

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LOS ALAMOS

UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos
P.O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544
<https://my.lwv.org/new-mexico/los-alamos>
Volume 77, Number 5, September 2024

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Calendar

September 17	National Voter Registration Day
September 19	Lunch with a Leader, Unitarian Church, Taraka Dale, noon
September 24	Board Meeting, Unitarian Church, 11 a.m.
October 7	Candidate Forum, UNM-LA, 7 p.m. (6:30 p.m. for refreshments)
October 8	Early Voting Begins

September Lunch with a Leader: Taraka Dale

Taraka Dale will be our Leader for the September 19 Lunch with a Leader from noon to 1 p.m. at the Unitarian Church. She is a scientist, principal investigator, and the Biomass and Biodiversity Team Leader in the Bioscience Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory. She received her B.S. in Biochemistry from Allegheny College in 1999 and her Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2005.

Dr. Dale has 20 years of experience in the design and development of mid- to high-throughput assays for biochemical research, and her group focuses on applications that utilize algae and other non-model



Taraka Dale,
<https://discovr.labworks.org/taraka-dale>

microorganisms as platforms for enabling the production of cost-effective biofuels and bioproducts.

She will share insights into the new Bio-Optimized Technologies to keep thermoplastics out of landfills and the environment, aka the BOTTLE program. This collaborative undertaking will use the Lab's R&D 100 award-winning smart microbial cells to create methods to upcycle today's plastic trash and design new, more-degradable plastics for the future.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

President's Message: Democracy Badge-O-Rama!

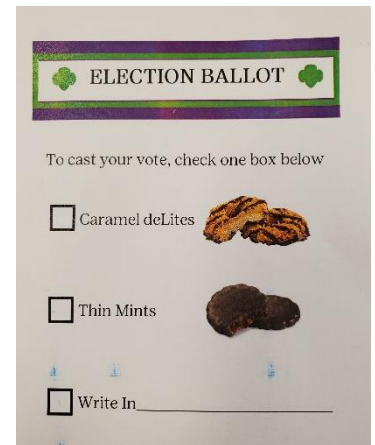
The LWVUS national convention in Washington D.C. at the end of the June included programs on new and intriguing topics, such as the recent collaboration between the League and the Girl Scouts. I had been back in New Mexico from D.C. just a few weeks when I went into town for the Los Alamos Science Fest. Spotting the Girl Scouts booth, I introduced myself to Karen Doebling, the Regional Manager for Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and Taos Counties. She said that a new Democracy badge had been released in 2020, and that 40 Los Alamos Girl Scouts were meeting for a Democracy Badge-O-Rama on August 11. She invited me to speak with the 20 older Scouts about the League of Women Voters.

I arrived just as the younger Girl Scouts, who had been divided into 2 teams, were making their pitch to the older Scouts and adults in support of "President Thin Mints," "President Caramel deLites," or a write-in of their choice (see photo of ballot). They made verbal statements of support and displayed their hand-drawn campaign posters. We all voted, and the Director had begun to count the ballots when I noted that a representative from each team might want to observe the count as it happened. A young Scout from each team was invited over to watch. President Caramel deLites prevailed by 2 votes.

Next, the older Scouts and I went outside to talk about the League. I offered a brief history of the national League and the local League. I talked about the League's candidate forums and voter guides and advocacy before the County Council and the New Mexico Legislature. Finally, I described a number of opportunities for further engagement: joining the League if 16 or older; volunteering for a League event, such as voter registration or candidate forum, noting that the high school Hilltalkers have long served as our forum timekeepers; registering to vote if 18 by November 5; attending the voting machine certification at the County Clerk's office; volunteering as a poll worker if 16 or older; entering the County Clerk's general election sticker contest; or speaking up on an issue of interest in writing or in person.

It was delightful to join them that afternoon and gave me confidence that they are on their way to being informed and active participants in our democracy.

Felicia Orth



The Girl Scouts had a practice ballot as part of their Badge-O-Rama voting exercise.

Welcome, New Members!

James Wernicke writes: I moved to Los Alamos in 2013 with my wife Alejandra and two kids, Trey and Allison. I'm a computer scientist with the Proton Radiography team at LANSCE. In my free time, I enjoy all things outdoors, traveling, and community service. I'm also a local business owner and advocate for responsible entrepreneurship. I also serve on several County and community boards.

We also welcome several other new members, hoping they might write introductions for us later on!

