

the VOTER

OCTOBER 2020
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Co-Presidents' Messages

Dear League Members,

With Beth Bardwell and Eileen VanWie, I recently attended an Observer Corps training session (on Zoom). The training was organized by Karen Douglas, co-president of LWV CNM, and featured presentations by members from LWV California. LWV SNM was invited to present briefly because our Observer Corps was included in a list in a national LWV publication in 2006.



Kathy Brook

I commented briefly on what I knew about being an observer and Beth added her more recent experiences observing public housing and utility board meetings. My take-away was that there are many ways to serve as an observer – one does not necessarily have to take notes or produce regular reports for the Voter but might alternatively include reports on the LWV website or share information periodically with the public.

Thanks to the efforts of Rosa Morales, who is joining the League, and her friends who supplied tables, a tent and decorations, for a League table at the Farmers' and Crafts Market on September 19. We will participate downtown at least two more times before the election. League members and others assisted with voter registration and completion of census forms.

Looking ahead to the legislative session in January, LWV NM is again sponsoring an advocacy workshop (via Zoom) on Saturday, December 5, 10 am-noon. This is open to League members as well as representatives of other organizations and will feature Sen. Nancy Rodriguez (D-Santa Fe), Rep. Rebecca Dow (R-Grant, Hidalgo, and Sierra), and Jim Jackson, former CEO of Disability Rights New Mexico. Learn tips from

—continued next page

NAACP Getting Out the Vote

There's nothing more important this month than getting voters to cast their ballots. That will be the focus of the League's next General Meeting on **Saturday, Oct. 10**. From 10-11:30 am, via Zoom, Dr. Bobbie Green, president of the Doña Ana County NAACP will discuss their "get-out-the-vote" push.

The NAACP has been a partner with LWVSNM on several activities and continues to encourage



Dr. Bobbie Green speaking at a suffrage event earlier this year.

voters to get registered and to cast their ballots!

Dr. Green, a Professor of Information Systems is a social activist, an expert lecturer, a writer, and a public speaker. She has created hundreds of videotaped lectures and has taught thousands of students during her career as a college professor

which spans more than 20 years. She was appointed as a Commissioner with the New Mexico Martin Luther King, Jr. State Commission by Sen. Mary Kay Papen in 2017. She was appointed to the Law Enforcement Academy Board by Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham in 2019.

Dr. Green has conducted the New Mexico State University Gospel Choir for the past fifteen years and has performed at numerous concerts and public events throughout the State of New Mexico.

She is a native Las Cruces and has been a faculty member at City University of New York, Department of BSIS since 2015.

Co-Presidents' Messages (cont.)

legislators and a professional citizen lobbyist on how to interact with legislators, speak at hearings, and advocate for your cause. Details are likely to appear in the next issue of La Palabra.

—Kathy Brook, Co-President

Greetings LWVSNM Members,

The Empowering Voters Planning Committee (EVPC) has been expanding ways to get information out about the election process and advocating for voting early, considering diverse voters. The Associated Students of NMSU have voter registration agents and are registering voters, seeking poll workers, and generating interest in voting. Banners and voter checklists are going into buses; flyers are being distributed to neighborhood associations and clients who receive meals-on-wheels. On Saturday, Sept. 19, LWVSNM members and supporters successfully had people complete the census and register to vote at the Farmers' Market. Thank you to the EVP Committee members for your important work!

The candidate forums with KRWG-TV have begun and are broadcast on *Issues and Answers* Thursday evenings at 7:00 p.m., Saturdays at 5:00 p.m., and Sundays at 11:00 a.m., continuing through the month of October.

Kathy and I attended the LWV of New Mexico Board meeting on Sept. 19. It was reported that the New Mexico First Redistricting Task Force has been selected, with two former judges as Co-Chairs, Edward L. Chavez (NM Supreme Court) and Roderick Kennedy (NM Court of Appeals). Other members include Native Americans, researchers, and good government advocates. There was also discussion of issues of focus for the 2021 Legislative Session: budget shortfall, diversifying revenue sources, decriminalization of abortion, and reform of the redistricting process. Begin thinking about what local issues you believe are important to address at our November 14 meeting.

