care
- ___ Money in Politics
- ___ Sustainability
- ___ Living Wage
- ___ Public Transportation
- ___ Environment
- ___ Other area of interest: _____

Ways to Help with League Activities

- ___ Voter Registration
- ___ Organize/provide refreshments at forums
- ___ Observer Corps: Council, DPU, P&Z, etc.
- ___ Write newsletter articles
- ___ Assist in developing the Voter Guide (editing, developing questions, data entry, etc.)
- ___ Assist with Lunch with a Leader
- ___ Website/Social Media – Technical assistance and content development
- ___ Advocate for League positions – Communicate with local, state, and federal leaders
- ___ Serve on LWV-Los Alamos Board (we need a Treasurer and a Lead for the Voter Guide)
- ___ Other ideas? (See the *March, 2022 Update* for details.)

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