

# the VOTER

MAY 2021  
Volume 53, Issue 1



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## Co-Presidents' Messages

Dear LWVSNM Members,

As we begin a new fiscal year on May 1, thanks go out to all who contributed to the many successes our League experienced this year in spite of limitations created by the coronavirus. All of the committees, including immigration, youth engagement, affordable housing, education and empowering voters, provided learning and advocacy roles. A new Development Committee will be forming, with Rosa Morales as the Chair, to expand League interactions with other organizations, businesses, and groups. Observer Corps members have provided valuable information to help keep members informed of local government and institutional issues and actions.



*Eileen VanWie*

The Board members effectively served to organize and manage the business of the League. Thank you to Kim Sorensen, Maryellen Kebbel, and Sadie Valverde, who successfully completed their terms in office. Thank you to those who are continuing: Dale Yeo, Johnnie Aldrich, Erika Graf-Webster, and Jo Galván Nash. Welcome to new Board members Laura Castille, Mary Flynn, and Cynthia Murrell.

We are fortunate to have talented members willing to play a vital role in the future success of the League. Thank you for the trust shown in Kathy and me, by re-electing us for a second two-year term as co-presidents. It is an honor to work with League members in support of our mission to empower voters and strengthen democracy.

—continued next page

## City Manager to Address LWVSNM

Ifo Pili will speak at the LWVSNM, May 8, 2021, general meeting. Mr. Pili is the “new” City Manager for the City of Las Cruces. He will speak to the League about his plans for economic development in Las Cruces. In particular, he will discuss his overall plan for the West Mesa and ways in which new state laws, i.e., changes to the liquor laws, cannabis, etc., will be incorporated into the City's development plan.

The virtual meeting begins at 2:00 p.m. and all League members will receive an email from [Eileen VanWie](#) with the Zoom link.

Ifo Pili began his duties as our City Manager on Sept. 8, 2020.

Before coming to Las Cruces, he was the city administrator in Eagle Mountain City, Utah. He also served as Eagle Mountain City's assistant city administrator and economic development coordinator for six years before becoming city administrator.

Born and raised in American Samoa, Mr. Pili was also an adjunct professor in the Master of Public Administration program at BYU, teaching local government management. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in political science and a Master of Public Administration degree from BYU.

At BYU, he was a scholarship football player for the Cougars, and received all-conference honors as a defensive lineman. His talent enabled Mr. Pili to play professionally, in the National Football League, for several teams, including the Houston Texans, Philadelphia Eagles, and New England Patriots. His playing career with the Eagles was highlighted by the team's appearance in Super Bowl XXXIX.

While attending BYU, Mr. Pili met his wife, Jenny. They now have eight children.



*Ifo Pili*

## Co-Presidents' Messages (cont.)

There are still ways for members to get actively involved. We need a Social Media Coordinator; a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator; an Historian/Archivist; and an Observer for the Public Regulation Commission. Please contact Kathy ([kathybrook@comcast.net](mailto:kathybrook@comcast.net)) and me ([vanwieek@yahoo.com](mailto:vanwieek@yahoo.com)) if you are interested in supporting the League in one of these off-Board positions.

Congratulations to Kathy Brook for being elected as Program Director for the State LWV at the Convention on Sunday, April 25!

With warm regards,

— Eileen VanWie

Hello Members,

With the arrival of May, we begin a new LWVSNM fiscal year with new members of our local board including Cindy Murrell, Mary Flynn, and Laura Castille. It's also an opportunity to plan for the coming year.

Many thanks to Sadie, Kim, and Mary Ellen who are leaving the board. It has been a pleasure to work with them during our strange pandemic year.

Thanks, also, to those of you who attended the annual meeting on April 10. In addition to the votes on board members, the budget, and program items, participants provided feedback to the board. Suggestions included adding education of voters to our bylaws, clarification of the reference to a valid excuse for a board member to be absent, describing "meal" expenses as "meeting" expenses in the budget, and defining program as items for study and action (not as all League activity). **If you have additional input for the board, please don't hesitate to contact us.**

At recent program planning meetings, we discussed a study to gain a better understanding of how county government works in New Mexico. If you are interested in assisting with some research on these differences and their implications, please [contact me or Eileen](#).

Congratulations to Beth Bardwell on her appointment to the Las Cruces Utilities Advisory Group.

