

the VOTER

MARCH 2022
Volume 53, Issue 10



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Co-Presidents' Messages

Dear League Members,

During the past month, I've had the opportunity to view a bit of the proceedings of the legislative session (including some of the activity on the last day – not a pretty sight), learn a bit more about Zoom and Google tools courtesy of new member Josie Miller, attend my first LWVSNM book club meeting, participate in the virtual League Day in Santa Fe, and Much more.

Good sources of information that I have encountered include the League Day presentations on taxation of Social Security and the hydrogen hub; materials on both can be found on the [Action](#) page of the LWVNM website. For those interested in immigration and the border, you can view an [excellent presentation](#) by Dr. Jose Bucheli as part of a series from the NMSU Center for Latin American and Border Studies.

City councilors are scheduling listening meetings; one area where League members might want to provide input concerns the planned general obligation bond that is expected to be on the ballot later this year.

Many thanks to Priscilla Parrish and Mary Flynn for their work in preparing the proposed budget for next year.



Kathy Brook

—Kathy
Co-President

Dear LWVSNM Members,

March is National Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the contributions women have made to our history, culture, government, and society. International Women's Day has been

—Co-President's message continued on next page

March General Meeting Celebrates Women and Democracy

The March meeting of the League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico will be on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. To celebrate Women's History Month, the program will focus on the national League's campaign "Making Democracy Work." The meeting will include a panel discussion featuring local leaders discussing Democracy.

Our distinguished panel for this discussion includes:

Guadalupe Cano currently serves as the District 4 Town Councilor in Silver City. The Town Council consists of a Mayor and four councilors with terms that are four years each.



Becky Corran currently serves as the District 5 Councilor for the City of Las Cruces. This is her first stint on the city council which, for the first time, has all women who were elected to the six council seats.



Diana Murillo-Trujillo currently serves as Mayor of Anthony, NM and as a Doña Ana County Commissioner for District 2. She was elected to the Commission in November 2020, and is serving a four-year term.



Watch for an email from a co-president that will provide you the link to join the Zoom meeting.

Co-Presidents' Messages (cont.)

observed since 1910. At an International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, a German woman suggested that every year in every country there should be a celebration on the same day – a Women's Day - to press for fair rights. Over 100 women from 17 countries unanimously approved the idea. By 1914, March 8 was adopted as the annual International Women's Day.

In 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned the U.S. Congress to designate the month of March as National Women's History Month. Each year the National Women's History Alliance selects a theme. The 2022 theme is, "Women Providing Healing Promoting Hope." With all of the turmoil, health issues, world threats, and voter suppression we see today, this theme reminds us to resist depression, fear, and inaction by choosing to be productive and courageous; by advocating the LWVUS campaign of making democracy work!

The *Southern New Mexico Listens* project, made possible by a partnership grant with the New Mexico Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities, began on February 23 and 24 by listening and dialoguing with two groups of students attending a



Eileen VanWie

NMSU Introductory Sociology course. Conversations in small groups included what the students thought about how our democracy is working and not working. The students appreciated the freedoms they have in the U.S.A. Some felt the reason younger people voted in the last election was because they got involved talking about it on social media. Others felt it was difficult to know how social media impacted voting and understanding of issues. As for what is not working, they were disappointed in how elected officials could not work together. Some said that inequality of money meant inequality of opportunities and resources, leading to an unhealthy democracy.

Some civic issues that were important included: mental health, child welfare, economic stability, social media, 16-year old's voting, civil rights, voting, crime, homelessness, immigration, racial and economic inequality. There will be follow up conversations with the same students in mid-March. The students seemed to appreciate the ability to share opinions about democracy they had not considered in a safe environment.

—With warm regards,
Eileen VanWie

Upcoming Calendar Events

MARCH 2022

National Women's History Month • Irish-American Heritage Month • Red Cross Month • National Social Work Month • National Reading Month

March 2, Wed.: **LWV Affordable Housing Committee**, 3:30 p.m.; Contact [Beth Bardwell](#) for more info.

March 3, Thur.: **LWV Book Club**, 3:30 p.m.; contact Erika grafwebster@icloud.com for info.

