

# the VOTER

SEPTEMBER 2020  
Volume 52, Issue 4



## INSIDE

Upcoming Events	2	We Need a Veep	5
Election Volunteers	3	Education Committee	6
Election Signs	4	Youth Engagement	7
411 Communications	4	Observer Reports	8-11
Absentee Voting	5	Treasurer Report	12

## Co-Presidents' Messages

Greetings League Members,

This election season feels like the most important of any in my lifetime, and the confusion around it is the most challenging. There seems to be more and more evidence of current Russian interference to undermine and damage our democracy. The Center for Voter Information probably intends to be helpful by sending applications for absentee ballots to registered voters. But, it has created confusion and has sometimes sent inaccurate information. At the federal level, the services of the United State Post Office have been declining due to lack of sufficient funding, resulting in delivery delays. Other forms of voter suppression are also occurring. Kamala Harris has been credited with saying we must "jump the hurdles." The LWVSNM Empowering Voters Planning Committee is engaged in figuring out how the League can be that kind of coach. Contact Kathy, [Helen Zagona](#) or [me](#) if you're interested in joining the team.



*Eileen VanWie*

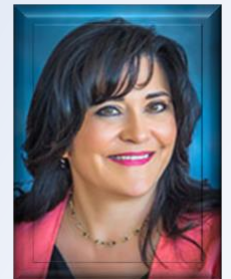
The Goal of the Board's Visioning Lab on August 15 was to define and develop the LWVSNM 2020 Election Programmatic Strategy to Maximize Voter Empowerment and Voter Mobilization. Outcomes identified were to: 1) Clarify League's action and advocacy; 2) Efficiently and effectively mobilize 2020 voters; 3) Address the dire need to engage fully and purposefully in the 2020 election. Thanks go out to Karena Oberman who facilitated the process.

The ad hoc Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee held its first meeting to draft a strategic action plan on August 20. A JEDI Strategic Action Plan has broad implications for League membership, partnerships with other nonpartisan groups, action and advocacy for JEDI issues. In the conversation about how to address the causes of

## Superintendent to Describe School During COVID

It's bound to be an interesting discussion at the **Saturday, Sept. 12** general meeting of the League. From 10-11:30 am, via Zoom, Dr. Karen Trujillo will give insight into how LCPS is conducting school with its 25,000 students who are learning from home. There have been multiple adjustments made to everyone's lives during the pandemic and we'll hear from the Superintendent what new protocols have been enacted and what she anticipates will take place during the rest of the school year.

Dr. Trujillo joined LCPS on August 20, 2019, first as the Interim Superintendent and then as the Superintendent. She is a lifelong resident of NM and has been in the field of education for over 25 years. She has served in numerous roles in both K-12 and higher education. She is a three-time graduate of NMSU and is a proud Mayfield Trojan (1988). She has been married to Ben Trujillo for 28 years and they have three children: Taralyn (25), Timothy (21) and Tavyn (18).



*Dr. Karen Trujillo*

Her motto is, "Bloom where you are planted."

injustice, there was a focus on economic equity. The LWVSNM policy, of being "fully committed to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in principle and in practice," will be strengthened by an action plan. League members are invited to send feedback and progress on the draft will be shared with members.

—continued next page

## Co-Presidents' Messages (cont.)

If you have not been able to join committee or general meetings via Zoom, please contact Beth Bardwell ([betbardwell@gmail.com](mailto:betbardwell@gmail.com)) or me ([vanwieek@yahoo.com](mailto:vanwieek@yahoo.com)) to get set up and receive orientation on the use of Zoom. No doubt we'll need to continue meeting this way for the foreseeable future and we want all members to participate. Please also invite others to join the League and participate in our meetings.

With Warm Regards,

—Eileen VanWie, Co-President



Dear League Members,

For those of you who may have missed the August general meeting, complete with many questions from participants, our speaker was Lisa LaRocque, sustainability officer for the City of Las Cruces. Her topic was the Las Cruces Energy Transition away from fossil fuels.



Kathy Brook

Currently, we are heavily dependent on fossil fuels and central generation of electricity. In the future there will be new technology for storage and distribution and a mix of central and local electricity generation. Lisa's presentation is similar to one that she made for a Las Cruces City Council work session on April 27, 2020. Her presentation starts around the two-hour mark [when you click here](#).