For those interested in national LWV positions, you can find the latest version of *Impact on Issues* (a PDF) at <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>. Alternatively, you can order a copy from Amazon.

—Kathy Brook



Kathy Brook

## Upcoming Calendar Events

### MAY 2021

#### Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May 3, Mon.: **Short Board Meeting**, noon, via Zoom

May 8, Sat.: **General Meeting**, 2pm, via Zoom; watch for your email from Eileen to attend; If you don't get an email invitation by the meeting date from Eileen VanWie, [contact her](#).

May 17, Monday: **Affordable Housing Committee**, 3:30 p.m., [contact Beth Bardwell](#) for information/Zoom link.

May 17, Monday: **Regular Board Meeting**, 5:30 p.m. via Zoom invite.

May 19, Wed., **Youth Engagement Committee Mtg**, 4:00 p.m., contact [Erika Graf-Webster](#).

#### May through August 31, 2021: **Emergency Rental Assistance Program:**

*Help spread the word about this important opportunity!* New Mexico will grant \$170 million in federal aid to New Mexicans for rental and utility assistance to households experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19. Rent, utility bills, water & sewer, trash removal and other expenses related to housing costs are covered. The application process is open until Aug. 31. Apply at [www.renthelpnm.org](http://www.renthelpnm.org) or call: 1-833-485-1334.

### 2021/22 LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO BOARD:

Kathy Brook & Eileen VanWie – Co-Presidents  
Laura Castille – Vice President  
Johnnie R. Aldrich – Secretary  
Mary Flynn – Treasurer  
Dale Yeo – Voter Services Director  
Erika Graf-Webster – Youth Engagement Director  
Cindy Murrell – Membership Director  
Jo Galván Nash – Public Relations Director  
Marjorie Burr (chair) and Priscilla Parrish – Nominating Committee

P.O. Box 15142 • Las Cruces, NM 88004  
575.524.VOTE (8683)  
[www.lwvsnm.org](http://www.lwvsnm.org)

The League is proud to announce the election of the 2021/2022 Board Officers and Directors. The election took place during the April 10, 2021 Annual Business Meeting. All were unanimously approved. The League thanks members of the Nominating Committee for their work on developing such an outstanding slate. [Click here to read the LWV News Release about our Board.](#) Here is a complete list of the new Board:

## CO-PRESIDENTS\*:

**Kathy Brook** and **Eileen VanWie** continue their leadership roles, each with two-year terms. Kathy was also elected as the LWV NM Program Director. Eileen also serves on the state Board. *[Local terms expire May 2023]*



Kathy



Eileen

## VICE PRESIDENT\*:

**Laura Castille** will serve one year which is the remaining term of the previously vacant VP's seat. Her expertise will benefit the organization tremendously! *[Term expires May 2022]*



Laura

## SECRETARY:

**Johnnie R. Aldrich** will continue her fine work as Secretary serving another year. Johnnie was also elected to the LWV NM Nominating Committee. *[Local term expires May 2022]*



Johnnie

## TREASURER\*:

**Mary Flynn** is the new Treasurer and a new community resident. She's a lifelong League member from CA. *[Term expires May 2023]*



Mary

## DIRECTORS:

**Dale Yeo** is continuing her leadership as Director of Voter Services for another year. *[Term expires May 2022]*



Dale

**Erika Graf-Webster\***, previously an appointed Director, was elected to the Board for a two-year term as Director of Youth Engagement. *[Term expires May 2023]*



Erika

**Cindy Murrell\*** returns to the Board as Director of Membership; she was elected to a two-year term. *[Term expires May 2023]*



Cindy

**Marjorie Burr\***, former president, was elected to serve one year as Chair of the Nominating Committee. *[Term expires May 2022]*



Marjorie

**Priscilla Parrish\***, longtime community volunteer, was elected to serve one year as a member of the Nominating Committee. *[Term expires May 2022]*



Priscilla

## APPOINTED:

**Jo Galván Nash** was appointed by the Board to a one-year term as Director of Public Relations. *[Term expires May 2022]*



Jo

**Rosa Morales** has been appointed as Chair of the Development Committee, a non-Board position; she is seeking a co-chair volunteer for this important addition to the League. *[Term expires May 2022]*



Rosa

\*elected 4.10.21

*The Voter is pleased to include this new section that features one member of our organization. This will help us connect with one another during the ongoing pandemic. And, we will get to know a little more about the members in our organization. Feel free to contact [Jo Galván Nash, Voter Editor](#), to recommend someone to feature in a future newsletter.*

## Let's Meet LWVSNM Member ... Christine Sorg

**Christine Ann McConaty Sorg** was born second of four daughters to James and Elizabeth McConaty in Denver, Colorado. After graduating from George Washington High School, she attended Colorado State University in Fort Collins. It was the 1960s, and as both war abroad and unrest at home ramped up, Christine graduated with a bachelor's degree in Zoology and Entomology. Disenchanted with suburban life in middle America, she answered President Kennedy's call and joined the Peace Corps.