Thanks to Kathy Brook for submitting a grant application to El Paso Electric, which recently brought us \$400. And, thank you to members who have been making financial gifts to our League. It is definitely helping to meet additional expenses that were not included in the budget, especially with the budget that included \$5,750 in donations.

—With warm regards,
Eileen VanWie, Co-President



Eileen VanWie

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT. 2020

Oct. 10: **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. Guest: Dr. Bobbie Green, NAACP-DAC

Oct. 12: **Indigenous People's Day**

Oct. 12 and Oct. 26: **Empowering Voters Planning Committee**, 11:30 am, via Zoom, contact Eileen (vanwieek@yahoo.com) for Zoom link.

Oct. 19: **Board Meeting**, Monday, 2-3:30 pm, via Zoom. Contact Eileen VanWie in advance if you would like an email with a Zoom invite.

Oct. 19: **Affordable Housing Committee**, 4pm, contact Beth Bardwell for more information or a meeting link (betbardwell@gmail.com)

NOV. 2020

Nov. 3: Tuesday, **General Election**, 7am-7pm

Nov. 14: Saturday, **LWVSNM General Meeting**, 10 am, via Zoom

Nov. 16: Monday, **LWVSNM Board Meeting**, 2 pm, via Zoom

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

As of Oct. 1, there were only 34 days left until Election Day 2020! Don't delay in asking friends and neighbors whether they have sent in their absentee ballot applications. Write a letter to the newspaper editor. Call someone you know who may need a ride to the County Clerk's Office or to a voting location. And, look at the answers from candidates to the questions posed to them by the League at <https://www.Vote411.org>.

Processing of Absentee Ballots

By now, you have received in the mail an **application** for an absentee ballot (unless you had requested one early on). If you want to vote via absentee ballot, fill out the application correctly and send it back as soon as possible. You can also track the status of your application online at NMVote.org.



You also may be wondering about the processing of absentee ballots. Take a look at the website for the National Conference of State Legislatures (<https://www.ncsl.org>). Click on State Elections 2020 and then on Election Administration.

Absentee ballot processing in New Mexico: Any time after mail ballots have been sent until the 5th day before the election, the county clerk can convene an election board to meet during normal business hours to qualify mailed ballots that are returned. If more than 10,000 ballots are sent, they may be opened and inserted into an electronic voting machine two weeks before election day. If fewer than 10,000 absentee ballots are sent, processing may begin four days before the election.

Absentee ballot counting: Absentee ballots are inserted into vote-counting machines to be registered and retained before election day, but votes are not counted until after the polls close. It is unlawful for a person to disclose the results of a count or tally prior to the closing of the polls or the deadline for receiving mailed ballots.

—Kathy Brook

Look for the LWVSNM printed **Voters Guide** inserted in the **LC Bulletin**. Many thanks to members of the Voter Services Committee for getting this important publication into the community's hands.

VOTER INFORMATION

Contact the DAC Bureau of Elections, 575-647-7428
elections@doananacounty.org

Poll Workers Needed

LWVSNM is exploring the possibility of providing poll watchers for the election. If you are interested in being a poll watcher, please get in touch with one of the co-presidents (vanwieek@yahoo.com or kathybrook@comcast.net). A poll watcher doesn't necessarily have to monitor a poll site all day long. But, it's an important task to ensure all protocols are being met as Americans cast their votes. There is a small stipend for your volunteer work.

As an added convenience, you can also [fill out a short online form to become a poll worker](#). The form will be forwarded to the Doña Ana County Clerk's Office.