Meanwhile, @VOTESNM, our Twitter account is now following CIRCLE@CivicYouth, a nonpartisan research center on young people's civic engagement at Tufts University. This organization has identified Senate and Congressional races where young voters have the highest potential impact in deciding elections in November – to illustrate the power of young voters. NM Congressional District 2 is #20 on the list.

Stay tuned for new developments as we navigate the fall election.

—Kathy Brook, Co-President

# LET'S CONNECT

[www.facebook.com/LWVSNM/](https://www.facebook.com/LWVSNM/)

<https://twitter.com/VOTESNM>

[www.instagram.com/lwvsnm/](https://www.instagram.com/lwvsnm/)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SEPT. 2020

Sept. 7: Monday, **Labor Day**

Sept. 7: Monday, **Empowering Voters Planning Committee**, 2 pm, via Zoom, contact Eileen ([vanwieek@yahoo.com](mailto:vanwieek@yahoo.com)) for a zoom link.

Sept. 11: Friday, **Patriot Day**

Sept. 12: **General Meeting**, **Saturday**, 10-11:30 am, via Zoom; watch for your Zoom email from Eileen VanWie ([vanwieek@yahoo.com](mailto:vanwieek@yahoo.com)) to be able to attend the meeting.

Sept. 21: **Board Meeting**, Monday, 2-3:30 pm, via Zoom. Contact Eileen VanWie in advance if you would like an email with a Zoom invitation.

**Sept. 28: Monday, Empowering Voters Planning Committee**, 2pm, via Zoom, contact Eileen ([vanwieek@yahoo.com](mailto:vanwieek@yahoo.com)) for a zoom link.

Sept. 21: **Affordable Housing Committee**, 4pm, contact Beth Bardwell for more information or a meeting link ([betbardwell@gmail.com](mailto:betbardwell@gmail.com))

### OCT. 2020

Oct. 10: **General Meeting**, **Saturday**, 10-11:30 am with guest speaker Dr. Bobbie Green, NAACP President of Doña Ana County, sharing ideas about getting out the vote.

## 2020/21 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO BOARD:

Eileen VanWie & Kathy Brook – Co-Presidents

OPEN – Vice President

Bonnie Votaw – Secretary

Sadie Valverde – Treasurer

Kim Sorensen – Immediate Past President

Maryellen Kebbel – Membership Director

Erika Graf-Webster – Youth Engagement Director

Dale Yeo & Helen Zagana – Voter Services Directors

Jo Galván Nash – Public Relations Director

Sharon Thomas (chair) & Judith LaPointe –

Nominating Committee

P.O. Box 15142 • Las Cruces, NM 88004

575.524.VOTE (8683)

[www.lwvsnm.org](http://www.lwvsnm.org)

## Work Continues on Getting Voters Prepared

As of Sept. 1, there were only 64 days left until Election Day 2020. There is a lot that can be done to help get-out-the-vote such as directing friends and neighbors to the Vote411 site: <https://www.Vote411.org>. Candidates have been requested to answer important questions submitted by our local and state Leagues allowing citizens more information before casting their votes.

### **Vote411, Look for the League of Women Voters Online Guide**

**Also watch for the LWVSNM Printed Guide, distributed through the LC Bulletin**



#### **VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES:**

- Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020, either online or by mail
- Saturday, Oct. 31, 2020, in-person

**More Information, contact the DAC Bureau of Elections, 575-647-7421**

**Contact the Bureau of Elections for information related to in-person services during the pandemic:**  
**[elections@donaanacounty.org](mailto:elections@donaanacounty.org)**

### **Volunteers Needed as Election Officials**

There is a tremendous need by Doña Ana County Bureau of Elections for Election Officials (EO) heading into the November election. Our EOs (previously known as poll workers) are literally the first layer of accountability and transparency at polling locations and are vital to a successful election. Historically, a large percentage of our EOs are in the older age range, often because they are retired and have more flexibility in their schedules. We are actively working on recruiting individuals to work the upcoming election, specifically Election Day. Here are some additional details on the different roles and the requirements for EO, including training requirements: <https://donaanacounty.org/content/election-worker-application>.

Additionally, the compensation for Election Officials is \$175-\$200 for the day of work, (depending on their specific role on site). It's a long day, but beyond the compensation, it's a great opportunity to be an important part of the electoral process. I think it's vital that we have representation from all of the important and diverse groups across our county.

Feel free to [contact me](#) or [Lindsey Bachman](#) with any questions. Thank you!