- Susan Mendel
- Bill Priedorsky, Melissa Bartlett
- Catherine D'Anna
- Michael Grimler
- Denise Derkas
- Anne and Steven Laurent
- Haley McEntire
- Ellen Specter

Volunteers Needed for Voter Registration

National Voter Registration Day is Tuesday, September 17th. The League of Women Voters of Los Alamos plans to partner with the Los Alamos County Clerk's Office to register voters at several locations in the County. If you would like to assist in registering voters on this date, please send an email to Felicia Orth at orthf@yahoo.com to sign up. Note that volunteers who wish to register voters need to be trained and to fill out paperwork with the Clerk's office. League members who have not been trained may also work with the Clerk's staff in various locations on that day.

Refreshments Requested for Candidate Forum

The League will hold a Candidate Forum for the November general election on Monday evening October 7 at UNM-LA. We have invited the candidates for NM House District 43, County Council, and County Clerk. It is our tradition to provide refreshments for the Forum. If you would like to contribute sweet or savory finger food, please email Wendy Swanson at w_swanson@mac.com

Observer Corps Report – County Council – August 6, 2024

MRA Commission Petition; BCC Orientation Manual; Inclusivity Task Force; Trinity Drive Improvements

The regular session was attended by Chair Denise Derkacs, Vice Chair Theresa Cull, and Councilors Melanee Hand, Suzie Havemann, Keith Lepsch, David Reagor, and Randall Ryti. Our observer report is based on discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda package.

Petition to Form a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) Commission

Local business owner Lisa Shin presented a petition calling for an advisory commission to be formed for the Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA) in eastern downtown Los Alamos. She asked Council to establish an MRA Commission composed of members who represent the business community, have experience with property development, and banking/financial services to make advisory recommendations regarding County redevelopment projects. She said, "This will ensure community participation, an informed electorate, good governance, and transparency."

Council discussion

County Council decided to take no action by a vote of 5–2, with Councilors Hand and Reagor in opposition.

Noting that the MRA process already includes opportunities for public input, Councilors Cull and Derkacs expressed concern that creating another board would create another layer of bureaucracy that would slow things down. Councilor Havemann added that private sector representation for MRAs was already in place through the County's Commerce and Development Corporation, the

Main Street program, and the Main Street Futures Committee.

Councilor Reagor argued that it was best to obtain public input early, while the development proposal is being scoped and laid out, rather than at the end of the process. Councilor Hand agreed with the perspective of the petitioners concerning the need for increased transparency in development projects. Although a commission may make the process longer, Hand felt that the County should consider how it can provide transparency in every possible way to gain trust of its citizens.

B&C Orientation Manual

Council unanimously approved revisions to the Boards and Commissions Orientation Manual. The Council Rules Working Committee, consisting of Councilors Cull, Hand, and Havemann, prepared the proposed revision in concert with County Attorney Alvin Leaphart. According to the County staff report, "the primary reason for the proposed changes to the Boards and Commissions (B&C) Orientation Manual was to include information and guidance on working groups."

Council directed the County to provide training to B&Cs on the revised rules, at which time the B&Cs will be solicited for additional feedback on the revisions. "It's apparent that there's probably a lot more room for improvement with this B&C guidebook," said Councilor Havemann. "This motion is meant to support a kind of iterative, learning, dynamic process."

Inclusivity Task Force Charter

Council voted 6-1, with Councilor Reagor opposed, to form an Inclusivity Task Force to determine the need for an ongoing advisory board that would make recommendations to Council regarding inclusivity for all races, cultures, genders, and sexual orientations.

The Task Force will provide a final report to Council on the results for the following tasks:

- Determining an overall perspective of inclusivity within the community through discussions with the Los Alamos Public

Schools, Los Alamos National Laboratory, County departments, other Los Alamos social service providers, and community members at large.

- Identifying best practices that have already been developed by other towns/cities, universities, industry, and other organizations, and could be applicable to promoting inclusivity and a feeling of belonging in the Los Alamos community.
- Reviewing the efforts and actions of the Racial Equity and Inclusivity Task Force and the status of their recommendations.
- Proposing near-term actions to address immediate opportunities as well as longer-term efforts to promote sustainable progress and benefit to the community.
- Engaging the community to obtain feedback on a Task Force final report prior to presentation to Council.

A mid-term progress report will be presented to Council in April 2025. The Task Force's charter will expire on November 30, 2025.

