

the VOTER

NOVEMBER 2020
Volume 52, Issue 6



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Co-Presidents' Messages

Greetings LWVSNM Members,

Hopefully you have all voted. The day I went to the County Government Center, there was a short line that got me to the voting station in about 20 minutes. I've been an election watcher at City Hall. Saturday, Oct. 24, there was a waiting line, but it went fairly fast. It's been inspiring to see and hear about so many people voting early.



Eileen VanWie

At our General League meeting scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 14, we will identify Southern New Mexico issues that are important to address during the 2021 Legislative Session. Issues identified by the New Mexico League are: resolving the budget shortfall and revenue sources, decriminalizing abortion, reforming the redistricting process, and revising the primary election law. (The LWVNM and we are reviewing an addendum to the State League position on primary elections. [See the draft position on page 6.]

Other legislative topics that have surfaced within our local League are: extending the early voting time period, "fixing" the electoral college, using an equity lens for multicultural/multilingual public education, making broadband an essential public utility, funding public education equitably at all levels (early childhood through adult), funding business projects that give priority to NM women and minority owned businesses, imposing requirements for and monitoring of immigration detention facilities (HB624 2019), and following up on the Health Security Act (HB548 and SB536). That's an ambitious list and probably is not adequate. Be thinking and studying about issues you believe are essential to address by the NM Legislature in a challenging revenue year.

The topics we identify in November may be shared at the Dec. 5, 2:00 pm Legislative Advocacy Conversa-

Nov. Meeting: 2021 Legislation

November's General Meeting will focus on local legislation that could be considered during the 2021 Legislative Session. We will not have a speaker which will give us extra time to discuss the legislative topics that are important to the League.

Please join the meeting right before 10 am on **Saturday, Nov. 14**. Look for your email from Eileen VanWie which will have the Zoom link for you to click.

Read more about the potential priorities in Eileen's report on this page. And, read Kathy's article on page 5. If you cannot attend, feel free to email Eileen (vanwieek@yahoo.com) or Kathy Brook (kathybrook@comcast.net) with your thoughts.

tion, our General League meeting with our elected legislators. We also will ask them what their priorities are for the 2021 Legislative Session.

Thank you to all of our members who have done so much to empower voters and strengthen democracy during this highly charged election season. With the pandemic midterm election back in 1918, campaigns used flyers, mailings, and newspaper ads to inform the public, because the flu prevented having face-to-face rallies. While voting by mail was possible for the military and citizens living abroad, it was not readily available for all citizens. It was the first-time masks were worn to the polls.

We have used some of the same approaches, but also are fortunate to have technology, social media, and online webinars to communicate information to the public. Now voting-by-mail

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Co-Presidents' Messages (cont.)

allows more people to vote and the military and citizens living abroad vote over the internet. Maybe that's in the future for all citizens. We can be proud of the nonpartisan voter services we have provided to the public in spite of limitations due to the corona virus. Stay safe!

—With warm regards,
Eileen VanWie, Co-President

Dear League Members and Friends,

Thank you for all you have done over the past few months related to the 2020 general election. Thanks to those who have spent time at the Farmer's Market distributing information and assisting those wanting to register to vote and complete the 2020 census, to those who have distributed information via the Las Cruces bus system, delivery of meals to seniors and at senior living facilities, to students in the high schools, at Doña Ana Community College and at NMSU. Bouquets of gratitude to Dale Yeo for her leadership in assembling the materials for VOTE411.org and the printed Voters Guides in both English and Spanish, to the *Las Cruces Bulletin* and *Camino Real* for their assistance with the printing process, and to Fred Martino and KRWG for the candidate forums that allowed the public to see the candidates. Thanks, as well, to Beth Bardwell and Councilor Gil Sorg for assisting in getting voter information in the city utility bills.



Kathy Brook

Most importantly, thanks to all of you who have voted early in-person or absentee and those of you who will vote on Nov. 3 and have encouraged others to do the same.

Time now to take a deep breath.

The work of the League is recognized in many ways. At the City Council meeting on Oct. 19, there were at least three mentions of the League – twice with reference to the Youth Engagement Committee/City of Las Cruces program for high school students on knowing your local government and once by new city manager Ifo Pili who referenced the library's role in making LWV materials available to patrons.

Best wishes for a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.

