The League of Women Voters/Los Alamos
Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday July 27, 2023
UU Fellowship Hall
1738 North Sage Street
Los Alamos

Call to Order

Felicia Orth called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.

Board Members Present

Felicia Orth, President
Ellen Mills, Second Vice President
Barbara Calef, Past President
Addie Jacobson, Treasurer
Rebecca Chaiken, Secretary
Lynn Jones, Voter Services
Akkana Peck, Director at Large
Karyl Ann Armbruster, Lunch with a Leader
Jody Benson, Publicity
Amy Birnbaum, Reservations
Bob Williams, Newsletter
Becky Shankland, Director at Large

Guest – Jean Dewart, Membership

Minutes

Lynn noted two minor corrections to the May 2023 board meeting minutes. The corrected minutes were accepted.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for the time of June 1 to June 30, 2023, was presented by Addie. The correct ending checking account balance is $8,390.16. Receipts included membership renewals, donations, and interest. Disbursements included the purchase of new checks, reimbursement to Karyl Ann, a payment to Aspen Copies, and a donation to BELC (Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church). The savings account ending balance is $26,826.43.

Addie noted that she is working on correctly categorizing items from April and May, at which time they can be submitted to the board for approval.

Acknowledgement of Rosmarie's Service as Treasurer

Following the last board meeting, a total of $370 was collected as a recognition to Rosmarie Frederickson for her years of service to the board. A gift card to Blue Window was purchased. Rosmarie sent a thank you note to the board and indicated that the gift card will be welcome when her family comes to visit.

Voter Guide

Lynn indicated that we have a very tight deadline for a printed Voter Guide this year because the candidate filing date is August 29, later than in years past. Carol Clark has agreed to print the Voter Guide if we decide it should be printed. The races coming up include three Los Alamos school board positions as well as two UNM-LA Advisory Board positions. We will not know how many candidates are running until the filing date. The LAPS superintendent, Jennifer Guy, has asked that we hold a candidate forum. Lynn does not think Guy will object to combining the school board and UNM-LA forums. Lynn suggested that Guy be invited to introduce board duties at the forum, but Ellen noted that Guy reports to the school board, so Ellen was concerned about protocol. Instead, perhaps we should invite the president of the school board. Jody said Guy could discuss the bond. If we do invite Guy, Lynn suggested that we also invite the UNM-LA Chancellor, Mike Holtzclaw.

Regarding Vote411, Lynn said that LWVNM is doing a huge amount of administrative work for us now, including entering questions and responses.

After some discussion, it was agreed that we will decide on August 29 (via an electronic vote) whether to print a Voter Guide for the upcoming election.

Voter Guide questions

At our last board meeting, it was agreed that Jean would invite all League members to assist in the development of questions for the Voter Guides and Candidate Forums. Only one League member not on the board responded, Cecile Hemez, but Jean noted that Cecile participated while she was in France. The team developing the questions includes Jean, Akkana, Karyl Ann, Lynn, Jody, and Cecile. Jean hopes that future elections will see a better turnout by our members.

The team has reviewed numerous materials and interviewed several individuals in advance of preparing the questions, so they align with the duties associated with the positions. The team hopes to provide proposed questions to the board by August 10 so the board can vote on the questions at the August 24 board meeting. Jean also suggested that a Lunch with a Leader event may be a good way to explain the duties of both the school board and UNM-LA Advisory board. Furthermore, it might be helpful to League members to enlist the services of a member to attend and report on school board meetings. Felicia will write up such a request for publication in our next *Update*. Barbara said that Karyl Ann and Ellen took this on in the past. Also, we need to know if the school board is in line with our Education position.

Lunch with a Leader

Karyl Ann finally was able to contact Karl Braithwaite, who has agreed to speak at our event in September. She has secured Allan Saenz for August, and he indicated that he would be willing to appear in person. Karyl Ann will attempt to secure Eric Peterson for our event in October. Barbara will provide a list of topics Peterson can discuss. Rebecca asked that a representative from the Food Depot and/or LA Cares be invited in November, in advance of the holiday season.

Felicia confirmed that in-person Lunch with a Leader events can be filmed and posted on our website.

Karyl Ann distributed a proposed boxed lunch menu from Pig and Fig. All boxed lunches will come with chips and a cookie, but not a beverage. The total cost will be $13 per lunch. Karyl Ann made an executive decision to limit the boxed lunch offering to League members. Barbara moved that we approve the menu, and this was seconded by Akkana. All voted in favor.

Fund Drive

We now have a small committee in charge of fundraising, including Ellen and Leslie Wallstrom. Barbara suggested that they get together and decide how fundraising will be done, and then report back to the board. In years' past, we have held a fundraising letter-writing party, and a spreadsheet of donors has been kept. League member Tracy McFarland agreed to keep this spreadsheet up to date. Ellen noted that it has never been clear who made donations associated with our letter-writing campaign. She hopes that our procedures will become clearer and more streamlined.