March 7, Mon.: **Short Board Meeting**, noon, via Zoom

March 12, Sat.: **General Meeting**; 2:00 p.m., via Zoom

March 13, Sun.: **Daylight Savings Time**, 2:00 a.m., turn clocks forward



March 17, Thur.: **St. Patrick's Day** 

March 21, Mon.: **Board Meeting**, **5:00 p.m.** via Zoom; (note earlier start time)

March 26, Sat.: **Women's History Month Celebration**, 2:00 p.m., Las Cruces Civic Plaza

APRIL 2022

April 4, Mon.: **Short Board Meeting**, noon, via Zoom

April 18, Mon.: **Tax Filing Deadline**

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

OPEN – Youth Engagement Director

Nancy Stanton – Membership Director

Jo Galván Nash – Public Relations Director

Marjorie Burr (chair) and Priscilla Parrish & Mary Flynn – Nominating Committee

LWVSNM

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575.524.VOTE (8683) • www.lwvsnm.org

LWVSNM Honors MDWA Recipient

Mary Carter of Anthony, NM, was recently selected as the 2022 recipient of the 2nd annual Making Democracy Work Award. She was recognized with a certificate and a \$250 cash award during the League’s Board meeting on February 12, 2022, two days prior to the 102nd anniversary of the creation of the League of Women Voters on Feb. 14, 1920. Carter was accompanied at the meeting with her colleague and Center volunteer Saif Almuhairbi. He nominated her for the award.



Mary Carter

Carter, the executive director for Anthony’s Women’s Intercultural Center, implemented a Citizenship Program to educate, empower and help people who have been referred to the Center for assistance. League Co-President Eileen VanWie said “the award is given to an honoree who has contributed to strengthening our democracy.”

For 13 years, Carter has taught classes at the Center for older Spanish-speaking adults who have lived in the U.S. for 15 or more years and wanted to prepare for the citizenship exam and interview to become naturalized U.S. citizens. The citizen preparation class expanded when Carter translated the curriculum into English for young English-speaking adults who have been in the U.S. for at least five years and wanted the same opportunity. Her guidance has resulted in at least 60 new citizens every year.

“I believe it is of great importance to educate our population on how democracy works and the responsibility and privilege it is to vote which is the reason that I personally teach the class,” Carter said. “I am honored and humbled to receive this, and I hope the news of this award encourages more people to become naturalized citizens, unleash their voice by voting and are encouraged to run for public office.”

“This award honors someone who also promotes what the League supports — justice, equity, diversity and inclusion,” Co-President Kathy Brook said. “Mary Carter’s volunteer work promotes these democratic principles.”

“At the Center, we focus on empowering women to become the authors of their own lives,” Carter added. “Women move from surviving to thriving through our classes, workshops and through individual sessions addressing barriers and challenges in their lives or setting a plan for their personal goals. It is then that they are able to increase opportunities for themselves, their children and eventually become more involved in the betterment of their respective communities.”

Legislative Education Report

Education was the big winner in the recent Legislative session. In addition to the usual allocations that constitute approximately half of New Mexico’s budget, approximately \$35 million more will go into Indian Education programs that address the Yazzie Martinez court orders. Across the board salary increases of 7 percent for all educational personnel were also approved in HB2 – the General Appropriations Act. Millions more in the \$8.5 billion budget for FY23 will go to fund the following important bills.

SB1 Increasing Teacher Salaries (Sponsored by Sen. Mimi Stewart) sets beginning teacher salaries for Levels 1, 2, 3 at \$50,000, \$60,000, and \$70,000, respectively. This increase should help address some of the severe teacher shortages in our schools, which currently have over 1,100 teacher vacancies. Impending teacher retirements added to the urgency to address the recruitment crisis. The salary increases will also help with teacher retention.

SB140 Opportunity Scholarships will provide free tuition and fees for NM residents without bachelor’s degrees wishing to pursue certificates and degrees in areas such as teaching, health care, public safety, and other areas to be determined. An eligible student who maintains at least 6 credits a semester (fall and spring) with a 2.5 GPA can complete a credit-bearing certificate, associate degree (up to 90 credits), and a bachelor’s degree (up to 160 credits) at any of NM’s public post-secondary institutions. There are no income eligibility requirements and a provision that students can take courses in the summer.