—Kathy Brook, Co-President



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2020

Nov. 3: **General Election Day!**

7am-7pm polls open

Nov. 9: **Empowering Voters Planning**

Committee via Zoom, Monday, Noon

Nov. 14: **General Meeting**, Saturday, 10-11:30

am, via Zoom; watch for your email from Eileen VanWie (vanwieek@yahoo.com) to be able to attend the meeting. TOPIC: Local League legislative priorities. *Bring ideas!*

Nov. 16: **Board Meeting**, Monday, 2-3:30 pm,

via Zoom. Contact Eileen VanWie in advance if you would like an email with a Zoom invite.

Nov. 16: **Affordable Housing Committee**, Mon.,

4pm, contact Beth Bardwell for information or a Zoom link (betbardwell@gmail.com)

Nov. 26: **Thanksgiving** holiday

DECEMBER 2020

Dec. 5: **Advocacy Workshop**, Sat. 10am-

Noon to prepare for '21 Legislative session [See more information p.5]

Dec. 5: **Legislative Advocacy Conversation,**

(General Meeting with Legislators), Saturday, 2pm

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

Eileen VanWie & Kathy Brook – Co-Presidents
OPEN – Vice President

Johnnie R. Aldrich – Secretary

Sadie Valverde – Treasurer

Kim Sorensen – Immediate Past President

Maryellen Kebbel – Membership Director

Erika Graf-Webster – Youth Engagement Director

Dale Yeo & Helen Zagona – Voter Services Directors

Jo Galván Nash – Public Relations Director

**Sharon Thomas (chair) & Judith LaPointe –
Nominating Committee**

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575.524.VOTE (8683)

www.lwvsnm.org

HEADING TO THE POLLS! ELECTION FINALLY HERE

After what seemed like never-ending advertisements, the 2020 General Election is finally here. There have been record numbers of people nationwide who took advantage of absentee balloting as we deal with Covid-19 during this essential election season. If you're one of those who plan to make your final decisions on Nov. 3, election day, plan to social distance and don't forget to wear your mask in line.

We have our English [LWVSNM Voters Guide online](#) (and [the Spanish Guide](#), too) if you need to review the candidates, Amendments or bond questions; you also have access to [Vote411](#). [See Dale's report on p.4.]

Several of our members are official election watchers. Eileen VanWie said early voting lines waxed and waned at her location at City Hall. Christine Newton has been at the County Govt. Center and reports poll workers were very friendly. As a nice gesture, she said when a brand-new voter would show up, the election workers would yell "First-Time Voter!" and everyone in the room would applaud.



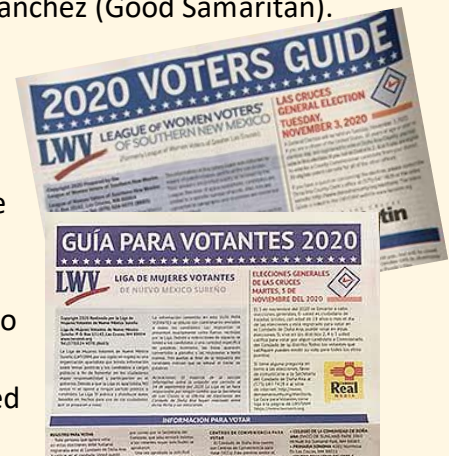
Thousands of county residents took advantage of Early Voting. Absentee ballots could be dropped directly into a box or voters could stand in line as shown here at Sonoma Elementary School.

Thanks to all League election watchers which also includes Alex Burr (County Govt. Center), Kim Sorensen (Sonoma Elementary), Johnnie Aldrich (Corbett Center) and Elisa Sanchez (Good Samaritan). On Election Day, these individuals will be taking shifts at the Govt. Center.

As of Nov. 1, there are still some Voters Guides available. E-mail lwvsnm@gmail.com if you need some. In addition to them being distributed by the *Las Cruces Bulletin* and *Camino Real Media*, they were also handed out during the Farmers & Crafts markets by a team of League members. [See more information about their work on page 4.]

Radio and newspaper ads were produced by the PR Committee for the State League. Our League was involved with that Committee which helped to spread printed, radio and social media messages. And, thanks to Karena Oberman, NMSU students and staff received e-blasts about getting registered and voting!