—Amanda López Askin  
DAC Clerk and Member of the LWVSNM

**[Click here to update your voter registration or to register to vote online!](#)**

**[Click Here for Absentee or Early Voting Information!](#)**

### **State League Request**

The State League also needs help to make follow-up calls around the state to the candidates who are running for office. The state League wants to ensure all candidates are aware and will participate in the Q&A section of Vote411. If you can devote some time in the next few weeks, please contact Diane Goldfarb, LWVNM Voter Services Chair, 505-239-9478, [dgoldfarb1@comcast.net](mailto:dgoldfarb1@comcast.net).



## LWVSNM Signs Popping Up

Be on the lookout for the bright yellow and purple signs that were developed by our League. The message encourages people to vote early! Due to limited League funds, participating members paid \$10 for each sign.



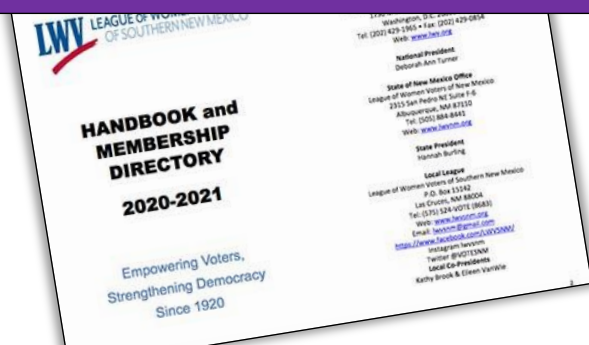
Photo by Alex Burr

Pictured above, lifetime League member Marjorie Burr (right) and her daughter Margaret Burr, also a member of LWVSNM, put up the first yard signs of the season. Anyone who has a sign should get it up in September to remind neighbors that voting early avoids having to stand 6-feet-apart in a line on Nov. 3. And, the signs commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

The signs have a metal stake and you can inquire with [Eileen VanWie](#) if you want to buy another one. She ordered a few extra.

## Membership Directory

Every League member will get their 2020-2021 Membership Directory and Handbook soon. Director Maryellen Keibel reports the booklets are at the printer and will soon be in your mailboxes. Keep an eye out for it and be sure to check out all the updated info including League bylaws, website, and voter information.



## Tweets & Posts & PSAs – Oh My!

I have been representing our League on the state League's Communications Committee which has been meeting regularly to create a multiweek plan for promoting the VOTE411 website and early voting throughout the state. In addition, a series of images and messages have been created to use on social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. (See our social media addresses on page 2, "Let's Connect".)



Jo Galván Nash

One of the goals was to include young people in the images in order to attract 18-24-year-olds — the "youth" that Erika Graf-Webster describes in her work with young adults (page 7). During the upcoming weeks, monitor your favorite social media pages and please "like" and "share" whenever you see a message from LWVNM. They are in English and Spanish.



Aside from social media, public service announcements for radio and television are being developed for media across New Mexico. Different messages are planned through Nov. 3.

—Jo Galván Nash, PR Director

## A Look at Absentee Voting

Absentee voting has a rather long history, apparently originating in the US during the Civil War so that soldiers on both sides could cast ballots from the battlefield. And at the federal level, absentee voting expanded during World War II so that soldiers stationed overseas could vote. Among the states, absentee voting in the late 1800s provided for civilians who would be away from home on election day and those who were seriously ill. New Mexico has offered absentee voting without requiring an excuse since 1993, after first offering this opportunity to older voters.

Since absentee voting also has a long history of involving the use of the mail, it can be called mail-in voting. Before it was possible to request a ballot online, such requests were made by mail, ballots were mailed to voters, and then returned by mail. Today in NM it is still possible to make the request by mail. In New Mexico, completed absentee ballots can be hand delivered to the county clerk's office or to election officials at voting places as well as being mailed. This has been a very secure process and tampering with the mail is a federal offense.

Traditionally the absentee voter has submitted a request for a ballot. What was different in the primary and will be different in the 2020 general election is the mailing of applications to people who may not have requested one. Note that for the November election, the county clerk decides whether to proceed with mailing applications that have not been requested by individual voters. The Doña Ana

County Clerk will be following this procedure but some clerks in New Mexico are not and some, reportedly, have not made a decision.