She arrived in the village of Amedzofe, Ghana, to be a science instructor at the Teacher Training College. As it happened, she learned much more than she taught. "It was almost a shock to be in such a peaceful place. The Ghanaian people were so nice, so free of conflict or violence. I can hardly recall even hearing a child cry." She married fellow science teacher, Gill Sorg, in 1972 at the village church in a dress she sewed herself.

They returned to the United States to another change of scenery: the High Plains of North Dakota and Montana. As her husband attended graduate school at UND, Christine gave birth to a daughter, followed by a son three years later. By that time, the family had settled near Wolf Point, Montana, where Gill worked for the Department of Agriculture. Before long, they had become full-time farmers and ranchers. Christine served as a member of Women Involved in Farm Economics (W.I.F.E.), and Gill joined the Montana Alfalfa Seed Growers' Association. Holidays were spent with family in Denver, Minnesota, Massachusetts and Washington.

The farm was isolated, yet Christine yearned for more knowledge and skills. The nearest community college was a two-hour drive away, so she studied—things like astronomy, botany and tax preparation, to name a few—remotely.

When her children had grown, she returned to full-time learning at the University of Montana, Missoula, and received a degree in medical technology and microbiology in 1993.

After 20 long, dark winters in Montana, the Sorgs decided it was time for a change. Longing for the sunny skies of the Southwest, they found in Las Cruces everything they were looking for: pleasant weather year-round and opportunities for those with agriculture experience. Soon, Christine was splitting her time between substitute teaching, gardening, and volunteering in the community.

Her lifelong interest in wildlife and biology drew her to Friends of the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks. Her work with them inspired her to become a voter registration agent. One day, a newspaper advertisement about the League of Women Voters caught her eye, and she found where she belonged. Ever since, Christine has devoted herself to voter registration and education.



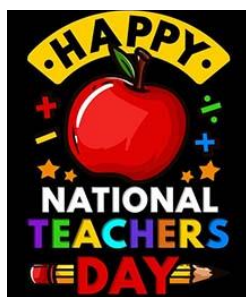
*Christine Sorg*

## Available Resources

If you would like a hard copy of the LWVSNM Who's Who Directory of Elected Officials there are copies at Branigan Library, City Hall, and the County Govt. Building. [Plus, the pamphlet is also on our website.](#) Plus, we have extras if you want to place them in other public places. [Contact Dale Yeo.](#) And, brochures on the Pioneer Women's Park Marker are available at Branigan Library, City Hall, Farm & Ranch Museum, and the Visit Las Cruces Office.

## Celebratory Events in May

The month of May has many special occasions. **May 4 is National Teachers' Day** as a part of National Teachers Week (the first full week in May). Teachers have had an especially challenging year and may appreciate a "thank you" more than usual. The obstacles they faced during the pandemic, navigating work and home while many of them were raising children of their own, were particularly difficult. Of course, any day is a good day to thank teachers.



**Cinco de Mayo, May 5**, a commemoration of the victory of Mexicans over the French in 1862 and more popular in the U.S. than in Mexico, is that same week. May 9 is Mother's Day. In 1870, poet Julia Ward Howe said women, especially

mothers, had a responsibility to advocate for a world peace and wrote the *Mother's Day Proclamation*. Eileen's mother died in 1997 and I think of her every day. Cooking some of her recipes may be a way to honor her this month.

One other important holiday in May is **Memorial Day**, the last Monday in the month. Let us remember the men and women who lost their lives in service to our democracy. Let us all do what we can to stand up for our representative democracy. Consider a visit to the local Veterans' Memorial.