So many local League members have been involved in all of the get-out-the-vote activities. Our only hope is that this will be New Mexico's largest turnout in history. The League's Empowering Voters Planning Committee will meet in a few days after the election to debrief about many of the strategies used during the past several months. If you have some thoughts about what can be improved for the next election, join the Zoom meeting on Monday, Nov. 9 at noon (contact Eileen VanWie for a Zoom link) or send your ideas to Eileen (vanwieek@yahoo.com).



—Jo Galván Nash, PR



LWVSNM Outreach at the Farmers Market

League members spent two Saturday mornings at the downtown Farmers & Crafts market to answer questions of local voters, hand out voting information, including the Voters Guide, and encourage residents to register and to vote! These were important activities to engage directly with the public, and safety precautions were taken.

Thank you to local artist Bob Diven and League members Debra Hathaway, Rosa Morales, and Laura Castille for providing important voter services on October 17th. You can tell from the “VOTE” photo that Bob created a chalk drawing that turned smooth concrete into “bricks.” Lots of visitors stopped to watch the process. Debra, Rosa, and Laura brought people to the League table to share information about where, when, and how to vote. It was inspiring to hear so many people say they had already voted. ABC Channel 7 News covered the event at 10:00 pm that night. Lead Reporter Mike Cook from *The Bulletin* shared the occasion in the October 23rd edition of the newspaper, and it was reported on the radio by Jack Nixon on Bravo Mic. —Eileen VanWie



Voter Services Completes Busy Election Work

The job of preparing the 2020 General Election Voters Guides for the people of Doña Ana County has been completed.

The English language Voters Guide was published by the Las Cruces Bulletin (circulation 20,000) on Friday, Oct. 9 and was distributed via the Bulletin's home delivery system and in stores. We obtained an overrun of 1,000 Voters Guides to provide print information to those who may not have adequate computer access. They have been placed in the DAC Government Building, the Las Cruces City Hall, and in the Branigan Library, among other places.

The Spanish language translation of the Voters Guide is also complete and was published in Camino Real Media magazine (circulation 16,000) in its weekly edition on October 19. We also have some overruns (250) to distribute.

Vote411 is online and being advertised throughout



Dale Yeo

the state as a good source for voters to access election information. Candidates are able to get into the site until Election Day to post and edit their answers to our Voters Guide questions so voters may not only find the information from our published Voters Guide but also more current information that the candidates have newly placed there. In addition, Vote411 also has candidates' bio information.

These three resources can be accessed from the LWVSNM webpage: <https://www.lwvsnm.org>. Starting in September, forums were taped (via Zoom) every week and shown initially on KRWG TV's Newsmakers program at 7:00 pm through October. These programs have featured our Doña Ana County state Legislators and have been co-hosted with Fred Martino and a League designee. To see forums you may have missed, go to <https://www.krwg.org/programs/newsmakers>. County Commissioners, County Clerk and County Treasurer candidates were interviewed by K.C. Counts for Voice of the Public on KRWG radio.

—Dale Yeo

Legislative Issues: The LWVUS Perspective

Thinking ahead to the legislative session, LWVUS has recently provided guidance to state and local Leagues to develop effective advocacy and organizing strategies in support of our legislative work's impact. From the Campaign for Making Democracy Work and the People-Powered Maps program, areas of emphasis for LWVUS will be redistricting and apportionment, election administration reforms, voter protection, and improving public financing systems and disclosure requirements for elections.

LWVUS has also identified as urgent issues support for the popular election of the President, reproductive choice, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Another urgent issue is climate change with the focus on strengthening protections for impacted communities; curtailing air, water, and land pollution; expanding renewable energy; and securing climate and community resiliency. Justice Reform completes the list with attention to strengthening accountability for the criminal justice system, enactment of comprehensive policing reform, and police demilitarization.

—Kathy Brook

Advocacy Workshop – Prepare for the 2021 Legislative Session
A virtual event

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico Presents

Effective Citizen Advocacy at the Legislature

Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020

10 am to Noon

LWVSNM Members & the public is invited

Learn tips from legislators and a professional citizen lobbyist on how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for your cause.

This workshop is about the legislative process, not specific issues.