In response to a question from Councilor Reagor regarding representation from all political parties, County Attorney Alvin Leaphart and Deputy Manager Linda Matteson confirmed that the County's task forces generally do not have the same party affiliation requirements as its board and commissions.

Update: The County is soliciting letters of interest to fill the newly chartered Los Alamos Inclusivity Task Force. Interested residents should email Letters of Interest to: lacmanager@lacnm.us no later than 5 p.m. Sept. 20. All applicants are expected to be interviewed Sept. 23-30.

Roadway Improvement to Trinity Drive

Council approved 5-2, with Councilors Reagor and Ryti in opposition, advancing for further consideration a road improvement option for an approximately half-mile portion of Trinity Drive that begins at Oppenheimer Drive and ends at Knecht Street.

The road improvement option advanced by Council includes the following:

- One 12-foot westbound lane,
- Two 11-foot eastbound lanes,
- A center 14-foot two-way left-turn lane,
- On-street 5-foot bike lanes in both directions, and
- 5-foot minimum width sidewalks.

Furthermore, Council requested the County Manager to return with options to reduce the number of curb cuts on both sides of Trinity Drive, such as by consolidating driveways.

Background

According to the County staff report, the alternatives proposed for this section were developed to address roadway safety issues identified in a Road Safety Audit in 2016. For this purpose, the County was awarded Federal Highway Safety Improvement Program funding through the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) for design, right-of-way acquisition and construction of safety improvements. Trinity Drive (NM 502) is a state-owned highway.

Justin Green, County Project Manager for this project, and Conrad Ley, the County's consultant with Wilson and Company, laid out four alternatives for Council's consideration. The alternatives differed primarily with respect to the number and width of vehicle lanes in each direction, and the choice of on-street bike lanes on both sides of Trinity Drive versus an on-street bike path on one side and a two-way multi-use path on the other side.

Council discussion

Councilor Havemann listed several reasons for supporting the alternative that was eventually approved by most of the Council, which includes two eastbound lanes.

- Other road diet options with only one eastbound lane for the full extent of Trinity Drive would likely be unpopular and potentially counterproductive for safety, because people tend to speed up to get out

of town more quickly by the time they hit Knecht Street.

- Alternative road diets may not be as amenable for emergency and evacuation purposes.
- An incident on the Truck Route or Central Avenue could magnify the traffic load exiting town on Trinity Drive.
- Road diets with only one eastbound lane are problematic because that side of Trinity Drive has so many businesses and crosscuts. "You have seven driveways to get across," said Councilor Ryti. "It's quite a gauntlet there ... and we're only talking about one half mile."

Councilors Reagor and Ryti voted against the motion because they felt that the main problem was the need to consolidate driveways to reduce the number of curb cuts.

Next step

Staff will return to a future Council meeting to address any outstanding questions, comments, present any refinements of the selected alternative, and request approval of a resolution of support for the selected preferred alternative. NMDOT typically requires a resolution of support from the local governing body to illustrate the community's support of the project and allows the project to proceed to final design and subsequent bidding and construction.

Local News Coverage

Los Alamos Daily Post, August 10, 2024. Video: Councilor Melanee Hand Discusses Aug. 6 Meeting.

<https://ladailypost.com/video-councilor-melanee-hand-discusses-aug-6-meeting/>

Kirsten Laskey, *Los Alamos Daily Post*, August 8, 2024. Los Alamos County Council Takes No Action On Citizen Petition Calling For MRA Commission.

<https://ladailypost.com/los-alamos-county-council-takes-no-action-on-citizen-petition-calling-for-mra-commission/>

Los Alamos County public release, *Los Alamos Daily Post*, August 27, 2024. County Council Seeks Letters of Interest for Newly Chartered Los Alamos Inclusivity Task Force. <https://ladailypost.com/county-council-seeks-letters-of-interest-for-newly-chartered-los-alamos-inclusivity-task-force/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Report – County Council – August 20, 2024

Española Regional Projects; Unite Us

The work session was attended by Chair Denise Derkacs, Vice Chair Theresa Cull, and Councilors Melanee Hand, Suzie Havemann, Keith Lepsch, David Reagor, and Randall Ryti. Our observer report is based on discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda package.

Española Regional Projects

Council unanimously approved financial support for three new regional capital projects proposed by the City of Española for an amount not to exceed \$2.415 million.