And, don't forget that the month of May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

—Eileen VanWie and Rosa Morales



## Dues Renewal & Membership Form

The LWVSNM dues renewal process is now underway. May 1 marks the beginning of the new fiscal year. Even if you are a current member, we ask that all members fill out the Membership Form (see the final page of *The Voter*) and submit with your dues payment. The League want to know what topics are of interest to you and what skills you may want to offer during the year. New members can also find a registration form on our website: [lwvsnm.org/join/](http://lwvsnm.org/join/).

At the recent Annual Meeting, it was determined that the dues will remain at \$65 for each member; members of your family in the same household can also join or renew for half the cost — \$32.50. Memberships are free for students 16 years or older as well as for anyone who has been a member for 50 years or more.

You can renew online (with a credit card or PayPal) via the League's website at [www.lwvsnm.org/donate/](http://www.lwvsnm.org/donate/). PayPal charges us a fee, so if you use the online service, please add a donation of \$2.50 or more to cover the fee. Checks and registration forms can be mailed to: LWVSNM, P.O. Box 15142, Las Cruces NM 88004.

Whenever you submit your payment be sure to include your name, address, email address and daytime telephone number.

And, the League certainly appreciates the additional contributions made by members, which also can be included when you pay your dues.

## Supporting Future Educators

Please consider a donation to the Bonnie Burn Scholarship. Bonnie, a past president, was a prominent member of the League and sadly passed away several years ago. She was married to Bob Burn who is also an LWVSNM member.

Bob and LWVSNM began the endowed scholarship in order to award a \$1,000 scholarship per year to an LCPS graduating senior who will enroll at NMSU to study education.

The scholarship funds are deposited with the Las Cruces Public Schools' Foundation. The best way to donate is to send a check made payable to the LCPS Foundation and on the memo line write "LWVSNM Bonnie Burn Scholarship." Mail it to LCPS Foundation, c/o Betsy Geery, PO Box 16214, Las Cruces, NM 88001.



## **DRAFT SUMMARY OF MINUTES**

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

### ***Board Meeting via Zoom Conference Online***

***April 10, 2021 — 4:15-5:09 p.m.***

**In Attendance:** Kathy Brook, Co-President; Eileen VanWie, Co-President; Johnnie Aldrich, Secretary; Marjorie Burr, Nominating Committee Chair; Laura Castille, Vice President; Mary Flynn, Treasurer; Cindy Murrell, Membership Director; Erika Graf-Webster, Youth Engagement Director; Jo Galván Nash, Public Relations Director; Priscilla Parrish, Nominating Committee Member; Dale Yeo, Voter Services Director.

Eileen began this first meeting of the new board by welcoming the new members: Marjorie Burr as Chair of the Nominating Committee, Laura Castille as Vice-President, Mary Flynn as Treasurer, Cindy Murrell as Director of Membership.

The first order of business was to formally appoint Jo Galván Nash as Director of Public Relations. The motion was unanimously approved, with additional thanks to Jo for her work as editor of *The Voter*.

After considerable discussion, it was decided there will be two Board meetings per month: the first will be a short meeting for recurring business matters on the first Mondays of the month at noon; the second Board (longer) meetings will be on the third Mondays of the month at 5:30 p.m.

The general session meetings with guest speakers remain on the second Saturdays of the month at 2:00 p.m. for all members.

In anticipation of the LWV NM Convention April 24-25, the Board designated the following delegates: Brook, Castille, VanWie, Nash, Valverde, Yeo. All members of LWVNM are invited to attend and participate in discussions at the convention, but only delegates may cast votes.

Finally, the Board suggested multiple possibilities for our guest speakers at the May 8 meeting. **New Vice-President Laura will consult with Eileen and Kathy and decide the issue. In addition, watch for more information on a June meeting for more discussion about program planning.**

— Submitted by Johnnie R. Aldrich, Secretary



## OBSERVER REPORTS

### LCPS Board of Education (BOE) • Work Session

April 6, 2021

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: President Ray Jaramillo, VP Carol Cooper, Secretary Teresa Tenorio, Terrie Dallman.

There was lengthy discussion on the intense time frame proposed for the superintendent search process. The goal is to announce the new superintendent on June 1. Vote: 3-yes, 1-no to accept the proposal on the process. President Jaramillo will Chair the Sub-Committee. Sra. Flores was suggested to be a Board Member on the Search Committee. Parent representatives will be appointed by Terrie (elementary), Teresa (middle school), and Carol (high school). Members of the Committee need to be identified by April 9. Interviews for the finalists are tentatively set for the week of May 17-21. One Board member has personal responsibilities that week and hoped to have the interviews postponed by a week. The President agreed to work with members so they could all participate.