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

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

Information, Misinformation, and Disinformation

Interesting sources of information on aspects of voting include the following:

- A source of maps on the current legislative districts in New Mexico: <https://nmlegis.gov/members/districts>. Click on the district number or on the link to the statewide map near the top of the page. These districts will be redrawn in the redistricting process in 2020.
- University of Southern California's Election Cybersecurity Initiative (www.electionsecurity.usc.edu). This organization has presented webinar's tailored to each of the 50 states. The webinar for NM included Maggie Toulouse Oliver and was viewed by a number of LWV members. Twitter: @USC_TrueVote
- MIT's Election Lab (<https://electionlab.mit.edu>). *This organization describes itself as applying scientific principles to the study of elections and their administration. It has developed an election performance index on which NM ranked 9th for the 2018 election. Twitter @MITelectionlab*
- Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (www.cisa.gov). Twitter @cyber
- Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (<https://circle.tufts.edu>) This is a nonpartisan research center at Tufts University, focusing on young people's civic engagement. They report that climate change is one of the top issues for young people. They also identified NM Congressional District 2 (includes Doña Ana County) among the districts in which the votes of young people could have a significant impact. Twitter: @CivicYouth
- Our Twitter account (@VOTESNM) is following some of these organizations. I am new to Twitter and was not eager to engage with it but am finding it a helpful way to follow what is going on with various levels of the League and other organizations focused on the voting process.

—Kathy Brook

Voter Services & the Voters Guide

September has been the final, hectic month for LWVSNM Voters Guides. The League's voter information website is now published online with answers to our prepared questions for the candidates and answers to many of the questions you may have about voting. Go to www.vote411.org, enter your address and find your specific information. You can register to vote, check your voter registration status and find what's on your ballot (including candidates' responses to Voters Guide questions). This is a valuable resource to cultivate as it is unique in its completeness of information relevant to each individual address.

On Oct. 9, the Las Cruces Bulletin is publishing our traditional printed version of the Voters Guide as a special section of the regular newspaper. There is also an overrun of copies which will be made available at popular places in the area.

This year we also will publish a Spanish version of the Voters Guide in Camino Real Media edited by Gerald Smola who is translating, publishing and distributing it as a separate section of his newspaper.

This publication will spread to people which we have not previously been able to reach.

I especially wish to thank my Co-chair, Helen Zagona, for her help while she has also been busy with get-out-the-vote activities. Vicki Simons has also been a great help with calling chores.

Our forums have also required much planning and contacting of candidates. Starting in September, forums were taped every week and shown initially on Thursdays on KRWG TV's Newsmakers program at 7:00 p.m. The televised shows will continue throughout October. These programs feature our state Legislators and are co-hosted with Fred Martino and a League designee.

To see the forums, go to <https://www.krwg.org/programs/newsmakers>. County Commissioners, Clerk and Treasurer candidates may be interviewed by K.C. Counts for Voice of the Public on KRWG.

—Dale Yeo, Co-Chair
Voter Services Committee



Honoring Polly Evans – Centenarian with League Roots

The 100th birthday of Polly Evans on Sept. 27, 2020, was noted recently in the *Las Cruces Sun-News* and the *El Paso Times*. Among her many accomplishments and contributions to the community, Polly was a wonderful member of our League and served as President (1989-90 and 1992-94), as well as *The Voter* Editor, Treasurer, and observer for the School Board. Polly was involved in a study of open primaries and other election procedures, a topic which was on the agenda at the most recent state board meeting because it may be covered in the upcoming legislative session.



Photo: Las Cruces Sun-News

Eloise "Polly" Evans

Polly raised four children and was an educator with the Las Cruces Public Schools, having taught at Alameda Jr. High and Mayfield High School. She was on the cutting-edge of developing alternative education in LCPS, said League member and retired LCPS administrator Jo Galván Nash.

"Polly was well known for her efforts to develop what would become San Andres Alternative High School. The early iterations of alternative education — at Tortugas High or Freedom High, as they were called — was new to LCPS and eventually led to the accredited San Andres High School in Mesilla," Nash said. "She was a key player in structuring the school and was the Principal. Her legacy still has an imprint at the school known today as Rio Grande Preparatory Institute."

For those who may want to contact Polly, her address is Good Samaritan Assisted Living, 3035 Terrace Dr. #204 or pollyevans2@gmail.com. Happy Birthday Polly!