HB13 Teacher Residency Act (Sponsors: Reps. Debra Sariñana, Joy Garratt, T. Ryan Lane; Sens. Bill Soules, Mimi Stewart) New Mexico teacher residency programs at

—continued next page



New Officers

As shown above, Ginny Castille, a local student, is the new social media volunteer for our League. Thanks, Ginny!

Other positions will also be open when the membership comes together for the 2022 Annual Meeting in April. The nominating committee has been working to identify a slate of officers to fill our leadership positions. If you're interested in joining as an officer or as a Board member, get in touch right away with **Marjorie Burr**, head of the committee:

burrmb@aol.com. [Read the job descriptions for the various positions by clicking here.](#)

Rethinking Civic Engagement

Thanks Nancy Stanton for this recommended reading:

Located on the [Brennan Center for Justice](#) website, Elan C. Hope writes that young adults participate in politics and their communities far more than they are given credit for — and in ways that often go unrecognized. [Read the “Rethinking Civic Engagement” article.](#)

If you have an article that would be of interest to other League members, send the URL (the web address at the top of your web page) to [Jo Galván Nash](#) for inclusion in a future *Voter*.

Legislative Education Report (cont.)

public post-secondary education institutions and tribal colleges that have department-approved teacher preparation programs. The legislation is designed to diversify the teaching profession and fill high-need teaching positions within the state and ensure teaching residents are prepared for licensure and successful teaching. The residency includes at least one full academic year of rigorous department-approved teacher preparation coursework in cohorts, while concurrently including a guided apprenticeship in a classroom of a level two or three teacher. Programs will be monitored by university supervisors, who also coach the teacher supervisor. Stipends of at least \$35,000 per resident are required. Stipends of at least \$2,000 for the Level 2 or 3 teacher supervisor are also required. Teacher residency coordinators, funded at least \$50,000 per year, are also required. Residents commit to serving a minimum of three years at schools in the sponsoring school district. Minimum requirements to be eligible for admission to a teacher residency program are included in the bill. Partners in the program must report annually to the Public Education Department by July 1.

HB 60 Native American Language Certificate Salaries (Sponsor: Rep Derrick Lente)

The bill requires salary parity for people who hold Native American Language and Culture Certificates of New Mexico tribes or pueblos. While a baccalaureate degree is not required, the minimum annual salary shall be equal to the minimum annual salary for a Level 1 licensed teacher.

HB 73 Educational Retirees Returning to Work (Sponsors: Rep. Joy Garratt, Phelps Anderson, T. Ryan Lane)

The bill allows certain retirees to return to work without a suspension of retirement benefits, as long as the retired members have not rendered service to their local units for at least 90 days. They will make contributions to the retiree health care fund and their employers will likewise make contributions during the period of employment.

—Submitted by Meredith Machen and Eileen VanWie, LWVNM Education Co-Chairs, educ@lwvnm.org

Come Celebrate Women’s History Month

Las Cruces Mayor Pro Tem Kasandra Gandara started the ball rolling regarding a celebration of National Women’s History Month. The City Council is preparing a proclamation honoring the vital role of women in New Mexico history, including current role models. In 1987 Congress passed Public Law 100-9, designating March as “Women’s History Month.” The national theme this year is “Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope.” The Southern NM Women’s Suffrage Alliance, a group of several nonpartisan organizations, is planning an event for Saturday, March 26 on the Plaza de Las Cruces at 2:00 p.m. If the virus makes in-person events inadvisable, it will become a virtual event. Let’s have many LWV members attend the celebration. Wear your LWV buttons and sashes!

Legislative Update from LWVNM

Dick Mason reports the Governor has until March 9th to act on legislation from the 2022 session. Any legislation that Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham doesn't sign or veto is pocket vetoed (same as vetoed).

You can find her signed legislation by clicking here: <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/about-the-governor/signed-legislation/>

Mason said the state League doesn't expect the Governor will veto any of the legislation LWVNM supported.