Equity and Excellence for all Students: Associate Superintendent Roberto Lozano presented the 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of Policy JBC equity for all students. This policy is in response to the key finding in the Yazzie/Martinez court findings. It establishes a framework that promotes learning environments for all students that validate and equitably infuse a student's home culture, language, and identity in all aspects of their learning experiences. It was approved on a 4-0 vote.

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### LCPS Board of Education (BOE) • Regular Meeting

April 20, 2021 • 4 p.m.

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: President Ray Jaramillo, VP Carol Cooper, Secretary Teresa Tenorio, Terrie Dallman (via phone), Maria Flores (via phone)

Student accomplishments were celebrated. Public comment included comments against ethnic studies, support for the Superintendent's search process, two educator comments encouraging the Board to maintain the traditional calendar and not extend it, and one parent comment supporting additional days to the calendar for next year.

Interim Superintendent Ramos reported on the secret prom that took place on April 10. Attorney Gallegos described policies that influenced response to learning about the secret prom. Mayfield students went back online and the students who attended were quarantined for 10 days. These decisions were made by the administration, not the Board. COVID safe school proms are now being planned at the high schools.

Dr. Miller-Tomlinson presented Policy IHCG K-5 Plus Program second reading: (provides additional instructional time for students through extension of school year - July). The purpose of the program is to gain learning that helps prevent "summer learning loss." Utah State research doesn't show statistical improvement with such a program. UNM study shows similar results. Need to develop "universal PreK."

Dr. Lozano presented JBC Policy as amended 4-6-2021, first reading: Equity and excellence for all students. It needed to be posted on the LCPS website earlier; this error has been rectified. The policy will be reviewed again in the future. The policy stems from Yazzie-Martinez court findings.

School Board meeting times will return to 6:00 PM for regular meetings, and 4:00 PM for work meetings.

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## OBSERVER REPORTS

### LCPS BOE (cont.)

Superintendent search information was presented by President Jaramillo. Applicants will submit resume with signed cover letter, valid certifications required by NM PED, completed application, three letters of recommendation, passed background checks and will address the following minimum qualifications (developed by the Committee): Important Skills: leadership, communication, and public relations; Important Characteristics: student centered advocate, integrity and trust, team builder, active listener; Important Qualifications: Experience as a principal, bilingual (English/Spanish preferred), experience working with culturally, linguistically diverse students and students with special needs. Important Issues: funding, curriculum and instruction, technology, personnel, and student needs (suggested by student representative).

President Jaramillo suggested a salary range of \$150,000 per year and up to the high range of \$185,000 per year. Señora Flores suggested that the low range be raised (\$165,000-\$175,000) to be more competitive. Board Attorney Elena Gallegos reminded the Board to give themselves as much flexibility as possible. They settled on the range of \$150,000 to \$185,500.

Options for the school calendar 2021-2022 were explained and feedback from teachers, parents, and community was shared. Option “A” would add time during the day within the school calendar. Option “B” would add days to the calendar. Option “C” maintains the current calendar time frame. Money from the state will be given to schools that extend “learning” time. Option “C” passed on a 5-0 vote. Board members indicated this state funding does provide “equity” and does not address local needs. For example, one local need is salaries for more teachers to reduce class size. The Board focuses on students when making decisions.

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### Ngage Meeting • Virtual Leaders Circle

March 23, 2021

Observer: Cathy Burn

#### Broadband Legislation Overview

-Lori Martinez

Thanks to the Leaders Circle and the Broadband Task Force we were able to send a letter to Governor Lujan Grisham with over 500 signatures along with a resolution from the City of Las Cruces to prioritize broadband. At the time of our meeting our local elected officials estimated about \$140 million in capital outlay had been allocated during the session to broadband access.

-State Representative Angelica Rubio

-Senator Carrie Hamblen

-Senator Bill Soules

Our focus this session was on connectivity, not just broadband. HB 10 is essentially the framework to ensure connectivity is addressed equitably and sustainably. SB 93 includes funding to create the Office of Broadband under the existing Department of IT, with a director overseeing the work. Next year is a budget year and we should start the work now to make sure our legislators push for the funding we need to make this happen. Though we did not accomplish everything we wanted, this was a monumental year for the conversation on connectivity. We are building something for a better future.