—Kathy Brook



Photo: LCPS

Pros/Cons - Constitutional Amendments

Are you prepared to vote on the Constitutional Amendments on Nov. 3? Sometimes, the Amendments tend to get overlooked or voters are not fully aware of what they propose. Luckily, the NM Legislative Council Service has drafted a good Pros/Cons document to help us understand all sides of the vote.

The Amendments were proposed by the 2019 and 2020 Legislatures.

Take a few minutes to read through arguments both for and against the Amendments by clicking here: www.nmlegis.gov/Publications/. Then, look under the heading "New Mexico State Government", then click on "2020 July".

And, don't forget there are also bond questions on the election ballot:

○ Bond Question A authorizes the sale and issuance of \$33.3 million in bonds for senior citizen facilities improvements.

○ Bond Question B authorizes the sale and issuance of \$9.7 million in bonds for public library improvements.

○ Bond Question C authorizes the sale and issuance of \$156.3 million in bonds for public higher education institutions, special public schools, and native tribal schools.

LWVSNM Assisting Voters ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆



If you get to the Farmers' & Crafts Market on Saturdays, you may see League members answering questions about the election, distributing information or looking up voters' registrations. Thanks to new LWVSNM member Rosa Morales for spearheading this activity. Left to right: Rosa, Laura Castille and her daughter, Debra Hathaway, Rosemarie Sanchez, Kathy Brook and Eileen VanWie. To volunteer at the League table, contact Rosa at iselamar2@gmail.com.

2020 Election Deadlines:

- **Oct. 6:** Last day to register either online or by mail
- **Oct. 6:** Early voting begins, Mon-Fri, DAC Govt. Center, 8am-5pm (closed Oct. 12)
- **Oct. 17:** Alternative early voting locations open 11am-7pm, Tues-Sat through Oct. 31 at:
 - Anthony City Hall in Anthony;
 - Doña Ana Community College in Sunland Park;
 - Delores C. Wright Educational Center in Chaparral
 - Corbett Center at New Mexico State University
 - Hatch High School in Hatch
 - Sonoma Elementary School, 4201 Northrise Drive in Las Cruces
 - Las Cruces City Hall, 700 N. Main in Las Cruces
- **Oct. 20:** Deadline to apply for absentee Ballot
- **Oct. 27:** Final day recommended to return your absentee ballot by mail; or you can drop it off at a voting site during early voting or on Election Day
- **Oct. 31:** Last day to register in person



LET'S CONNECT

www.facebook.com/LWVSNM/
<https://twitter.com/VOTESNM>
www.instagram.com/lwvsnm/

Youth Engagement Voter Survey

For many months, Erika Graf-Webster, chair of the Youth Engagement Committee, has been working on distributing a survey for young adults. She's was assisted by LWVSNM Intern John Martin of NMSU to bring back informative data about voting among students/non-students. Although they are continuing to complete the full report, a draft summary of results was recently compiled.

These results will be of interest to all members who are working on increasing voter turnout. For example, about 25% of the 171 respondents did not know when and how to register!

Some other highlights from the 18-24-year old students revealed:

- 95% know that one must be registered in order to vote;
- 88% believe that they could impact local elections (Erika notes that only 17% always vote in local elections.);
- 87% of NMSU/DACC students were registered to vote;
- 63% responded that being able to vote online would make them more likely to vote;
- 59% favored making election day a holiday;
- 47% believe that their vote could impact a presidential election;
- 47% did not know that former felons can register;
- 30% say they'd be more likely to register and vote if they knew more about the candidates and issues;
- 20% cited "if employers would give the day off" as an encouragement to vote;
- 19% cited "not knowing enough about candidates or issues" as their reason for not voting;
- 19% said that now knowing enough about candidates or issues is their main reason for not voting;
- 15% said they didn't vote [in 2018] because they didn't know there was an election;
- 13.5% would be more likely to register if they could do it online (which Erika notes that they can!).

Furthermore, the draft report shows that several studies of youth engagement report by far, the most effective was to get students to the polls is to have welcome rallies with friends or registration parties. In reporting on these findings from the Youth Vote subcommittee, Barb Records recommends that because it is not possible to fully organize such a group before the election, efforts should be made to provide voting information to the teachers as it comes available from LWV and the County Clerk's office.