Census Estimates Show Slowest National Growth on Record

According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, national and state population estimates released at the end of 2021 show the population of the United States grew in the past year by 392,665, or 0.1%, the lowest rate since the nation's founding. The slow rate of growth can be attributed to decreased [net international migration](#), decreased fertility, and increased mortality due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic. [Click here to be able to look at percentage change, state by state.](#)

Also of interest is an online map that shows the percentage of housing units that are occupied from the 2020 Census at the state, county, and census tract levels. Zoom in to see county- and tract-level data. [Click on the map](#), then click on the "Housing" tab at the top. Double click on NM to zoom in.

VOTE411 Strategies Shared Among LWV Members Nationwide

VOTE 411

I am excited to report that more than 140 members of various Leagues across the country heard about "best practices" on how to use and promote the national VOTE411 website. Its rate of use is climbing with each election, including the Vote411 platform for New Mexico. During the monthly Zoom meeting "Community Call" (open to all League members) several ideas were shared by Dorothy Marchand of LWV-Texas, Megan Brown of LWV US, and Whitney Oxendahl of LWV-North Dakota.

It was good to hear that our League is already doing some of the activities that were recommended to promote voter awareness such as League presence at the farmers' market and having a Facebook page. Other strategies suggested were direct outreach through printed materials and connecting with key partners that will donate funds to the League with specific sponsorship levels ranging from \$100 to \$2,000. This new strategy is being developed locally by Nancy Stanton, membership director, and Rosa Morales, development coordinator.

You may remember, the VOTE 411 logo and promotional materials include actual photos; it was suggested that local Leagues take photos of people from *our* community to use in local materials. They also said send printed flyers, cards or bookmarks to libraries in cities that don't have a local League and include a QR code (similar to a bar code) that links to the state VOTE411 webpage. Meanwhile, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) is the top choice of other Leagues as a way to spread the Vote 411 messages, in addition to radio advertising and Spanish-speaking media.

It was particularly interesting to hear about the "Pressure Campaign Toolkit" which puts pressure on candidates who are not sending in their answers to the questions that Leagues send to them. Their answers are printed on the VOTE411 website and in our Voters' Guide. Vote411 has even created a video to evoke action within communities. [See the "You Deserve Candidate Information" video by clicking here.](#)

Other strategies are writing out an outreach plan and budgeting League funds to support it. It was noted that it's okay to use the League's Education Fund for promoting VOTE411.

If you're interested in attending the next virtual Community Call, email the LWV Organizing Team to get on the list serve (organizing@lww.org). The meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month at 3pm (MST).



—Jo Galván Nash, PR Director

Let's Meet LWVSNM Member ...

DALE YEO

Dale Yeo retired in 1994 from a long teaching career in the copper country area of Upper Michigan where she was a Title 1 Director and teacher in the Lake Linden-Hubbell Public Schools. She is proudest of developing a groundbreaking preschool program, an elementary computer lab, and a theme-based summer school.

After moving to Las Cruces in 2006, Dale became an active member of the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces (now Southern New Mexico) and is currently the Voter Services Director. She was the Original developer of the LWVSNM (GLC) website. She has twice had the opportunity to attend the National Convention of the League. Dale leads League members who organize and publish the popular Voters' Guides during election years. The widely read publication was translated into Spanish in 2021.

To keep in touch with her background in education, Dale became interested in the Dyslexia Institute of Southern New Mexico which connects dyslexic children with instruction and provides scholarships for that instruction for children from economically disadvantaged families. She is a Board member (currently the President) and works on fundraising, grant writing and the website.

Dale is also an active member of Morning Star Church where she helps with the Lighthouse Food Pantry. She is a member of Morning Star Missions, plays in the bell choir, co-leads a hiking group, attends classes and other church activities and is on the church Leadership Board.

In her spare time, Dale loves to read, hike, go to the movies, attend live performances, and eat out, as well as explore other areas of life in her adopted home. She travels occasionally to visit family and friends. To afford to do all these things, she conducts a one-person, part-time business: Pet Sitting.

Dale is not currently married and has one son and one grandson (in her home state of Michigan) and various relatives in Minneapolis where she was raised.

And lastly, Dale says "I feel that my affinity for community service comes from my Mother and my long-time membership in the Girl Scouts. One important expression of this interest has been through being involved in Voter Services in the League since 1994 when I retired."