The funds will be used for upgrades of two parks: the new Santa Cruz Park and the existing Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park. Council also approved the purchase and restoration of the historic Centennial Community House. The home will serve as a social services hub for the City's newly created Department of Social Services.

Mayor John Ramon Hill, city manager Eric Lujan, public works director Elijah Maris, and contractor Brandon Velasquez described each of the regional capital projects.

Funding will be provided by the County's Regional Strategic Projects Fund. The fund was created by Council upon its approval of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Los Alamos County and both the City of Española and Rio Arriba County in 2022.

Councilor Hand noted that "Española is one of our closest and essential neighbors to Los Alamos, and I believe it's important to support Española's needs as they contribute to ours and how they contribute in so many ways."

Also expressing support of the motion, Councilor Reagor said, "This is the type of project that I think the fund was for, and I think we should approve the motion as is."

Unite Us, Social Services Software

Council received a presentation from Jessica Strong, Social Services Division Manager, on the Unite Us software package, which provides a closed loop referral tracking system. Strong emphasized its importance in strengthening the social safety net and improving service delivery for the community.

Strong said that the software connects organizations to address clients' varied needs quickly and securely, preserving client dignity and reducing the burden of sharing their story multiple times. She noted that the Unite Us referral program will also allow the Social Services Division to track and monitor data

(such as referrals accepted or rejected; speed of referral connections; long-time data of client outcomes) over time.

Strong pointed out that the program aligns with the County's Community Health Impact Plan and Comprehensive Health Plan. The software is being used in Doña Ana County, the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, Santa Fe, and Taos. Unite Us is also used in 46 or 47 states across the country. Such connectivity provides the Social Services Division with the capability to refer client cases to appropriate services in other jurisdictions.

Strong noted that the Social Services Division already has in place relationships with local providers such as Self Help, LA Cares, and many of its contracted or network providers. The Unite Us software can also help the Division screen clients for eligibility for various state and federal benefit services.

Strong's presentation focused on the implementation of the system within Los Alamos County and the City of Española. Her division is still working through some challenges around getting volunteer-run organizations like churches to consistently monitor the referral system.

Local News Coverage

Los Alamos Daily Post August 24, 2024.
Video: Councilor Suzie Havemann On Aug. 20 Work Session.

<https://ladailypost.com/video-councilor-suzie-havemann-on-aug-20-work-session/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Report – County Council – August 27, 2024

Affordable Housing Plan; Bear-Resistant Roll Carts

The regular session was attended by Chair Denise Derkacs, Vice Chair Theresa Cull, and Councilors Melanee Hand, Suzie Havemann, David Reagor, and Randall Ryti. Councilor Keith Lepsch was absent. Our observer report is based on discussion during the meeting and documentation provided in the full agenda package.

Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan and Ordinance

Council unanimously adopted the updated Los Alamos County Affordable Housing Plan with minor edits (6–0, Councilor Lepsch absent).

The Affordable Housing Ordinance will be considered for adoption and voted on at the September 10 Council session. The ordinance was introduced on August 6, 2024, but was amended at tonight's meeting to bring it into compliance with New Mexico state law.

Purpose of Updated Affordable Housing Plan and Ordinance

Affordable housing projects are residential housing primarily for persons or households of low- to moderate-income. Dan Osborn, the County's Housing and Special Project Manager, explained that the purpose of the updated Affordable Housing Plan ("Plan") and Ordinance is to maintain compliance with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act so that the County remains eligible for state and federal funds.

The new Plan updates the 2010 Housing Plan, incorporating new data to substantiate the need for public financial support for affordable housing assistance. Osborn said that analyses conducted for the Plan provide justification for public assistance and donations to households earning up to a 120% Area

Median Income (AMI) threshold to help the County accomplish its housing goals.

The Plan also identifies barriers to affordable housing and offers goals and recommendations to address them. Osborn was joined by consultant Carlos Gemora with Sites Southwest to answer Council questions.

Council reviewed the draft Plan on June 25, 2024 [see LWVLA *Update*, August 2024] and directed staff at that time to proceed with the final Plan and Ordinance.