The distribution of applications not requested by individual voters will be limited to "mailable voters," for whom there is a high level of confidence that address information is correct. Others wanting to receive an application will have to request one from the county clerk or at [nmvote.org](http://nmvote.org). After submitting the request, the voter will be mailed a ballot. It is highly recommended that completed ballots be submitted to the county clerk's office as soon as possible. This can be accomplished through the US mail or by personally delivering the ballot to a polling location in the county or to the clerk's office.

In the June special session, New Mexico's legislature also set October 20 as a deadline to apply for an absentee ballot. The USPS has recently indicated that this deadline should not create a barrier to timely return of ballots by mail. **But if you plan to vote absentee, request your ballot early and return it as soon as possible.**

In trying to understand the voter fraud issue in New Mexico, Priscilla Parrish, on the Empowering Voters Committee of our League, looked at data assembled by the Heritage Foundation. This information indicated only a handful of votes (8 since 1998) in which there was deceptive behavior on the part of voters.

—Kathy Brook

## Consider Joining the Board or Being an Observer

Be more engaged with your local League by joining the board as Vice President or by observing the meetings of the Public Regulation Commission.

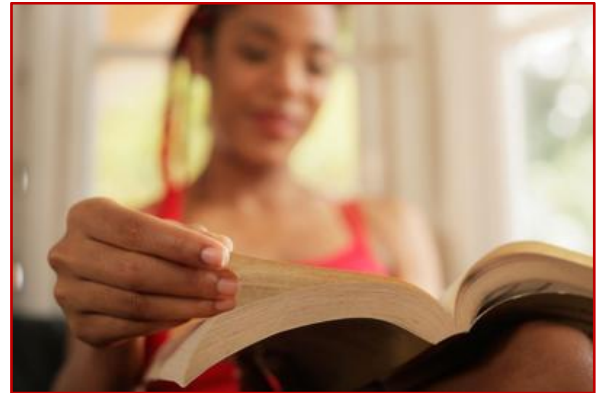
Currently the position of Vice President is vacant. It's a very important position for the Board but it doesn't have to be overwhelming to a volunteer. Responsibilities of the vice president, in addition to assuming the responsibilities of the co-presidents in their absence, traditionally include planning for general meetings and assisting with the program planning meeting and the annual meeting. The board meets monthly on the third Monday at 2:00 p.m. The full job description for the Vice President in the LWVSNM [website under "Members."](#)

The idea of observing the PRC grew out of our recent general meeting with Lisa LaRocque, the sustainability officer for the City of Las Cruces. The job of the PRC observer is to monitor actions relating to southern New Mexico, in particular, with respect to electricity generation and distribution. The PRC meets weekly on Wednesday mornings (currently via Zoom).

For more information or to volunteer, contact Kathy ([kathybrook@comcast.net](mailto:kathybrook@comcast.net)).

## Bringing Members Up to Date on the Education Committee

The League Women Voters of Southern New Mexico Education Committee (LWVSNM) was reactivated in January 2020 with the intention to update the local education position to include court findings from the Yazzie/Martinez Lawsuit. The court ruling stated that New Mexico violated students' fundamental rights by failing to provide "a sufficient public education," required by the State Constitution. It had failed to provide culturally and linguistically relevant learning environments and instructive materials (NM Indian Education Act, 2003); it failed to provide the goals to close the achievement gap and increase graduation rates (NM Hispanic Education Act, 2010); and it failed to provide bilingual/multicultural education (NM Bilingual Multicultural Education Act, 1973 and 2004). Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) are also key elements to multicultural and culturally relevant learning. Members interviewed public school and university educators to assess the current status of addressing the court findings.



Committee members soon became aware that the Governor and the Public Education Department (PED) had made a motion to dismiss court oversight of the findings and the Committee decided it was important for the Court to maintain oversight. The Legislature and the PED had taken some steps to address the issues, but it was too soon to see relevant outcomes. Then COVID-19 hit and the inequities in education became more of a concern than ever. Since this is a State issue, the LWVSNM Committee appealed to the State League to develop an advocacy statement supporting the continuation of court oversight. The State League agreed, and opinion editorial articles were sent to most newspapers in the State, to the Governor's and PED's offices. The op ed encouraged the Governor and the PED to withdraw its motion. Ultimately at the court hearing in June, First Judicial District Court Judge Matthew Wilson denied the State's motion to dismiss the court oversight.