DRAFT MINUTES SUMMARIZED

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

LWVSNM Board Meeting

Monday, September 21, 2020

Present: Eileen VanWie and Kathy Brook, Co-Presidents; Johnnie Aldrich, Secretary; Erika Graf-Webster, Youth Engagement; Jo Galván Nash, PR; Kim Sorenson, Past President; Dale Yeo, Voter Services; Sadie Valverde, Treasurer; Lizz Taylor, Guest

Meeting Administration:

1. Call to Order: Eileen called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. In memory of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, she read a brief passage from RBG's *In Her Own Words*.
3. Appointment to Secretary: **Motion passed to accept Johnnie Aldrich to finish the term of Bonnie Votaw.**
6. Treasurer's Report: Sadie Valverde reported a balance of \$9,023 in the checking account; Donations since last meeting is \$1,500. Thank you notes sent. Several more in-kind donations will be listed separately.
7. Lobbying and Voter Service Activities: Kathy reported sending emails in support of SB4 to legislators at the Special Session in August. No financial transactions.
8. Records Management: Kathy presented extensive notes in a chart clearly indicating the kinds of reports, the agencies to which the documents should be sent, the deadlines for each, the reporting method, and a comments column that included focal contents. She also recommended periodic review of the reports by a small committee. Lizz pointed out that non-compliance with the requirements could be used as a tool for litigation against the League. Questions about how long we must retain the documents and whether individual board members might be liable must be resolved. Kathy will seek clarification on the distinction between general liability insurance and insurance for directors and officers. Lizz offered to work with a small group to develop the Records Management system.
9. Follow-up to Visioning Lab + Voter Services: A chart of "Visioning Lab" items for our Election Programmatic Strategy for Voter Empowerment and Voter Mobilization needs two columns completed (Person Responsible and Timeline). Other:
 - a. vote411.org This national voter-help service went live on September 14.
 - b. Voter's Guide: Dale reported that the Spanish and English versions of the guide will cost \$2,200 each. The English version will appear in the *LC Bulletin* on October 9; the Spanish version will come out the following week.
 - c. Empowering Voters Planning Committee: This group will meet via Zoom at noon on September 28. Those wanting to attend should notify Eileen for an email invitation.
 - d. Public Relations:
 - Farmers' Market Report: Members worked with Friends of the League, Rosa Morales and Deborah Hathaway at a booth on September 19. Sadie reported that in the 2 hours she was there, several registration and Census 2020 forms were filled out by citizens.
 - Helen Zagona was not at the meeting today but sent word via Dale that she will include flyers encouraging registration and information about vote411.org when she delivers to users of Meals on Wheels. And, the City of LC Senior Programs Department will send flyers to all on its mailing list.
 - Eileen and Kathy are writing monthly op-eds for publication in the *Las Cruces Sun-News* and *The Bulletin*.
 - Johnnie volunteered to be a poll watcher on Election Day. Others are needed.

— continued next page

Draft Minutes Summary (cont.)

- Jo, working with the LWVNM Communications Committee, has provided informational flyers in English & Spanish and distributed them to us and other League boards to be used as needed. She will do a mock-up of a 1/4-page fundraising advertisement for the *LC Bulletin*.

10. Online process for action items.

Online process for electronic voting on Board items: Kathy Brook and Jo Galván Nash developed guidelines for use when the Board must vote on an issue or activity between meetings. It was suggested this be used only for emergency decisions. **Motion to accept the process carried with “48 hours” changed to “2 calendar days.”**

11. Budget review including fundraising: Kathy reported that the League budget is about \$1,500 short of funds needed to cover expenses, especially due to printing two Voters’ Guides. We need a plan for how to use the diversity fund. Christina Little and Charlotte Lipson will be asked to “blast” their email lists with a request for donations to help pay for the two Guides.