Plan Highlights

Key highlights of the Plan were summarized in the County's News Release issued on August 28, 2024:

- **Increased Housing Supply:** The Plan calls for the development of 1,300 to 2,400 new housing units between 2024 and 2029. This range is designed to meet current housing demands while also allowing for future economic and community growth for low- and moderate-income households. Additionally, the County aims to issue 10-15 homebuyer assistance grants and 15-20 small-scale rehabilitation grants annually.
- **Diverse Housing Options:** Recognizing the need for a variety of housing types, the Plan emphasizes the development of low- and moderate-income, "missing middle" housing, including compact, efficient, and higher-density housing options that are essential for accommodating different income levels and household sizes.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The Plan encourages collaboration between public entities and private developers to maximize resources and accelerate the development of affordable housing. Case studies included in the plan highlight successful models that can be adapted for Los Alamos. The Plan aims to enhance the county's economic vitality. The availability of affordable housing is crucial for retaining essential workers, supporting local businesses, and maintaining a high quality of life for all residents.

Next steps

A public hearing on the amended Affordable Housing Ordinance is scheduled for the September 10 Council meeting.

Osborn said that the next step following adoption of the Plan would be to schedule a Council work session to outline recommendations for implementing its strategies. Gamora commented that some recommendations might require an amendment to the County's Development Code, such as reduction of parking minimums for dwellings to allow greater residential densities, which would help with affordability.

Osborn said that he would also update the Council on the status of individual projects contributing to affordable housing goals. "The truth of it is, those are always going to be moving targets," he said.

Bear-resistant Roll Carts

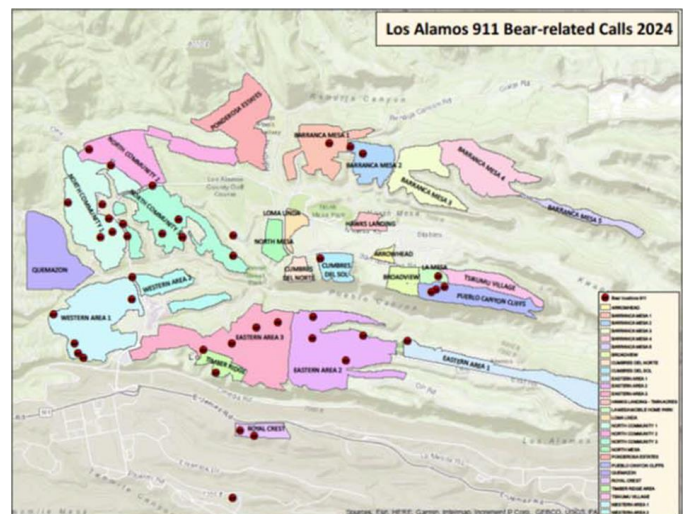
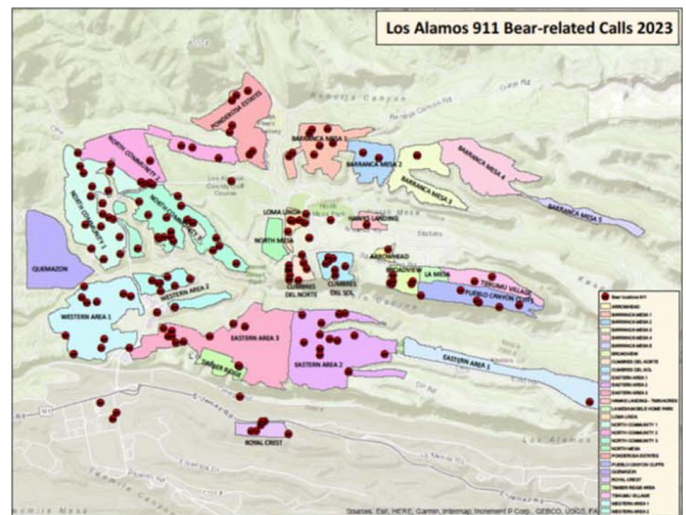
Council unanimously approved continuing the practice of distributing bear-resistant roll carts by resident request only, with future consideration of a mandated program with an opt-out option for bear cart coverage in Los Alamos townsite neighborhoods. Council also approved a contract for the purchase of additional roll carts.

Bear cart program

Armando Gabaldon, Environmental Services Manager, and Eric Martinez, Deputy Public Works Director, provided Council with an update on the current status and future plans for the bear-resistant roll cart program.

Over 1,000 bear carts have been deployed in the County, with 462 residential customers on the waiting list throughout North Mesa, Western Area, and Town Site. Historically, Environmental Services has received 150–200 requests for bear carts annually and would serve only those residents who have had bear/trash encounters. Staff prefers this option as it allows the purchase and deployment of bear carts to occur in a phased, less overwhelming approach.