Speakers:

Senator Nancy Rodriguez
D-Santa Fe

Representative Rebecca Dow
R-Grant, Hidalgo & Sierra

Jim Jackson,

Former Chief Executive Officer of Disability Rights New Mexico, an independent private non-profit organization authorized through federal law to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

Empowering Voters Planning Committee Reports Many Activities

Oct. 12, 2020 Committee Meeting:

- The Youth Engagement Committee (YEC) reported teachers are doing as much as they can in light of the restrictions on in-person learning. Members of the YEC are supporting the DACC Student Government organizations and have met with them on Zoom. At NMSU, messages have been sent to approximately 30 groups on campus. There will also be Information published on the NMSU "Hotline" about accessing the Voter's Guide. Kathy made a presentation to the Residents Hall General Assembly on voting information.
- Currently, Doña Ana County has the highest turnout of voters in the state.
- Utility Bill Mailers: City Councilor Gil Sorg agreed to send out information in utility bills.
- Christine Newton and Priscilla Parrish will double-check with mall restaurants and the elder care homes and neighborhood associations to see if any need hard copy election information sheets.
- Bookmarks: They will check with Branigan library to see if we can distribute bookmarks. We also have contacted La Clinica de Familia and Ben Archer Health Clinic about distribution. A call will be made to COAS bookstores, and we can contact the museums for distribution.
- Farmer's Market: Rosa Morales and Laura Castille will get materials to distribute on Oct. 17. They can also do Census questionnaires. Artist Bob Diven will do a chalk drawing.
- Laura reported that Daisy Maldonado said the Empowerment Congress is doing phone banking and texting to encourage early voting. The Empowerment Congress is a civic engagement group providing services to the Colonias.

—Helen Zagona

The LWVNM Position on Primary Elections Needs Consideration

The issue of who participates in primary elections will undoubtedly be debated during the next legislative session, so this is a good time for the League to consider whether our position will allow us to weigh in. Most of the Temporary Election Changes Act (SB4), passed during the Special Session in June, will expire at the end of 2020. However, the first part, Section 1-4-5.7 NMSA 1978, will remain law unless it is amended by the legislature. That section concerns voter registration during early voting and on election day. It says that, during early voting and possibly on election day, unaffiliated voters may vote if they first register with a major party. Voters already registered with a major party may update their registration but may not change their party.

In New Mexico 23% of the voters are independent or decline to state. Another 1% belong to a minor party. Those voters have not been allowed to participate in primary elections. Following a study of open and closed primaries in 1993-95, LWVNM adopted a provision to support an “all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election.”

So, the League wants all voters to be able to participate, but how? Meredith Machen has asked the state board to concur with part of the Maine League’s position on election procedure. The amended position statement is as follows, with the concurrence language underlined.

“The League of Women Voters of New Mexico supports: an all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in the primary election, so that (a) Voters who are not enrolled in a major political party may vote on one ballot per primary without having to enroll in that particular political party; and (b) Voters enrolled in a major political party can vote only on the ballot of their party.”

League members are asked to consider the pros and cons of each of the two concurrence statements.

(a) Voters who are not enrolled in a major political party may vote on one ballot per primary without having to enroll in that particular political party.

PRO

- This will allow those who do not want to declare a party affiliation to participate in the selection of candidates they will be asked to choose among in the general election.
- Opening up primaries to unaffiliated voters will encourage broader participation by younger voters who are reported to be more likely not to want to be associated with a party.
- The number of voters who consider themselves independent is growing, a trend that will reduce participation in primaries if they are open only to voters who have declared a party. These independent voters are likely to decline to participate if they are required to affiliate with a party.
- Independent voters are taxpayers; they help pay for elections and should be able to vote without being forced to subscribe to a party.
- Closed primaries give the major parties a monopoly on power.
- Parties are more likely to consider electability as a factor in choosing a nominee when independents can cast their votes in a primary.

CON

- Parties should be able to choose their own candidates. Organizations typically allow only members to vote on organization business.
- If a voter wishes to participate in a party primary, s/he should be willing to affiliate with that party.
- An open primary dilutes the preferences of party members who are most dedicated to the principles of their party.

(b) Voters enrolled in a major political party can vote only on the ballot of their party.

PRO

- This restriction will prevent interference by opposing party voters who seek to select a weaker candidate for another party so as to benefit his/her party candidate.
- This provision preserves the party’s freedom of association.