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### **Ngage (cont.)**

#### **District Superintendent Speaks on RE-entry**

##### **-GISD Superintendent Travis Dempsey**

1. Conducting a Parents' Choice Survey that has resulted in 38% choosing full re-entry and 62% choosing to remain virtual.
2. Keeping Virtual Wednesdays.
3. Vaccinating 500-600/week. Out of 1,900 employees over 1,400 vaccinated.
4. Feeding families a hot lunch and a breakfast for the next morning while the nutrition staff serves the students in the building.
5. Focusing on communication with "Coffee with the Superintendent" and "Coffee with Principals."
6. Working hard to advertise of COVID safe practices so that families feel safe to have their children return to school.
7. Implementing an evidence-based anti-bullying program.

##### **-Dr. Toni Hull, Hatch Valley Public Schools Executive Director of Curriculum and Instructional Innovation**

1. Collecting data on how many students will be returning to full re-entry.
2. Continuing to provide meals on re-entry.
3. Prioritizing consensus and commitment among teachers by conducting Zoom Round Table discussions.
4. Planning "Parenting with a Purpose" program so the parents can get on a call with teacher, principals, and superintendent and get their questions answered and strengthen those connections with families.
5. Focusing on "Jump Start" not "Catch Up" when students return.
6. Leveraging Zoom for opportunities in high quality professional development.

#### **LCPS Updates**

##### **-Elijah Myers, Student at Arrowhead Park Early College High School Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee)**

1. Majority of students are looking forward to returning to school. From JJ advisory standpoint-alcohol use and prescription abuse has risen among students from isolation.

##### **-Maria Flores, LCPS Board Member**

1. Approximately 65% of students re-entering while 35% will still be remote. Still to be vaccinated are 30% of teachers.

##### **-Dr. Maria Artiaga, LCPS Director of Early Childhood Education**

1. Trying to get materials home to students so they have tools they need at home.
2. Making sure the technology is in place has been a critical issue.

#### **City of Las Cruces**

##### **-Kasandra Gandara, City Councilor**

1. City stands ready to help. \$3.5 million has gone to schools for hot spots.
2. The City still offers resources, plexiglass, and other things to keep the community safe.
3. Museums and libraries putting together tutoring for students.
4. Giving rental/utilities assistance to La Casa.
5. SW working on rapid re-housing efforts.



## OBSERVER REPORTS

### Las Cruces City Council • Regular Session

April 5, 2021

Observer: Kathy Brook

The Council approved resolutions in support of transition of the city fleet to zero emission vehicles and citywide adoption of clean transportation options and planning for an energy transition of the natural gas line of business. At Councilor Sorg's suggestion, the goal for the transition to electric vehicles was increased from 22% to 50% of the city fleet by 2030.

A second agenda item was repeal and replacement of chapter 13 of the municipal code covering housing. The council supported the LWV SNM proposal (through public comment at the start of the session) to increase the share of funds from the sale of city property dedicated to affordable housing from 10% to 50%.

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### Las Cruces City Council • Work Session

April 12, 2021

Observer: Kathy Brook

It is anticipated that in May the City will receive \$11.875 million from the American Rescue Plan Act with additional funding to be distributed next year. Details on guidelines and required reporting have not yet been issued. However, funds will be available for government services impacted by revenue loss from Covid, premium pay for essential workers who worked during the crisis, responding to or mitigating negative economic impacts on residents, businesses, and nonprofits, and for capital improvements. In addition, there will be direct funding for transit, the airport, and aspects of senior care, and there will be increased funding from HUD. Other funds will be offered on a competitive basis from EDA, NEA, NEH, and the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Renter and utility assistance funds will be handled through the state and other entities.

The City Attorney is compiling a set of City Council rules and procedures (from the charter, city ordinances, etc.). Discussion items included conflict of interest and interactions between councilors and city staff.

Lisa LaRoque offered a presentation on single use plastic bags. There has been considerable outreach to residents and retailers resulting in a number of recommendations for limitations on use of thin plastic bags and exemptions to those limitations (such as laundry bags, bulk items food banks, restaurants). Limitations would be accompanied by a message campaign, coordination of public events for retailers and residents, and promotion of the opportunity to sell reusable bags as fundraisers. League member and NMSU student Courtney Komes was at the meeting as she has been serving as a co-op with the sustainability office.