With our action at the State League level, the LWVSNM Education Committee was asked to become the State Education Committee. The Committee now has representatives from the four State Leagues (Los Alamos, Santa Fe County, Central NM, and Southern NM). It is using the current State League education position to advocate for educational issues in the state. It has identified a few themes (multicultural/ multilingual education, learning technologies, early childhood education, dual-credit courses, family involvement, and/or teacher education) that may be added to the State education position. The Committee hopes to have an updated education position ready to present to the membership at our April 24, 2021 State Convention. Collaboration at the State level has broadened our learning, planning, and actions.

—Eileen VanWie

### 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Timeline

If you'd like to see a good timeline, beginning in 1848, that led to the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, see the League of Women Voters of Central NM article. [Read it in their August newsletter.](#)

It's unfortunate that because of the pandemic the local league could not participate in a march at the downtown civic plaza to commemorate Women's Equality Day and the Amendment's ratification.

### Voter Checklists are Online

Don't forget that a checklist for voters is on the LWVSNM website. The checklists, in English and Spanish, are on the home page ([www.lwvsnm.org](http://www.lwvsnm.org)). It provides step-by-step information for someone needing guidance on registering and getting information about candidates; the checklists also list several dates of importance.



## Youth Engagement Committee Report

June-August, 2020

Our committee was inspired by a presentation at the League's 2020 National Convention about a highly successful effort in Alaska to form a YOUTH VOTE group. Such a group would consist entirely of young people with the mission to get other young people to participate in the election process.



Erika Graf-Webster

I proposed this idea to the League Board at the June meeting. There seemed to be mild approval of the idea, but no firm commitment, since other important League activities are taking up the members' time.

We formed a small subcommittee consisting of Karena Oberman, Barb Records, Lizz Taylor and Naoma Staley to evaluate the feasibility of this concept. Due to time, COVID and other constraints, this sub-committee determined that it was unlikely that such a group could be constituted and made operational prior to this year's election.

This subcommittee agreed that we should narrow our focus to getting information to young people to encourage them to register to vote and to actually vote. According to a national survey only 11% of youth (18-24 year-olds) are aware that they could register online, and even fewer that know that

they can request an absentee ballot online. While some youth in Doña Ana County do not have computer access, most of them these days have smart phones. They can register to vote via a smart phone!

Erika has sent a request to some of the LCPS teachers that have cooperated with us before to get their civic-minded students involved in getting the following information distributed. In addition, she has contacted Mike Milam and Daisy Maldonado, who have youth contacts in the southern part of the county, to do this distribution, as well. She also added that if any of the young people respond saying that they can't register online and can't get to the County Clerk's office, to please let her know and the League will arrange to have a voter registrar contact them.

### Register to vote:

- Online: <https://www.sos.state.nm.us/> or <https://www.vote.org/state/new-mexico/>
- County Clerk's Office: 845 N. Motel Blvd. 575-647-7421
- Find a Voter Registration Agent
- Update address if necessary
- Deadline to register online: October 6<sup>th</sup>
- Same Day Voter registration at Early Voting locations: October 6<sup>th</sup> – October 31<sup>st</sup>

— Erika Graf-Webster,  
Director of Youth Engagement

## [www.lwvsnm.org](http://www.lwvsnm.org)

The League continues to update its website and add information that is helpful to all members. You may notice that the top menu now has a "Who We Are" tab and a tab for "Positions & Positions." The first gives an overview of our League and our work; the second gives members and the public access to our positions and positions that drive our yearly activities. We're continuing to add content to each of those pages.

In addition, under the "Members" tab, you can review the League's bylaws and policies, and the list of those who serve on the Board.

If you have suggestions for further changes, we are glad to hear from you. Members [Jo Galván Nash](#) and [Stewart Oberman](#) are the "webmasters."





### **LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Multiple Meetings via Videoconference**

**Observer:** Kathy Brook

#### **City Council Work Session - July 27, 2020**

**Workforce Talents Collaborative Update:** The collaborative is an initiative of The Bridge of Southern New Mexico (Tracey Bryan of The Bridge, Darlene Lopez of NM Workforce Solutions, Monica Torres of DACC, Dawn Hommer of Community Action Agency, City of Las Cruces Human Resources and Economic Development staff). Presentations described the ways how these groups work together to close gaps, eliminate duplication of services, and make members of the community aware of the job opportunities available in the area. It was noted that high school students often have limited knowledge of what happens at White Sands Missile Range and the presence of NASA. The city has introduced or expanded internships, mentorships, apprenticeships, and other work experience opportunities in city government. A Jobs of the Week feature will be introduced at city council meetings.