CON

- If unaffiliated voters are allowed to choose a party for each primary election, previously affiliated voters should also be able to choose which primary to participate in.
- Moderate members of one party should be allowed to vote for one of the candidates from the opposing party.

DRAFT SUMMARY OF MINUTES

(Complete set of minutes will be sent to League Members)

LWVSNM Board Meeting

Monday, October 19, 2020

Zoom Online Conference 2-4pm

Board Members Present: *Eileen VanWie and Kathy Brook, Co-Presidents; Sadie Valverde, Treasurer; Johnnie Aldrich, Secretary; Jo Galván Nash, Public Relations Director; Dale Yeo, Voter Services Co-Director; Erika Graf-Webster, Youth Engagement Director; Kim Sorenson, Past President.*

Notes from this meeting are a clear indication that the League of Women Voters is an ACTIVE group.

In her Treasurer's Report, Sadie indicated that our current bank balance is \$10,101.02. However, this does not include the costs of printing the VOTERS GUIDE by the LC BULLETIN (English) and CAMINO REAL MEDIA (Spanish). The bills for the printed Voter Guides include the gross receipts tax; we will follow up on whether LWV qualifies for an exemption.

Because of limitations on travel associated with COVID-19 and the decision to print a Spanish version of the Voter Guide, our budget needs to be reevaluated. A small group (Sadie, Erika, Kathy) will meet quarterly and make recommendations to the Board, as necessary.

In a written report, Maryellen Kebbel, Membership Co-Director, indicated that current potential membership is 109! (Last month, 81). We will be inviting two people from Silver City to join our League.

Co-President's Eileen suggestion that we make a "Making Democracy Work" Award to a project like the high school "Know Your Local Government" study that included educators with Las Cruces Public Schools and the Las Cruces Community Engagement Manager. This led to lengthy discussion. It was suggested that making the award to specific persons would make it much more effective in terms of increasing our membership. The purpose is to recognize and honor people and projects that "make democracy work" in our community. Eileen was asked to draft criteria and write a Vision Statement for the award.

Saturday, December 5 was established as the date for the League's annual conversation with Legislative leaders. (Reminder: pre-COVID-19, this was a breakfast or dinner occasion.) Our ZOOM meeting, currently scheduled for 2:00-3:30 p.m. that day, will be our opportunity to hear our local Representatives and Senators present their priorities for the 2021 Legislative Session — and our opportunity to let them know about our priorities. Voter Services Co-Directors Dale and Helen will send "Save the Date" notices to legislators. All LWVSNM members are, of course, invited to join.

Our priorities will be discussed at a General Meeting on Saturday, Nov. 14. Soon, we need to arrive at consensus about accepting the LWVNM Position on Primary Elections. The basic statement begins: "The LWVNM supports an all-inclusive system of voting that allows all registered voters to participate in primary elections." A two-page document on the issue includes "pro" and "con" guidance. The draft was sent to all members. [Refer to page 6 for more detail.]

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Additionally, Kim suggested that decriminalization of abortion should be another priority. As Chair of the Immigration Committee, she also wants to know about the number of immigrant detainees in New Mexico and, specifically, whether the state has any role in their education opportunities. **Kim will contact various state officials asking about possible immigration bills that may be introduced in the 2021 Legislative Session.**

New Member Rosa Morales' suggestion that LWVSNM join at least one of the three area Chambers of Commerce (Las Cruces Area, Hispanic, Green) was another item that had to be tabled for further discussion because of the need for more information. Dues amount is one consideration, but the primary need is to be sure their mission and positions are not contrary to those of the League. **Jo will contact LWVNM and the other three local Leagues about their relationship with local Chambers.**

Eileen reported the LWVNM Education Committee will be meeting on Oct. 28.

Eileen also presented the draft Strategic Action Plan for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI). The draft is a first look at the work being done by the JEDI Committee. The suggested Vision Statement: "The LWVSNM envisions Southern New Mexico free of poverty in order to develop a well-functioning democracy, characterized by justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion." Discussion centered on the phrase "free of poverty" as too specific for a vision statement. The next draft will be reviewed at the November Board Meeting.