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### Las Cruces City Council • Regular Session

April 19, 2021

Observer: Kathy Brook

A major topic on the agenda involved amendment to the city campaign code to address problems that came to light in the last municipal campaign. Definitions were added to the code and the limit on contributions from an individual or an organization was increased from \$2,300 to \$2,800. For anonymous contributions there is a limit of \$100 for the entire campaign period. The requirement for filing reports was clarified to indicate that the reports must be submitted even if the candidate did not receive contributions and candidates must close out their accounts prior to running for municipal office again.

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## OBSERVER REPORTS

### City Council (cont.)

An upcoming topic that resulted in extensive discussion is the city's plan to protect city water wells from contamination associated with septic tanks. Costs to homeowners associated with tying into the city sewer system were estimated at about \$5,000. Discussion focused on developing options for covering these costs for low income residents.

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### South Central Solid Waste Authority Board Meeting (SCSWA) • Regular Meeting

Thursday, April 15, 2021 • 9:00 a.m. via ZOOM

Observer: Johnnie R Aldrich

After the opening formalities, Director Patrick Peck began his report with the happy news of the failure of HB108 in the recent session of the NM Legislature. The bill would have raised the permitting fee on solid waste processing operations from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

The major part of his report described long-term planning that has been discussed by the Authority Board. A small recycle processing facility will be installed in Las Cruces that will separate the most valuable items (heavy cardboard, high-grade plastics) from the less valuable recyclables. SCSWA then will be able to sell these more valuable items independently.

However, SCSWA must retain its contract with Friedman Recycling of El Paso, which is currently responsible for both the collection and processing of all of our county's recyclable waste. Because of that company's millions of dollar's worth of collection and sorting equipment, the Authority will retain its contract with Friedman, but will pay them less for the service.

The \$1.5 million estimated cost for the new facility will cover the cost of both the equipment and the required renovation of the primary Transfer Station here in Las Cruces to accommodate the new equipment. Even though the Authority will be reducing its payments to the El Paso company and earning more with the sale of high-quality recyclables, raising the recycle rates for city residents from \$8.00 to \$8.50 will still be necessary in order to meet budgetary requirements during the several years before gains are realized from this reorganization. No indication of when the higher rates will begin.

Several budgetary resolutions were passed unanimously, the primary one of which was an award of \$1,904,263 to SCS Field Engineers of Reston, VA, who submitted the lowest bid for the construction of a newly designed landfill gas system.

# Treasurer's Report

Provided by Sadie Valverde, Treasurer

## APRIL 2021

Date	Description	Deposit/credit Payment/Debit	Balance
	Bank Balance as of 4/23/2021		\$4,113.39

Deposits:

April 15, 2021	3 Member dues @65.00-\$195.00 donations \$300.00	\$495.00
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Total Deposits:	495.00
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Expenses:

04/01/2021	We are It – webpage ck#1070	\$14.08
04/29/2021	Consumer Cellular - phone -ck#1071	19.78

Total Expenses Paid:	33.86
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Bank Balance as of 4/23/2021	\$4,113.39
One outstanding check We are it as of 4/25.2021	\$ 42.25

Donations from Member from 5-2020 thru 4-25-2021    \$4,437/25

Committed Funds:

Diversity Fun	935.00
Immigration fund	625.00
Youth Engagement fund	525.00
Total Committed funds	\$2,085.00

Please remember to pay your membership dues. Fill out the Membership Form (last page of this newsletter). Any additional donation is always appreciated. Thank You!

## LWVUS

Thank you for your interest in supporting the League of Women Voters!  
Your charitable donation will go directly to our important work to empower voters and defend democracy. Together we can ensure that our elections are free, fair and accessible, protect our environment and reduce the influence of money in our elections.