**Economic Development Partnership updates:** Reports from Farmers and Crafts Market, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, Downtown Las Cruces Partnership

**New Mexico Family Services:** A representative described the services offered by this private entity in operation since 2013. It was described as doing no advertising or social media but operating on the basis of word of mouth. With an interdisciplinary team it offers medical services, therapy, nutrition, dietetics, etc. to Medicaid recipients and managed care organization members with chronic conditions following care plans set by health providers.

---

#### **City Council Regular Session - August 3, 2020**

The meeting began with the reading of the names of those whose lives were lost in the El Paso Walmart shooting a year ago and with an announcement that ribbons had been placed on 23 trees around city hall, one for each person lost.

In public participation, topics included the procedure for responding to public concerns raised in this forum – since there has not been a systematic approach in the period of Zoom-only meetings. Staff will follow up on this.

At the request of a councilor, there was a presentation concerning the proposed agreement between the City and the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope in support of the Mano y Mano day labor program which involves the homeless and near homeless working with City Parks and Recreation to beautify public spaces and pick up trash. The agreement, which involves 200-400 people/month, was approved unanimously and there was discussion of ways that the program might be expanded.

Other topics included increased funding of the Animal Services Center of the Mesilla Valley (approved with two dissenting votes); approval of a resolution in support of the 30x30 Campaign to Save Nature, a campaign to protect 30% of the earth's land and oceans by 2030 (for which Senators Tom Udall and Michael Bennett and Representative Deb Haaland have introduced resolutions in Congress); approval of general obligation improvement bonds previously approved by voters to support park improvements, the animal shelter facility, replacement of fire station 3, and recreational trails.

---

#### **City Council Work Session - August 10, 2020**

**Jobs of the Week:** This is a new element being introduced at the start of city council meetings. A representative of Workforce Solutions provides information about several jobs available in the area.





### LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL (cont.)

**Community development commercial fee schedule:** Codes and plans have been updated over the past two years, but some fees have not been updated in many years. A goal of the community development department is that the budget by 2022 will include a minimum of 80% of the cost of providing services. Councilors raised questions about incentives for growth especially with respect to infill areas.

**Intervention support:** The council heard a presentation by iNet Med Rx<sup>2</sup>, Inc., a local entity, discussing the kinds of services it might offer as a mobile crisis unit. A mobile crisis unit is one of three elements in the process for providing crisis and outpatient services, the other two being a call center and a crisis triage center. The presentation indicated that the LC police and fire departments report that there are about 915 super-users of crisis services and that there are about 8500 calls/year to LCFD and 1500 calls/year to LCPD that involve crisis management. The city could potentially contract for a mobile crisis unit that could support suicide prevention, alignment of services to needs of individuals, reduction in psychiatric hospital bed use and reduction in fragmentation of care. Discussion among councilors focused on procedural matters in how to proceed – that is, do city procurement policies allow for sole source contracting or would a bidding process or RFP be required as a next step. These issues will be researched by staff.

---

### Las Cruces City Council Regular Meeting - August 17, 2020

Public participation included remarks on the success of New Zealand during COVID-19, city compensation policies especially with respect to the city manager position, and support for naming a school after the late Clarence Fielder.

A proposed new schedule of building permit fees was approved. This proposal was previously discussed at a work session and is the second phase of fee changes for building permits for the city; residential building permits were addressed last year. Discussion among the councilors focused on fees associated with infill and it was noted that there are no fees for building permits for single family homes in the infill area. The proposed infill incentive program would allow for reimbursement of building permits after completion of the qualified project. An LCHBA representative expressed concern about getting the city services done right and the need for competitive salaries for inspectors. The new fee schedule was approved.

The proposed contract with Ifo Pili to serve as city manager was approved. The agreement requires that he live within the city and it provides a vehicle allowance. Councilors were enthusiastic about the perspective of the new manager including his strengths in economic development and his commitment to reducing the poverty rate.

In other actions, numerous budget adjustments were approved along with the sunseting of the South Mesquite Design Review Board and the transfer of its responsibilities to the Historic Preservation Commission. In the comment period at the end of the meeting, councilors expressed appreciation of the work of interim city manager, David Maestas, and asked for discussion in the future of the El Paso Electric rate case.