13. Programs:

- a. October 10 — Dr. Bobbie Green, NAACP, “Get Out the Vote”
- b. November 14 — LWSVNM will discuss priorities for Southern New Mexico for the 2021 Legislative session in preparation for the December 5 meeting.
- c. December 5 — Dale will ask local candidates to meet with the League via Zoom on December 5. (Zoom event time TBA).
- d. The LWV New Mexico has scheduled an Advocacy Workshop, 10:00am-Noon, also on that day.

14. Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI): Eileen submitted a written report on the work of the LWVSNM JEDI Committee and the LWV New Mexico JEDI Committee. Reading the terms and conditions of the Diversity Fund, the donor revealed that the League may use those funds for the membership fee for potential members who will add diversity to the League. There would be an expectation that these members would be active in the League with specific projects, committees, or Board membership.

15. Youth Engagement: Erika reported the draft summary of the Fall 2019 voter participation survey among college students. LCPS teachers and specialists are preparing lessons about civic engagement for elementary, middle and high school students. Teacher David Nuñez reported on studies about engaging youth in voting. Erika and League intern Jon Martin of NMSU developed the youth turnout survey; although it’s not complete, a draft summary will be of interest to all members who are working on increasing voter turnout.

16. Education Committee: Eileen reports that all four of the LWVNM Leagues are reviewing several topics thoroughly with the intent of adding some elements to the LWVNM Education position. The committee plans to have position revisions ready to discuss with the LWVNM Board in November.

17. Website: Member Stewart Oberman is now working with Jo Nash as webmaster, continuing development and improvement of our website. Membership Chair Maryellen has been working with the website team with a goal to simplify access to the membership component of the website.

18. Membership: Chair Maryellen reports over 80 new 2020 handbooks/directories were mailed to current members. Current count is 81 primary members, 12 second household, and 2 students.

Next Board Meeting Dates:

- Monday, October 19, 2:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 16, 2:00 p.m.
- Monday, December 21, 2:00 p.m.



OBSERVER REPORTS

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Session

September 8, 2020

Observer: Kathy Brook

This was the first meeting with Ifo Pili, the new city manager, in attendance. The council approved unanimously a resolution, modeled after one presented to the Doña Ana County Commission, supporting inclusion of immigrants in the 2020 Census. Also included in the resolution was an issue concerning geocodes for those whose only address is a post office box. In the discussion it was noted that through the filing of amicus briefs the city is involved in a number of lawsuits related to the census.

Council members also approved a budget adjustment providing for a one-time distribution from the Telshor Fund of up to \$500,000 for extraordinary pay to emergency responders and critical infrastructure workers in connection with the pandemic. About 800 employees are expected to qualify for the funds.

Other issues addressed were the composition of the El Paseo and Solano ad hoc committee addressing redevelopment and transportation enhancements; the awarding of a contract to Workmed, Inc. of Las Cruces for occupational medical services; various budget adjustments; naming of the water quality lab after Dr. Jorge A. Garcia, recently retired from the city; and a resolution urging the legislature to allow county and municipal regulation of tobacco products and e-cigarettes to be more restrictive than those of the state.

In the report section of the agenda, Councilor Gandara expressed a desire for a work session on the policing survey and policing issues and Councilor Sorg asked that information provided by LWV SNM about the voting process and candidate information be included in city utility bills.

DOÑA ANA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS • Regular Meeting

September 22, 2020

Observer: Jo Galván Nash

All commissioners were present (Commissioner Reynolds electronically) as was Manager Fernando Macias.

Voting: County Clerk Amanda López Askin reported that voter registration is slower than in previous election years. She urged people to use the www.NMVote.org site to get registered or to update voter information. Early voting begins Oct. 6 and she hopes people vote early if voting in person. More than 18,000 absentee ballot applications have been received, which is five times the amount than in other years.

Census: Commissioner Manuel Sanchez asked citizens to fill out their census form immediately. A 61% goal in Doña Ana has not been reached. He said the Census has a huge beneficial impact to citizens of the county.

Hispanic Heritage Month: A Proclamation was approved to recognize Sept. 15-Oct. 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month. More than 51.7% of businesses in Doña Ana County are Hispanic-owned and the rate grew 29% over a five-year period. The observance celebrates the cultures and traditions of LatinX people. New Mexico has 48% Hispanic ancestry, more than any other state. LatinX ancestries predate the birth of our nation and can be traced to Spain, Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean Islands.