Gabaldon presented maps depicting bear sightings reported to the Police Department over the last few years. The carts were first deployed in 2022. In 2023, there were 148 sightings reported but so far only 37 in 2024. Gabaldon cautioned against interpreting this reduction in sightings as proof of the success of the bear cart program. He noted that bear behavior was influenced by available natural food sources as a result of dry or wet weather conditions. "We have been blessed with the monsoons that we have been experiencing," he said, "which changes a bear's appetite and preferred diet of natural food sources and not having to visit town and poke through garbage for scraps."



Challenges with current bear carts

Gabalton discussed the field performance of the 480 residential carts previously deployed in the North Community 3 neighborhood. He described the glitches experienced with overstuffed carts, lightweight waste, and unbagged refuse interfering with the locking devices of the carts. "Route efficiency has decreased in North Community 3," he said. "My staff is actually getting out of their units and manually opening those stubborn carts." On average, they have to do this for 20 or 30 carts in this area, adding at least 30 to 45 minutes to trash pickup.

New bear-cart design and field testing

The County advertised a formal competitive solicitation for bear-resistant roll carts, with Northland Products (Kodiak) being selected as the preferred vendor. Carts offered by Northland Products have been certified by the International Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC). "IGBC certification actually tests the cart with the grizzly bear," said Gabalton. "On their website (<https://kodiak-products.com/product-specs/>), they have a video showing a bear trying to get at something inside the cart."

The County deployed 10 of the new Northland Products (Kodiak) bear-resistant roll carts for field testing as part of the proposal evaluation process. Gabalton said that the County had great success with them, as have other high-mountain communities that use that product, such as Durango, Colorado.

Gabalton demonstrated the new bear-resistant cart, emphasizing the ease of unlocking and opening the lid to dispose of trash, and then having the lid lock automatically when it is shut. "One of the manufacturer's selling points is that you can do this with one hand," he said.

Next steps

The approved motion would only allow the County to address people on its waiting list. Next year, Council will consider mandating the use of bear-resistant carts in neighborhoods in the Los Alamos townsite, with an opt-out program available.

Local News Coverage

Los Alamos County News Release, August 28, 2024. County Approves Plan to Help Address Critical Housing Shortage
<https://www.losalamosnm.us/News-articles/County-Approves-Affordable-Housing-Plan-to-Help-Address-Critical-Housing-Shortage>

Kirsten Laskey, *Los Alamos Daily Post*, August 29, 2024. Los Alamos County Council OKs Affordable Housing Plan.
<https://ladailypost.com/los-alamos-county-council-approves-affordable-housing-plan/>

June Fabryka-Martin and Craig Martin

Observer Corps Report – Planning & Zoning Commission – August 28, 2024

The Planning & Zoning (P&Z) Commission scheduled three public hearings for this hybrid meeting, which was attended by Chair Rachel Adler and Commissioners Karen Easton, David Hampton, Benjamin Hill, Katie Bruell, and Ronald Nelson. Commissioners Stephanie Nakhleh and Rebecca White were absent.

The first hearing concerned a request for a Preliminary/Final Plat approval for a 29-unit two-story townhouse development on Longview Drive in White Rock. After hearing the presentation, the commissioners voted unanimously to approve the application.

The second hearing concerned a request for a "minor map amendment" to change the zoning for the County-owned Civilian Women's Dormitory at 1725 17th St. in the Eastern Area from single-family residential to institutional. The plan is for the historic building to serve as a visitor center with historical and educational

exhibits, related office space, and a Caretaker Unit. A detached restroom facility with picnic pavilion is part of the plan. Commissioner Bruell recused herself because her family owns property in the immediate area.

After much discussion, some of which actually concerned the site plan rather than rezoning, the motion to approve the request failed. Commissioner Hampton objected to the proposed Institutional zoning, which he believed was too restrictive. Commissioner Hill objected because he did not approve of the

design of the additions proposed for the property.

The third hearing was to have considered the site plan, but Paul Andrus, the director of the Community Development Department, withdrew the site plan application so that staff and the consultant could address the issues that had been raised. Chair Adler recommended that next time the rezone case be considered separate from the site plan.