—Minutes Summary by Johnnie Aldrich, Secretary

Yellow indicates action



OBSERVER REPORTS

CITY OF LAS CRUCES PUBLIC UTILITIES • Work Session

SEPT. 20, 2020

Observer: Beth Bardwell

One Member of 7 Absent

Your future drinking water supply: Commissioners received an update during the September 20th Work Session on the implementation of the 10-year Water Action Plan whose purpose is to secure drinking water for City residents based on the projected water demand and supply over the next 40-years.

Actions discussed include monitoring the decline and rate of decline in groundwater levels at City wells that supply drinking water. The water utility is developing "an aquifer drawdown warning indicator" to trigger actions to protect the aquifers from irreversible subsidence (compaction impedes recharge) and decline in water quality (increased saltiness). Currently, some wells have an average decline rate of about one foot per year; others three to four, and one well has an average decline of six feet per year. If the average decline increased to 6 to 12 feet per year depending on location, the warning indicator would trigger the water utility to evaluate actions to curb the drawdown, augment its existing water supply or take other action. Currently, 25% of the city's drinking water is being pumped from wells on East Mesa, 75% from wells in the valley, and a minimal amount from wells on the West Mesa.

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OBSERVER REPORTS

City Public Utilities (cont.)

A second action discussed was the timeframe, cost and feasibility of purchasing, permitting, and importing groundwater from the Corralito and/or Nutt-Hockett watersheds to augment the drinking water supply. Estimated costs were 11K and 24K per acre-foot respectively not including water treatment costs. Currently, the city's cost is about \$1 per acre-foot. Importing groundwater could be one option in the event the City loses its legal case in the ongoing U.S. Supreme Court litigation between Texas and New Mexico over impacts of groundwater pumping on surface flows in the Rio Grande.

A second work session to discuss additional strategies to augment or extend the City's water supply will be held on November 5th. Promising strategies should include curbing the drawdown, aquifer-storage and recovery, reclamation and reuse of wastewater for drinking water, desalinization and additional water conservation and efficiency measures.

CITY OF LAS CRUCES PUBLIC UTILITIES • Regular Meeting

Oct. 8, 2020

Observer: Beth Bardwell

All 7 members present

A litigation cost recovery rider of 10 cents for every 1000 gallons will be assessed on water bills in FY2021 to cover an unanticipated increase in legal expenses in the ongoing litigation between Texas and New Mexico. Resolution No. 20- 21- LCU012.

The City Council on Monday approved the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 72% by 2050 to minimize the associated intensity of extreme heat, dust and drought. The CAP found that the commercial and residential buildings within City limits contribute 38% of the city's greenhouse gas emissions from use of electricity and natural gas. The Las Cruces Public Utilities who sells natural gas, a fossil fuel and source of greenhouse gas emissions, to city residents is already scheduling meetings to identify strategies to reduce or mitigate the emissions. One possible option is 100% electrification from clean energy sources.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Meeting

Oct 5, 2020

Observer: Kathy Brook

The council approved an affordable housing development agreement with Tierra del Sol for a site near Sierra Middle School. The plan includes 32 housing units – 8 single family homes, 12 town homes, and 12 apartments. The estimated cost, prior to the pandemic was \$3.2 million.

The second major topic was approval of a climate action plan. In the presentation, Lisa LaRocque noted that we are already experiencing more episodes of extreme heat, meaning days of 100 degrees and more. The biggest impacts from the plan would come from the adoption of electric vehicles, reduction of building sector emissions of greenhouse gases, and increases in the adoption of solar energy. Discussion items included considering the issue of greenhouse gases in deciding on financial investments for the city and scheduling discussions with the public schools and DACC on ways to reduce our carbon footprint.



OBSERVER REPORTS

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC) • Regular Meeting

Oct. 13, 2020

Observer: Jo Galván Nash

All Commissioners were present (Shannon Reynolds electronically); as was County Manager Fernando Macias.

VOTING DURING PANDEMIC: Commissioners received a public-input-letter from a county resident, describing her experience during early voting alongside others who were not wearing masks. During early voting she witnessed three men in line who were not wearing masks. The security worker asked them to wear masks, they declined stating they don't have to, and they proceeded to vote. The polling area was sanitized immediately after they left. The resident also complained that no one was enforcing social distancing inside or outdoors. She questioned whether county officials could enforce the Department of Health safety mandates. County officials reported that based on guidance from the Secretary of State, no one should be denied the right to vote because they refused to wear a mask.