## LWVSNM

The League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico has been active in Las Cruces since 1968. A multitude of women, men and students throughout Las Cruces and Doña Ana County have been involved in the League's activities, studies and events that supported democracy and benefited our communities.  
LWVSNM is a tax-exempt 501(c)3, non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

## Books for LWVSNM Book Club – MAY 2021

*If you would like to participate, contact Erika at [grafwebster@icloud.com](mailto:grafwebster@icloud.com)*

**BOOK CLUB MEETINGS ARE ON 1<sup>ST</sup> THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH**

Status	Book
<b>Books Selected for Upcoming Meetings</b>	
<b>May 6, 2PM</b>	<p><b>How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need</b> by Bill Gates</p> <p>With the help of experts in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, political science, and finance, he has focused on what must be done in order to stop the planet's slide to certain environmental disaster. He lays out a concrete, practical plan for achieving the goal of zero emissions, suggesting policies that governments should adopt and what we as individuals can do to keep our government, our employers, and ourselves accountable in this crucial enterprise.</p>
<b>June 3, 2PM</b>	<p><b>The Code Breaker: Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race</b> by Walter Isaacson</p> <p>An account of how Nobel Prize winner Jennifer Doudna and her colleagues launched a revolution that will allow us to cure diseases, fend off viruses, and have healthier babies. They turned a curiosity of nature into an invention that will transform the human race: an easy-to-use tool that can edit DNA. Known as CRISPR, it opened a brave new world of medical miracles and moral questions.</p>
<b>Candidate Books for Future Selection</b> <i>Date in left column is the date on which the book was added to this list; books on the list for 6 months and not selected for discussion are deleted</i>	
<b>12-07-20</b>	<p><b>The WEIRDest People in the World: How the West Became Psychologically Peculiar and Particularly Prosperous</b> by Joseph Henrich</p> <p>A bold, epic account of how the co-evolution of psychology and culture created the peculiar Western mind that has profoundly shaped the modern world. In <i>The WEIRDest People in the World</i>, Joseph Henrich draws on cutting-edge research in anthropology, psychology, economics, and evolutionary biology to explore these questions and more.</p>
<b>12-07-20</b>	<p><b>The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It</b> by Robert Reich</p> <p>An urgent analysis of how the "rigged" systems of American politics and power operate, how this status quo came to be, and how average citizens can enact change. With the characteristic clarity and passion that has made him a central civil voice, Robert B. Reich shows how wealth and power have interacted to install an elite oligarchy, eviscerate the middle class, and undermine democracy.</p>
<b>1-22-21</b>	<p><b>On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century</b> by Timothy Snyder</p> <p>The Founding Fathers tried to protect us from the threat they knew, the tyranny that overcame ancient democracy. Today, our political order faces new threats, not unlike the totalitarianism of the twentieth century. <i>On Tyranny</i> is a call to arms and a guide to resistance, with invaluable ideas for how we can preserve our freedoms in the uncertain years to come.</p>
<b>1-22-21</b>	<p><b>Saving Justice: Truth, Transparency, and Trust</b> by James Comey</p> <p>James Comey uses his long career in federal law enforcement to explore issues of justice and fairness in the US justice system. He knows better than most just what a force for good the US justice system can be, and how far afield it has strayed during the Trump Presidency.</p>



## MEMBERSHIP FORM

*Send the Membership Form with Your Dues and/or Donation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ New member? Y / N Renewal? Y / N \*Student? Y / N

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**2<sup>nd</sup> Household Member: New Member? Y / N Renewal? Y / N \*Student? Y / N**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Members** (age 16+): List current school: \_\_\_\_\_

What League issues are you most passionate about? Circle any that apply:

Voting Rights	Elections	Education/Youth	Redistricting
Gun Safety	Immigration/Border Issues	Health Care	Climate/Environment
Legislation	Local Government	Social Justice/JEDI	Jobs/Economy
Other: _____			

What areas of interest/expertise would you like to offer? \_\_\_\_\_

*Send the Membership Form with Your Dues and/or Donation • THANK YOU!*

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:**

Annual Dues are paid in May of each year. If paying dues, select appropriate box:

☐ \$65.00 for first member ☐ \$32.50 for second household member ☐ \*Students (16+) free.

Make checks payable to LWVSNM. Send to: PO Box 15142, Las Cruces, NM 88004. Or pay online at [www.lwvsnm.org](http://www.lwvsnm.org) using PayPal or Credit Card. (An additional \$2.50 is appreciated to cover electronic fees.) Forms can also be emailed to: [lwvsnm@gmail.com](mailto:lwvsnm@gmail.com). Thank you!

### **DONATION:**

Please accept my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. I request my donation be used for: ☐ General Use

☐ Program \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Election/Voting-Related ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### FOR OFFICE ONLY

Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_ National Data \_\_\_\_\_ Membership SNM \_\_\_\_\_ Committee \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_