Hand-Held Radios: An expenditure of \$473,385 was approved for hand-held radios for the Sheriff's Department.



LAS CRUCES BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

September 15, 2020 via Zoom

Observer: Eileen VanWie

All Board Members and Superintendent Karen Trujillo were present.

Public comments (35 Minutes): parents gave pros and cons for online learning versus going back to classrooms/schools. The majority of parents wanted schools reopened.

The NEA Board of Directors want schools to stay fully remote with no special groups returning to school this semester for the safety of students and teachers. More time is needed to prepare the schools and train employees on requirements to make the environments safe. The CSEC staff want employees to stay out of schools, because protocols are not being followed which makes disinfecting schools difficult. The CSEC wants secretaries to be able to work from home.

The Student Advisory group has recruited 96 high school students willing to tutor elementary school students. Adelaide, the Board's Student Advisor, reported they plan to expand tutoring to middle school students as they learn from their work with elementary students.

The Extended Learning Application for LCPS was approved by NMPED September 10. Friday Night Lights recognition at Field of Dreams took place for hundreds of students participating in sports and activities this fall.

LCPS launched digital wellness checks by self-reporting of employees. They also log who they had contact with, for contact tracing purposes. As of the end of September, 14 cases have been established in the school district since March. (Four cases were at Fairacres Elem.) Food distribution to families had dropped and is going back up.

Superintendent Trujillo presented the re-entry recommendation from the administration. After much discussion, the Board approved the recommendation to continue the remote learning model until the end of the semester (Dec. 18), bringing back small groups of three types (special education students, early childhood students, and at-promise youth) for limited in person learning experiences beginning in October. Currently Doña Ana County is coded in the orange range for COVID, which restricts in person learning and even hybrid classes.

SOUTH CENTRAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING • (Special)

Thursday, September 17, 2020 • 9:00 - 10:30 a.m., via ZOOM

Observer: Johnnie R Aldrich

Several regular Board members were absent today, but a quorum was present, including County Commissioners Gonzalez and Solis and City Councilor Vasquez.

Because the Authority's fiscal year begins in July, this special meeting was called so that urgent budgetary matters could be addressed. The meeting began with the introduction of 2 new members of the Board: both Assistant Las Cruces City Manager, Robert Thompson and Interim Director of City Utilities Delilah Walsh attended this meeting.



South Central Solid Waste Authority (cont.)

Director Patrick Peck reported that the July-August collection tonnage was typical, saying “it is the busiest time of the year,” this year even passing the December-January collection numbers.

Most of the meeting time was devoted to the presentation and discussion of several resolutions authorizing loan and land use applications aimed at keeping up with our projected population growth patterns.

Director Peck’s sought the Board’s authorization to apply to the State Land Office to lease 40 acres off of Holman Road and El Centro Blvd. for 35 years. The current transfer station on Amador is now “at capacity,” so the goal is to establish a new transfer station to serve northeast Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. This is be a 4-5-year, multimillion-dollar project, but the leasing of the land must be the beginning. Ensuing discussion about the effect of such construction on surrounding traffic patterns and existing properties was lengthy, with multiple questions by Chair Lynn Ellins and City Councilor Kasandra Gandara. Eventually, the public will be consulted in a series of town meetings, and the Board authorized this initial request.

Another resolution causing considerable discussion was Director Peck’s request for authorization to apply for a \$1 million loan from the Closed Loop Foundation to install a Materials Recovery Facility (based on a machine that processes plastics for recycling) at the existing Recycling Center on Amador. The Closed Loop Foundation is a non-profit organization supported by major purveyors (e.g., Coca-Cola, Walmart, and Amazon) of plastic-encased products. The loan is available to municipal entities for 10 years at 0% interest. Director Peck described the facility as a “baby step” toward development of our own recycling processing plant so that we could operate independently of facilities in El Paso and Albuquerque, as we currently must do. Board approval was unanimous.