LWV Support President's Nomination to Highest Court

The League of Women Voters of the United States Board President **Dr. Deborah Turner** and CEO **Virginia Kase Solomón** issued the following statement on President Biden's announcement of his Supreme Court nominee, Ketanji Brown Jackson. If confirmed, Jackson would be the first Black woman to hold a seat on the Court.

“The League of Women Voters applauds President Biden for delivering on his commitment to name a Black woman to the highest court in the land.

The role of a sitting president is to appoint exceptional individuals who understand the power and influence of a US Supreme Court seat and will show an unshakeable commitment to justice. As a nonpartisan organization working to empower voters and defend democracy, the League of Women Voters expects the next Supreme Court Justice to defend the principles of our democracy and uphold our constitutional freedom to vote.

This historic nomination brings the Supreme Court one step closer to truly reflecting the diversity of our nation. With voting rights and civil liberties under attack, the Supreme Court must uphold the foundation of justice for all in America.

With this nomination, we call on our leaders in the US Senate to ensure a fair and bipartisan confirmation process. We demand that the focus of this confirmation be on the content of the nominee's record, her ability to be impartial, and an assessment of her commitment to justice and equity.

The nomination of the first Black woman to the nation's highest court reinforces the power of women to create a more perfect democracy. ”



LWVSNM Land Acknowledgement Statement

After the LWVSNM General Meeting in November 2021, where members talked about justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, the League Board wanted to learn more about JEDI issues and diverse people. Thanks go out to League member Cynthia Pelak, Professor of Sociology at NMSU, for suggesting the book *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (Youth Edition, 2019) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. While discussing what we had learned from the book and how we could use the information, Vice President Laura Castille suggested that we develop a land acknowledgement statement. After some research, the following statement was developed.

“Welcome to this meeting of the League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico. We acknowledge that we gather on the Indigenous lands of Turtle Island, the ancestral name for what the Haudenosaunee Confederacy have called North America for generations. We begin today by honoring the legacy of and relationship with the Indigenous peoples who have been stewards of the land that is now Southern New Mexico, including the Piro, Manso, Tiwa, Mescalero Apache, Chiricahua Apache, and others. We pledge to have meaningful and respectful relationships with sovereign Indigenous Nations and tribal communities.”

The Haudenosaunee name for North America is significant in the statement because a few of the early leaders of the women’s suffrage movement were friends with and learned from members of these nations. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Matilda Joslyn Gage lived among the Oneida, Seneca, and Mohawk Nations and saw how the women worked co-equally with the men. These nations provided a model for our democracy that inspired women to demand equal rights.

The Piro, Manso, and Tiwa people first established communities and still live in the Mesilla Valley. They have been and are seeking Federal recognition that would protect and enhance their language, culture, and traditions. The Apache nations may have migrated south from across the Bering Strait and Canada. The Mescalero’s settled east (now in Ruidoso) of the Chiricahua’s (now in Deming) and were both matrilineal nomadic hunters and gatherers in the Southwest.

The land acknowledgement statement makes a commitment to meaningful and respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples. It’s important that the League continue to learn about and find ways to advocate as allies for American Indians. Taking actions is more important than words. As we continue self-study and reaching out to the People, the land acknowledgement statement will probably change.

—Eileen VanWie

LWVSNM Book Club – March 2022

If you would like to participate, contact Erika at grafwebster@icloud.com

BOOK CLUB MEETINGS ARE ON 1ST THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH

Books Selected for Upcoming Meetings

<p>March 3 Moderator: Dale</p>	<p>Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law by Mary Roach Join "America's funniest science writer" on an irresistible investigation into the unpredictable world where wildlife and humans meet. What's to be done about a jaywalking moose? A bear caught breaking and entering? A murderous tree? Three hundred years ago, animals that broke the law would be assigned legal representation and put on trial. These days, we look to the curious science of human-wildlife conflict, a discipline at the crossroads of human behavior and wildlife biology.</p>
<p>April 7 Moderator: Vicki</p>	<p>Unthinkable: Trauma, Truth, and the Trials of American Democracy by Jamie Raskin In this searing memoir, Congressman Jamie Raskin tells the story of the forty-five days at the start of 2021 that permanently changed his life—and his family’s—as he confronted the painful loss of his son to suicide, lived through the violent insurrection in our nation’s Capitol, and led the impeachment effort to hold President Trump accountable for inciting the political violence.</p>
<p>May 5</p>	<p>Born in Blackness: Africa, Africans, and the Making of the Modern World by Howard W French Traditional accounts of the making of the modern world afford a place of primacy to European history. What if, instead, we put Africa and Africans at the very center of our thinking about the origins of modernity? French reframes the story of medieval and emerging Africa, demonstrating how the ascendancy of Europe, the anchoring of democracy in the West, and the fulfillment of Enlightenment ideals grew out of Europe’s engagement with the “dark” continent.</p>