---

### **Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education – Work Session**

August 4, 2020, 4:00-8:45 pm

Observer: Eileen VanWie

**Public comment** (35 minutes allowed) was on changing the name of Oñate High School. The majority of comments supported changing the name. Examples of reasons given for keeping the name included: all available funds are needed for education, use a different Oñate and keep the name, and use ONATE as an acronym.



## OBSERVER REPORTS

### School Board (cont.)

Examples of reasons given for changing the name included: Don Juan de Oñate committed genocide and used slavery, he was a white supremacist, removing his name is a chance to right a wrong, there was public disapproval of the name when it was given 30 years ago.

**Bargaining** between the National Education Association (NEA) for certified staff (teachers, nurses, counselors, etc.) and the Classified School Employees Council (CSEC) for classified staff (custodians, educational assistants, secretaries, security guards, etc.) with the school district is going well.

**School starts** for students August 12. For student use, 400 hot spots have been set up and 5,000 new computers should be arriving soon to be distributed for student use.

**A resolution** was passed to the New Mexico Public Education Department and the New Mexico Department of Health seeking COVID-19 data at the county level. Currently they receive regional information (e.g., rate of spread), which is not sufficient for making local school decisions on re-entry.

**A waiver** of the nepotism rule was approved to be able to hire the daughter of Superintendent Trujillo for a high needs position as a Speech Language Pathologist.

**Oñate Name Change:** Dr. Robert Lozano, Associate Superintendent of Equity, Innovation, and Social Justice, provided survey results about changing the name. They asked students for suggestions for a new name: Organ Mountain - 324 respondents, Organ - 75 respondents, East Mesa - 29, Mesa Grande - 14, Barack Obama/Obama - 11. Oñate was mentioned 394 times. Estimated cost for name change, with the letter "O" = \$158,500; without the letter "O" = \$183,000. Many of those expenses occur annually or within five years. Athletic uniforms are the most expensive item on the list. The Board maintained its original vote to change the name of Oñate High School, with the change to happen with the 2021 school year. There was discussion of giving students more opportunities to discuss the name of the school. They decided to rename the school Organ Mountain High School.

---

### City of Las Cruces Public Utilities Board • Regular Meeting

Date: August 13, 2020

Observer: Beth Bardwell

Members absent: 1      Total number of Board members: 6

The August 13, 2020 regular board meeting of the City of Las Cruces Public Utilities (CLCPU) addressed multiple items. Highlights follow.

- **Economic impact of COVID on customers' ability to pay utility bills.** Requests for utility bill payment assistance from residents and businesses remain steady. The utility expended the \$125K in emergency funding appropriated this spring. The utility received an infusion of \$100K in funding with the new fiscal year but within just one month, a quarter had been paid out. Efforts are underway to infuse additional funding of \$150K in emergency funding for bill payment assistance.



## OBSERVER REPORTS

### Public Utilities Board (cont.)

- **FY20 4th Quarter Budget Review of revenues and expenses for the gas, water, wastewater, solid waste utilities.** Performance of these four utility enterprises were within anticipated margins with revenues increasing across all utilities except natural gas. Expenditures are less than anticipated in part due to continuing staff vacancies. Water rate increase did not significantly diminish water use in upper-use tier levels.

<u>Utility</u>	<u>FY19 Revenues</u>	<u>FY20 Revenues</u>	<u>FY19 Expense</u>	<u>FY20 Expense</u>
Gas	\$18,915,545	\$16,856,429	\$16,504,743	\$14,869,276
Water	\$16,338,084	\$19,379,995	\$13,820,911	\$14,136,879
Wastewater	\$10,858,159	\$12,914,986	\$11,314,329	\$11,537,344
Solid Waste	\$14,161,082	\$15,069,598	\$10,480,484	\$12,517,370
<b>Total Utility</b>	<b>\$60,272,870</b>	<b>\$64,221,008</b>	<b>\$52,120,467</b>	<b>\$53,060,869</b>

- **Utility Strategic Business Plan (March 2019)**

#### *2019 Results Achieved (partial list)*

- With the goal of reducing the amount of waste in the landfill, the Solid Waste Department increased collection of green waste for reuse and maintained an average diversion rate of 23% of recyclable waste.

#### *Proposed Changes/Additions for FY21 (partial list)*

- By 2021, targeted institutional (big industrial/governmental) customers will reduce water usage by 5%.
- By 2023, 70% of natural
- gas service area within existing roadways will be serviced by natural gas utility. (It is worth noting that the draft City Climate Action Plan focuses on conversion of natural gas to electricity, so it is unclear how expansion of the natural gas utility aligns with targets for reduction in citywide greenhouse gas emissions.)