Director Peck also sought permission to make application for financial assistance, a \$3.5-million loan, from the New Mexico Finance Authority to offset budget shortages caused by the need for the required gas system at the Corralitos Landfill. This system, required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, reduces methane output to sustainable levels. New requirements have resulted in costs not included in the original budget. Resolution was approved.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL – Work Session

September 14, 2020

Observer: Kathy Brook

Topics included a possible temporary downward adjustment of the minimum wage for tipped workers and wastewater impact fees.

There was also a presentation on the anti-donation clause of the NM Constitution, Open Meetings Act, and ethics for elected and appointed officials. Chairs of city boards and Planning and Zoning Commission members were among those in attendance. League members who are interested might find this portion of the recording of the meeting to be helpful. This portion of the meeting was about an hour long starting at about the one-hour mark in the recording.

Treasurer's Report

Provided by Sadie Valverde, Treasurer

AUGUST 2020

Date	Description	Deposit/Credit	Payments/Debit	Balance
7-27-20	Citizens Bank balance			\$11,921.66
8-06-20	Deposit	\$445.00		
	180. yard signs			
	65. new member dues			
	200 donation in memory of Win Jacobs			
8-11-20	Deposit	360.00		
	220 yard signs			
	100 donation – voter guide			
	40 suffragist print			
8-12-20	transfer from Pay Pal – dues	63.27		
8-17-20	Deposit	115.00		
	65.00 member dues			
	50.00 yard signs			
	Total Deposits	983.27		\$12,904.93
 EXPENSES:				
8-6-20	League of Women Voters USA		\$2800.00	
8-8-20	We are It 2 months		420.25	
8-14-20	Insta-Copy Imaging yards signs		953.80	
8-16-20	Consumer Cellular – phone		19.16	
8-17-20	Hanover Ins. Company – annual premium		821.00	
	Total Expenses			\$5,014.21
	 Balance as of 9-1-20			 \$7,890.72
	Citizens Bank Balance	\$2,569.18		
	Donation	1,395.00		
	Yard Signs	910.00		
	Diversity Fund	1,000.00		
	Immigration Study Fund	625.00		
	Youth Engagement	500.00		
	Account balance after Debit payments			\$7,890.72
	\$85.00 postage mailing year books Pd. By Mary Ellen Kebbel			

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

Translating with Heart

by Carla Campbell

January/February 2020

One of the things Elizabeth Bennett most enjoyed about volunteering with the hospitality program for asylum seekers run by the Border Servant Corps (BSC) was talking with the guests in Spanish. They would be bused to Peace Lutheran church in Las Cruces by ICE employees, arriving tired, hungry, and sometimes unwell. The volunteers would feed them, offer them warm showers, wellness checks for a general screening of their health condition, and beds for the night. All this was provided by BSC and volunteers; no federal funding went into this offering of hospitality.

Refugee families would arrive in the morning and usually be more revived by evening, ready to talk with her about their experiences. These were not all pleasant, and included run-ins with gangs, kidnappings, and sometimes the murder of loved ones. One woman, whose husband had been killed while working on a farm, left in the middle of night after a black car had been driving slowly past her house frequently.

Elizabeth helped translate for wellness checks, explained the transportation process to the families (volunteers would call their sponsor and arrange for bus or plane transportation to the destination city), enjoyed dinner with guests, helped watch the children when they were playing, and stayed overnight at times.

She fondly remembers the goodbyes with the guests, often with warm hugs and lots of tears, showing a sign of real bonding between them. She found the asylum seekers to be humble, grateful people, offering to help wash dishes, or help out in whatever way they could. Most were Central Americans; some expressed confusion about why they were getting such a cold reception by the U.S. government.

A highlight of the weekly visits of guests was when Denise Chávez, owner of the Casa Camino Real Bookstore in Las Cruces, came in on Wednesday mornings to bring a pile of books to give out, and would stay and read stories to the children and adults alike. Then most were off to the bus station or airport, with food bags in tow, transported there by more volunteers, their experience in the U.S. just beginning.

Carla Campbell is a retired physician in Las Cruces.

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