DRAFT SUMMARY OF MINUTES
REGULAR and SHORT BOARD MEETINGS
February 7 and February 21, 2022

Board Members: Eileen VanWie, Co-President, Kathy Brook, Co-President, Johnnie Aldrich, Secretary, Laura Castille, Vice President, Mary Flynn, Treasurer, Jo Galván Nash, PR Director (absent Feb. 7), Nancy Stanton, Membership Director (absent Feb. 7), and Dale Yeo, Voter Services Director

The League of Women Voters of the United States celebrated its 102nd birthday in February. Our own League joined the celebration by selecting Mary Carter of the Women’s Intercultural Center in Anthony as the recipient of the Making Democracy Work Award because of her work there in the Citizenship Class Program. Since 2008, Mary, who initiated the program, has taught classes and worked with individuals to prepare them for the citizenship tests, resulting in at least 60 new citizens every year. The award certificate and its accompanying \$250.00 were presented at our February 12 General Meeting. Both Mary and the colleague who nominated her, Saif Almuhairbi, were present at the meeting.

Later, the Board authorized that Mary and Saif be offered a free membership to our League for one year, to begin May 1, 2022.

The birthday celebration continued with the sending of online Valentines, designed by Jo Nash, to our League’s members and legislators.

Membership Chair Nancy Stanton reported that our official membership has reached 101, of which 17 are new members. This month, the Board has initiated a “buddy system,” so that each Board member will speak to assigned new members regularly to answer questions and provide orientation to League activities and values.

March is Women’s History Month, and the Board made final plans were made for the March 13 general meeting, which will feature a panel discussion about “Making Democracy Work.” Las Cruces City Manager Ifo Pili (not confirmed), County Commissioner Diana Murillo-Trujillo, City Councilor Becki Graham, and Silver City Town Councilor Guadalupe Cano will be panelists. A Q and A will be included in the agenda.

In preparation for the Annual Meeting in April, Priscilla Parrish presented the Proposed Budget for 2022-23. She began by expressing thanks for the donation generosity of members during the past year and her hopes for continuation of that support. She also thanked Treasurer Mary Flynn, especially for her aid in formatting the document. Very few changes were recommended by the Board, but those will be added and presented to the Board for final approval at the March meeting.

Membership Director Nancy Stanton and Development Committee Chair Rosa Morales submitted a detailed Development Plan, the focus of which is fundraising among local businesses and leading residents. After considerable discussion, no specific action was taken, except provisions will be made in the proposed budget for committee operating funds.

Preparation for the Annual Meeting also included extensive discussion of our Local Positions, Policies, and Bylaws as they are currently printed in the Member Handbook. **Any member who wishes to comment about any of these is encouraged to do so, sending questions, comments, or suggested changes to both presidents, Kathy Brook and Eileen VanWie.** Of particular concern to the Board are those Positions which have not been updated for at least 10 years and for which a study committee may be needed.

—Submitted by Johnnie Aldrich, Secretary



OBSERVER REPORTS

LAS CRUCES BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: President Ray Jaramillo, VP Teresa Tenorio, Secretary Pam Cort, Members Carol Cooper and Robert Wofford; Superintendent Ralph Ramos

A fifth-grade student from Hermosa Heights Elementary led the pledge of allegiance to the flag in English and Spanish.

A Regulation Advisory Board is being created to get public input on regulations. It will also provide opportunities to educate the public about regulations and their development.