NEW COMPANY RELOCATING TO DAC: The BOCC approved a Resolution to issue up to \$10 million for industrial revenue bonds (for a term no longer than 20 years) for a proposed project in the Santa Teresa area. Prent Corporation is a manufacturing organization that makes plastics for medical devices, computers and other items; it's interested in relocating to southern Doña Ana County. Community Development Director Christina Ainsworth said the bonds would abate the company's property tax. The company would agree to payment-in-lieu-of-taxes of 25% which would be paid to the county. Company officials reported they will employ 25 workers and 55 part-time employees. Also approved was a \$500,000 state incentive package to go toward purchase of the land and purchase of a facility.

"We are very excited for this investment by the Prent Corporation," said Eric Montgomery of the local Mesilla Valley Economic Development Agency. "This will be a tremendous add to our community." With the growing need for PPE equipment nationwide, this company's products are in demand. It will be Doña Ana County's first PPE-based company.

HAZARD WORKERS RECOGNITION: A Resolution was approved to offer additional leave time for county employees who did not technically meet the requirements to receive hazard pay during the pandemic. The hazard pay was previously approved for county deputies, firefighters, detention center, animal control workers, and others who qualified for the CARES Act funding. Manager Fernando Macias said the county has other infrastructure employees who cannot tele-work and have had no time off during the pandemic, such as the road crews. Macias said the county wants to recognize them by providing additional leave. The BOCC agreed that a plan should be devised.

South Central Solid Waste Authority Regular Board Meeting

Oct. 15, 2020 • via GoToMeeting

Observer: Johnnie R. Aldrich

Board Members: Lynn Ellins, Chair; City Councilor Gandara, County Commissioners Gonzalez and Solis, and County Manager Fernando Macias.

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South Central Solid Waste (cont.)

A quorum was not present when the meeting opened, so Chair Ellins appointed attendee Delilah Walsh, Interim Director of CLC Utilities Department, as a Voting Member for the meeting. Such a move is provided for in the Authority Bylaws. The appointment was later rescinded when two board commissioners arrived late. The meeting was mostly about money.

The first Resolution authorized the “Write-Off of SCSWA Accounts in the Amount of \$5,013.85.” These are “bad debts,” over four years old, which are routinely removed from the budget at the time of the annual audit. Resolution passed.

A fire at the Chaparral Collection and Recycling Center on October 11 was a major topic of discussion. Investigators are still working at the site, but the cause seems to have been a couch that was included in the last load of the day. No one noticed that it was smoldering when the facility was closed for the night. The building itself survived, but interior damage was extensive. One of the Resolutions discussed later in the meeting was authorization for the purchase of one Walking Floor Trailer, at an estimated \$100,000.00, to replace the one that was “burned beyond repair” in the fire. (The machine is a 53-foot semi-trailer used to move trash.) Resolution passed.

Another lengthily discussed Resolution would have authorized a “One-time \$500 Extraordinary Pay to Essential SCSWA Employees” who have been on duty since the March onset of the Covid-19 crisis. Director Patrick Peck explained that it was “to show gratitude and solidarity to our employees, who continued to work despite the high possibility of infection.”

Because of potential legal problems caused by the “retroactive nature of the language” of the Resolution, an “audit issue,” one member commented, it was tabled until the wording could be repaired.

LAS CRUCES BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

Oct 20, 2020

Observer: Eileen VanWie

INSTRUCTION: Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) Superintendent Karen Trujillo reported on unique actions being taken to help meet the online learning needs of students. Teachers are recording lessons and making the recordings available to families at variable times. To encourage attendance, teachers are asked to increase engagement between students and teachers in unique and engaging ways. LCPS has worked with every family to provide technology and hot spots. There is only one family that needs additional technology support. Parking lots in all schools are being set up with hotspots so students can use the Internet from them. High school student tutoring has expanded to the high schools. More informal ways for students to interact online are being created, with an adult monitor for safety. Online course content is still being developed.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS: A new policy on Community Schools was introduced, which defines and clarifies community schools in Las Cruces. The four pillars of a community school are:

1. Integrated student support
2. Expanded and extended learning time and opportunities
3. Active family and community engagement
4. Collaborative leadership and practices

The policy will be reviewed more at the next two meetings.

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LCPS BOARD (cont.)