Barbara Calef

August Lunch with a Leader: Fire Chief Troy Hughes

Fire Chief Troy Hughes said since he was speaking at “Lunch with a Leader,” he would begin by talking about his pathway to becoming a leader. He grew up in a farming family in Nebraska with connections to the railroad. However, he knew a paramedic in the local fire department and found the idea of a job allowing two days off for every day on the job appealing. When he started, he was paid only \$3.69 an hour, so he had to take part-time jobs on the side. After six years, he was promoted to captain; six years later he became division chief and in 2008, the fire chief.

Hughes remarked that when he began working, firefighters often died in their 40s after years of heavy smoking and drinking. As he rose through the ranks, he emphasized fitness and fairness to help transform the department. Smoking was eventually banned in the workplace. Firefighters were required to assist the paramedics, who had suffered many back injuries carrying heavy equipment and moving victims by themselves. He learned to write grants to help fund the department.

In 2011 Hughes moved to New Mexico when he was appointed to lead the Los Alamos Fire Department (LAFD). He said, “They didn’t exactly tell me the truth about what was going on when I got here.” He discovered that the union contract had expired three years earlier and the DOE-Los Alamos County (LAC) contract was due to expire in 1½ years. Furthermore, there had been no labor management meetings in three years. He quickly reinstated the meetings, which still occur monthly. To reach agreement on a new contract, he enlisted the Interest-Based Bargaining service, which teaches a collaborative approach to resolving conflicts by focusing on the interests of both parties; he continues to use the service for union contracts.

Communication with DOE regarding their cooperative agreement with the County had been entirely by email. The DOE contract was handled out of Albuquerque by what is now Procurement



President Felicia Orth and Fire Chief Troy Hughes at the August Lunch with a Leader. Photo by Maire O’Neill.

Acquisition Services. Chief Hughes arranged to go there in person with his staff and established a relationship that helped him obtain a new 10-year DOE-LAC contract in 2013 and another in 2023.

Another change introduced by Chief Hughes was to make the union part of the promotional process, forming a team consisting of representatives from both labor and management. He commented that the fire service is very slow to change. "There are two things firefighters really dislike. The first is change and the second is the way things are. If you can overcome that problem, you can be a great successful chief and get things done."

Chief Hughes is proud that the LAFD has received accreditation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. To be accredited, the department must perform a self-assessment of 286 performance objectives followed by peer review. The LAFD also has a Class 1 ISO Public Protection Classification from the Insurance Services Office (ISO). This is considered a superior rating.

The most recent DOE-LAC contract calls for 176 firefighters of whom 50 to 60 are paramedics. It is a continuing struggle to maintain those numbers because of the cost of living in Los Alamos. With the 48-hour shift followed by four days off, some choose to live out of town. Additional incentives include high pay, good benefits, and fine gear as well as a policy of inclusivity. Nevertheless, the job is very demanding; even after passing the academy, the firefighters must engage in continuous training to maintain fitness.

The DOE pays 76% of the cost of running the LAFD and provides all the trucks. Five are currently on order, two ladder trucks for \$1.5 million each and three smaller trucks for \$900,000 each. LAC pays for the equipment. The LAFD is responsible for fires at LANL, where Chief Hughes works with their emergency services.

There are currently six fire stations in Los Alamos. The DOE owns those on LANL land; the others are owned by the County. A committee is currently working on plans to replace Fire Station #4 on Diamond Drive near the Golf Course. The new station will have living quarters separate from the decontamination area. A 15,000 square foot fire station currently costs \$13-14 million. However, part of the cost will be paid by state funds. There will be a town hall for public input and the final decision will be made by the County Council.

When Chief Hughes finished speaking, a League member asked about women in the fire department. He answered that the deputy chief is a woman (Wendy Servey) and they actively recruit women. There are now new fitness standards based on gender and age; there used to be only one standard for all people.

Barbara Calef

Tickler Reports – Council Agenda Items and BCC Vacancies

Tickler Report

Tentative Council Agenda Items as of July 26, 2024

This is a partial list of tentative Council agenda items in the County tickler that was distributed with the Council's agenda package for its August 27, 2024 session. All of the items are subject to change.