#### *Customer Survey Results (3% response rate) used to assess customer knowledge (partial list). Areas for additional outreach and education include:*

- 32% are not confident or unsure that LCU produces safe drinking water
- 35% incorrectly believe tax dollars fund LCU operations

**Resolution 19-20-094A awarded:** \$360K for water service line and patch replacement of 100 leaks identified by the utility's Advanced Metering Infrastructure.

**Resolution 20-21-LCU009** implements increase in rates and tariffs for solid waste effective September 1, 2020; e.g. Residential standard service 96-gallon container will now be \$15.25.



# Treasurer's Report

Provided by Sadie Valverde, Treasurer

**JULY 2020**

Date	Description	Deposit/Credit	Payments/Debit	Balance
6-23-20	Citizens Bank Bal.			\$11,004.64
6-30-20	Deposit/membership dues	\$260.00		
7-06-20	Deposit/membership dues	\$195.00		
7-06-20	yard sign donation	90.00		
7-06-20	Deposit	285.00		
7-13-20	Transfer from PayPal membership dues	411.10		
7-13-20	Deposit - yard sign donation	180.00		
7-22-20	Deposit yard sign donation	60.00		
7-24-20	Deposit yard sign donation	130.00		
6 deposits	dues	\$866.11		
	yard sign	\$460.00		
	subtotal	\$1,326.10		\$12,330.74
Expenses:				
6-26-20	Check #1040 K. Brook web page		\$389.92	
7-21-20	Check #1042, Consumer Cellular		19.16	
	Total Expenses		409.08	
	Current Balance as of July 24, 2020			\$11,921.66
	Citizens Bank Balance	\$2569.18		
	Donation Fund	1095.00		
	Yard Signs donation	460.00		
	Diversity Fund	1000.00		
	Immigration Study donation Fund	625.00		
	Youth Engagement	500.00		
	Account Balance after Debit Payment			\$11,921.66

*The following article is the third in a series, sponsored by the LWV Southern New Mexico, on individuals who accompanied asylum seekers in shelters in the Las Cruces area.*

## **Important Work with the Border Servant Corps**

**by Carla Campbell  
January/February 2020**

“Most people were very humble, very grateful to be in a safe place surrounded by people who care about their well-being,” recalls Kari Lenander, Executive Director of the Border Servant Corps (BSC) since 2013. She was describing the families seeking asylum that BSC hosted at Peace Lutheran Church, as they transitioned from ICE custody to being transported to the homes of their U.S. sponsors.

“They came in scared, nervous, exhausted, and reserved, and after receiving food, drink, clothing and showers, there was a visible transformation. People appeared more relaxed and settled, and trust started to build from the moment they walked off the bus. The volunteer community stepped up in treating people with dignity and respect.”

Starting in 2018, the organization has received asylum seekers from Annunciation House in El Paso. The families were mainly from Central America. After The New Mexico Hospitality Coalition was created in January 2019, the BSC has worked with that organization to coordinate hospitality services among various churches, nonprofits, and government agencies in the Southern New Mexico region. The Coalition meets regularly to coordinate these services.

“The Coalition is one of the most unique collaboratives in the borderland, in response to hospitality needs. The Las Cruces community was the reason why hosting worked so well. People worked toward a common goal, despite their differences,” Kari explains.

Currently the BSC no longer receives refugee families due to the Migrant Protection Protocols which requires them to seek asylum in Mexico or Central America. The BSC supports asylum seekers with donated goods such as clothing, food, and books.

In addition to supporting shelters in the region, BSC runs an immersion program for border education. Groups come to Las Cruces and visit the Border Patrol, meet with immigration lawyers, visit the U.S. District Court in Las Cruces, and listen to first-hand migration accounts. According to Kari, the program asks participants to “come with open hearts and minds,” to think critically about border issues, and to ask questions about the immigration process and policies.

For more information on how to donate items or volunteer, visit the BSC website at [www.borderservantcorps.org](http://www.borderservantcorps.org).

*Carla Campbell is a retired physician in Las Cruces.*

**THE BOOK CLUB LIST IS NOW POSTED ON THE LWVSNM WEBSITE UNDER  
“RESOURCES” – IT WILL BE UPDATED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.  
[CLICK THIS LINK TO SEE THE LATEST BOOK LIST.](#)**