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: Cris Balzano, lobbyist, represents LCPS at the NM Legislature. Topics they plan to address in the 2021 session are:

1. Yazzie/Martinez vs. NM lawsuit (update)
2. Digital infrastructure (Broadband and closing homework gap)
3. Medical and recreational cannabis
4. Behavior and mental health
5. State Equalization Guarantee (SEG funding formula), cash balance, state budget and reserves

Board members brought up other areas they want addressed with the Legislature: air conditioning on school buses funding, solar energy funding, SB48 student diabetes management act providing care while at school, and Columbia Elementary School funding.

HYBRID CLASSES: LCPS is preparing to go to hybrid classes in January. All of the schools need upgraded air filter systems prior to reentry to the buildings.

Dr. Wendi Miller-Tomlinson, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching, Learning and Research, reported that LCPS received \$4 million in funds from the NM Public Education Department for an Extended Learning Time program. It will provide 10 extra learning days for students identified for the program and includes professional development for teachers interested in working with it.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Work Session

October 12, 2020

Observer: Kathy Brook

Memorial Medical Center is proposing amendments to its 40-year lease of the hospital from the city. The current lease has been in effect for 16 years and requires that 4% of the hospital's net revenue be invested in facilities and equipment. The proposed change would reduce that investment to 3% (which the hospital argues is more in line with national norms) with the 3% to include health care technology. Since the Mayor is the only member who was on the Council at the time of the lease, one outcome of the discussion was a request for city staff to assist councilors in understanding the issues involved. One topic that was raised involved a delay of several years in the transfer of \$8 million from the lessee to the city and the amount of interest that might be relevant to that period of delay.

The second agenda item was an update on GO bond projects that had originally been scheduled for March but was delayed by the pandemic. The bonds for these projects had been approved in August 2018 and will be completed by 2022. Included are park improvements, two dog parks, sports fields, the animal service center, replacement of fire station #3 and walking trails.

The final topic was addressed by the Economic Development Office focusing on business retention and expansion (a program to connect proactively with existing businesses, starting with those in the West Mesa Industrial Park) and business recovery programs all of which are free.



LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Session

October 19, 2020

Observer: Kathy Brook

Resolutions were approved for \$185,000 in support of the La Casa shelter improvement project (with CDBG funding) and for hiring a consultant to develop a short-range plan for Roadrunner Transit including assessing performance, identifying service gaps, and recommending improvements to Dial-a-Ride. Also approved were agreements with various non-profit partners for emergency assistance programs to address the impact of Covid-19 on the community. These agreements involve reimbursement of expenses incurred by the agencies.

A lease-purchase agreement was approved concerning property on Motel Blvd for the benefit of La Piñon and Children Healing in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County (CHILD). Principal payments by La Piñon will be credited toward purchase of the property. The \$1.2 million from the city will come from the Telshor Fund.

The meeting also included a presentation from city staff concerning the monthly or quarterly process of amending the city budget.



Treasurer's Report

Provided by Sadie Valverde, Treasurer

SEPTEMBER 2020

League of Women's Voters of Southern New Mexico
Treasurer's Report

Date	Description	Deposit / Credit	Payments/ Debts	Balance
9-1-20	Citizens Bank balance			\$7,890.72
8-25-20	deposit – yard signs	\$30.00		
8-31-20	deposit – yard signs	105.00		
9-08-20	deposit - yard signs 50.00			
	members donations 1,000.00	1,050.00		
9-11-20	Deposit donation	190.00		
9-17-20	Deposit donation	50.00		
9-22-20	Transfer from Pay-pal donation	160.77		
9-24-20	Deposit -new member dues 65.00	140.00		
	donation	75.00		
Total deposits as of 9-24-20				1,725.77
 EXPENSES:				
9-8-20	ck #1048 -Carol Elder – translation		60.00	
9-1-20	“ #1049 – ABC Printing -year books		250.00	
9.15.20	“ #1050 – We Are It/web page		14.08	
Total expenses			324.08	
 Balance as of 9-24-2020				 \$9,292.41
Donations	\$3,078.35			
Yard signs	1,030.00			
Diversity Fund	1,000.00			
Immigration Study Fund	625.00			
Youth engagement	500.00			
 Account Balance as of September 24, 2020				 \$9,292.41

The Book Club is still on hiatus as the participants continue to social distance due to the pandemic.