- Affordable Housing Ordinance
 - Public hearing. Action requested on approval of ordinance at 9/10/24 meeting.
- Artificial Turf Conceptual Study
 - Action requested on approval of General Services Agreement contract at 9/10/24 meeting.
- Selected Roadway Improvement Alternative - Trinity Drive b/w Oppenheimer and Knecht
 - Public hearing. Action requested on support resolution at 9/10/24 meeting.
- Community Broadband Network Services
 - Action requested on approval of GSA contract at 9/10/24 meeting.
- Archaeological & Wildlife Biologist Support of the Jemez Mountain Regional Fire Protection Project
 - Briefing. Action requested on award of task order with consultant at 9/24/24 meeting.
- White Rock Pedestrian Crossings
 - Petition to revisit concern at 10/08/24 meeting.

eComment Tool for Council meetings:

Individuals can use the County's newly launched eComment tool to submit online public comments, once the agenda is published, until noon on the day of the Council meeting. Copies will be provided to each councilor before the start of the meeting.

Submit comments at the Granicus website at <https://losalamos.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. Use the search filters to find the meeting with the published agenda and select "eComment" in the far-right column. Agenda items open for public comment will be marked with a "Comment" tag.

See the public release in the Los Alamos Daily Post, "County Launches eComment Tool for Council Meetings", <https://ladailypost.com/county-launches-ecomment-tool-for-council-meetings/>

County BCC Vacancies as of July 31, 2024

Los Alamos County has 11 standing Boards and Commissions (BCCs). Generally, the purpose of a board is to serve in an advisory capacity to the County Council, but some have statutory responsibilities as well.

All BCCs and current vacancies are below as of August 31, 2024.

Upcoming vacancies are in yellow text. Changes from last report have a magenta highlight.

- Art in Public Places Board 0
 - No terms ending soon
- Board of Public Utilities 0
 - No terms ending soon
- County Health Council 4
 - 5 terms ending Jan 6, 2025
- Environmental Sustainability Board 0
 - No terms ending soon
- Historic Preservation Advisory Board 0
 - No terms ending soon
- Library Board 3
 - No terms ending soon
- Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board 2
 - 1 term ending Dec 1, 2024
- Parks and Recreation Board 0
 - 3 terms ending Nov 30, 2024
- Personnel Board 0
 - No terms ending soon
- Planning and Zoning Commission 1
 - No terms ending soon
- Transportation Board 1
 - 3 terms ending Feb 28, 2025

Totals: 11 vacancies, 12 terms ending soon

Interested Los Alamos County residents may submit an online application by visiting the County's Boards and Commissions webpage and selecting "apply" at <https://www.losalamosnm.us/Government/Leadership/Boards-Commissions>

LWVLA Board of Directors 2024-2025

Officers:

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

Directors:

- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Newsletter Publisher; Archivist; Membership: 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/Newsletter Distributor: Becky Shankland



Marching in the Rodeo Parade: Evan Rose, Lynn Jones, Barbara Calef, Jenni Macke, Ellen Mills, Wendy Swanson, Jody Benson, Mary Sanders, and Addie Jacobson. Photo by Howard Sanders.



League marchers Jenni Macke and Barbara Calef set off with a banner for 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote in 1920. Photo by Senator Leo Jaramillo.



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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ Date: _____

_____ ZIP: _____

Phone 1: _____ E-mail 1: _____

Phone 2: _____ E-mail 2: _____

Membership Categories: All checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deduction statement. A substantial portion of Single and Household membership dues supports state and national League of Women Voters work.

_____ 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: Free (must be 16 or over).

_____ Additional donation to support the Los Alamos LWV work: \$ _____

_____ **Newsletter Update** – Check here to receive it 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.

Ways to help the League if you wish to be an active member (check as many as apply)

Name1 Name2

_____ _____ Voter Registration at events such as the Farmers Market. Training by the County Clerk's office.

_____ _____ Organize/provide refreshments at forums when we meet in person.

_____ _____ Observer Corps: Watch Council, DPU, P&Z meetings etc. and write a short summary to publish in our newsletter. (All meetings are recorded, so you can watch them later.)

_____ _____ Write newsletter articles on a local issue or League activity.

_____ _____ Assist in developing the Voter Guide: edit, develop questions, enter data onto League database, work with news publications to get the information printed, etc.

_____ _____ Assist with Lunch with a Leader: assist in inviting leaders to give presentations; order/deliver lunches when we meet in person, help set up tables, etc.

_____ _____ Website/social media: technical assistance and content development.

_____ _____ Advocate for League positions: communicate with local, state, and federal leaders.

_____ _____ Serve on the LWV-Los Alamos Board.

_____ _____ Other: _____

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League of Women Voters of Los Alamos
P.O. Box 158
Los Alamos, NM 87544