Currently, Addie deposits donation checks and sends the information to Jean. Jean then sends the information to Tracy. Jean noted, however, that she does not see what donations are submitted electronically. This is an area that needs to be clarified with our former webmaster, Julie Williams-Hill, who still manages our PayPal account. Ellen added that clarification is needed in terms of donations coming in through membership, and donations coming in through our other fundraising efforts. Jean will send her spreadsheet to the board and a copy to Tracy. Addie and Ellen both agreed that we need to be more efficient and have a process in place. It also needs to be decided who will write thank-you notes to our donors.

Report on the Pit Study Committee Formation

Jody had nothing new to report. She had minimal response from the emailed invitation to help with the study, and now hopes to send another invitation to the entire League. Currently, there are only four participants.

Website

Barbara noted numerous problems with our website, specifically out-of-date information, which may be because we no longer have a webmaster on our board. We have two volunteers to post materials, but they only do so when requested. Rebecca sends the minutes for posting, and Bob agreed to send the *Update* for posting. Eduardo Santiago posts the videos on YouTube and sends the link. The calendar is very out of date, and it also includes "join" and "donate" buttons which only belong on the main page.

Felicia moved that we approve the new donation form (pdf) created by Bob, and Addie seconded this motion. All voted in favor.

Barbara also said that our website has nothing about our current efforts and activities. She asked for a volunteer but then agreed to do it herself. Jody will write up a summary of her Pit study and provide it to the volunteers for posting. Akkana wants our website to be easier to navigate. Currently important information is available under the "about" link, but that is not intuitive.

Rodeo Parade

Ellen has registered us for the Rodeo Parade, which will be held on August 12. Her vision this year is to recognize future voters. She has a new banner and can alter our sashes if any children can be secured to march in the parade. Several board members will seek out friends with children, and Barbara will ask Margo Batha to invite the iVote students.

Ellen needs at least six participants to hold our banners. Lynn (and her husband Mark), Jody, Barbara, Becky, agreed to march with Ellen. An invitation to march will be sent to all our members.

Membership Meeting

Barbara said that we need to have an in-person membership meeting, perhaps on a Saturday and hopefully in September. This will be a social event to meet and get to know our members. Ellen volunteered her home but will be on travel until late September. Felicia can provide an introduction for the event, and Jody offered to give a brief presentation of her time as a "Donut Dollie" during her wartime service with the American Red Cross.

LWVNM Fundraising

Felicia has been involved in two meetings thus far with Hannah Burling and other local League representatives about Hannah's vision for a change in the way LWVNM fundraises. There has always been a strict rule that LWVNM will not "poach" donors from local Leagues, but Hannah hopes for some changes to this model because of the

new 501(c)(3) Ed Fund. Hannah hopes to shift the burden for fundraising from the local Leagues to the Ed Fund. Hannah has committed to not interfering with local League fundraising and has offered a carrot if the local Leagues agree with her proposals. The carrot could include payments for our insurance, Zoom subscriptions, and the like. Felicia made it clear to Hannah, however, that our League would not be interested in some of these proposed carrots. Hannah specified that the Ed Fund will raise money to pay for Vote411, translations, the Native American Voter Guide (NAVG), and for counties not covered by local Leagues. Felicia noted that she still has a lot of questions for Hannah, and any possible agreement will put clear boundaries on what the Ed Fund would be doing.

Felicia asked the board, in general, if we had concerns about partnering with the LWVNM Ed Fund in raising funds to cover printing for all Voter Guides, paying related contractors, translations, licensing, publicity, and the NAVGs. Barbara and Jody would prefer to limit any partnership to NAVGs and counties not covered by local Leagues. If we were to contribute funds to this effort, Lynn said our costs associated with our Voter Guides range from a low of $1,500 to a high of $3,000. Currently, LWVNM pays for Vote411 entirely.

Barbara noted the new dues structure LWVUS will be implementing. What follows is an explanation from Rebecca's LWVNM board meeting minutes.

There will be a central electronic location for paying dues. The suggested amount will be $75, and the minimum acceptable amount is $20. Beyond that, each member will pay what they are comfortable paying. Local Leagues can still have a recommended dues amount. Dues will be divvied up as follows: 20 percent will go to local Leagues, 33 percent will go to LWVUS, and 47 percent will go to each state League. This new structure is expected to be rolled out in 2024. The funds will flow instantly in the three directions, with no need to make transfers. Local Leagues will no longer be in the business of paying LWVUS, which is now working on selecting vendors for this new process. LWVUS has calculated that 96 percent of state Leagues will end up with more funds, and 73 percent of local Leagues will end up with more funds. LWVUS will ensure that no League suffers a loss in dues revenue in the first few years.

Miscellaneous

Because Julie Williams-Hill still has a couple of "keys to the kingdom," Felicia will ask her directly what, if anything, she is willing to do for the League.

Addie suggested that our website/social media volunteers (Helena Whyte and Madhavi Garimella) be invited to our board meetings. Barbara noted that she has tried that in the past.

Jean said that 25 League members have thus far not renewed their memberships.

Rebecca cannot be present at the next board meeting. Barbara volunteered to take the minutes.

Important Dates

The deadline for the next newsletter is July 30, 2023.

The next board meeting will be August 24, 2023, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., at the Unitarian Church Fellowship Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Rebecca Chaiken