Tim Hand, chief of staff, described actions taking place with the New Mexico Legislature. The first funding priority is to build a vibrant educator ecosystem through expanding residency programs, alternative licensure residency programs, and increasing employee compensation. The Opportunity Scholarship Act passed the Senate Finance Committee. Professional Development and Educator Mentoring has significant funding included in a bill. Ensuring pathways to college and career readiness also has funding included to meet the needs of students. Equitable and innovative technology resources to address Yazzie/Martinez court findings to make materials culturally relevant. Lastly there will be funding for community schools. Stipends will be coming to teachers for the fourth quarter of this year.

High school attendance procedures were discussed by Dr. Wendi Miller-Tomlinson, deputy superintendent. There was a new attendance policy passed in 2019. The Attendance for Success Act takes away punitive language and measures. It addresses the causes for absences and finding ways to eliminate them. There are four tiers in the new attendance procedures: 1. Whole school Prevention; 2. Individualized Prevention; 3. Early Intervention; and 4. Intensive Supports.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Regular Meeting

February 8, 2022

Observer: Kathy Brook

Councilors approved a resolution to adopt standard rules of procedure for the council and voted against the appeal of revocation of the business license for Speak Easy, LLC. There was also discussion of a task force to work on infrastructure to work on the funds that will flow from the federal government to Las Cruces; the transportation policy review committee was designated for this purpose.

LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Work Session

February 14, 2022

Observer: Kathy Brook

El Paso Electric: Rico Gonzales of El Paso Electric discussed the change in ownership of the company and the fact that it is no longer publicly traded. Eric Montgomery, formerly of MVEDA, has been recruited to help with economic development and government affairs in NM.

Youth Development and Diversion: This is a Parks and Recreation program. Referrals to the juvenile citation program come through the Juvenile Probation Office. Staff members work with school districts, law enforcement and other agencies throughout the county. Services include community service monitoring, mentoring, case management. Successful completions are about 92%. Participants are engaged in clean-up programs, graffiti abatement, and other activities.



OBSERVER REPORTS

LCPS BOARD OF EDUCATION • Regular Meeting

February 15, 2022

Observer: Eileen VanWie

Members Present: President Ray Jaramillo, VP Teresa Tenorio, Secretary Pam Cort, Carol Cooper, and Robert Wofford; Superintendent Ralph Ramos

The Mayfield High School Jazz Band entertained the Board and audience. Recognition was given to the Centennial High School Media Journalism Team that earned a State Championship at the New Mexico Activities Association.

NEA-LC President Denise Sheehan shared disappointment that Dr. Serrano, Human Resources (HR) Chief, has been moved to a different position in the Operations Division, and she indicated women were unfairly passed over for the new Executive Director position of the HR Department. Irma Valdespino, CSEC-LC President, was very disappointed that Senate Bill 132 did not get passed in the Legislature. It would have given a raise to school staff. School journeymen are resigning because of small salaries. Ms. Valdespino will be meeting with Associate Superintendent Jacquez about salaries for classified staff. Valdespino commented on Dr. Serrano bringing the “servant leadership” model to the HR Department. She hopes the person who becomes the HR Director will also have the servant leadership approach.

Student Advisor, Grace from Centennial High School, described creation of a student survey to help develop best practices for students. The Student Advisory Council (SAC) will soon recruit students for the new SAC. The SAC will also be developing youth centered legislative goals to present at the ‘23 Legislative Session.

There’s been a collaborative team effort to update the teacher evaluation system. A new platform called Elevate New Mexico on Canvas (software) is being used. The team drafted ways to support teachers within collective bargaining. Every teacher develops an annual professional development plan. There are two “classroom walk-throughs” from administrators, with feedback meetings later. An end of year, PDP reflection conversation is conducted with the administrator. First and second year teachers receive extended support with two formal evaluations, involving self-assessment. Teachers have opportunities to provide evidence of improvement.

Superintendent Ramos reported that February is a time to recognize Career and Technical Education programs. Students in these program graduate at higher rates.

Deputy Superintendent Wendi Miller-Tomlinson reported on innovations in LCPS middle schools. The transitional year is an important time in a student’s life. How can the school better support students with academic, social, and emotional needs in that year? How can we provide challenging experiences for them? Educators want to provide more advanced academic services and high expectations for all students. Now there is a “single subject acceleration” process (e.g., 6th grader taking a seventh-grade course) as an option for students who are ready for it. New advanced/honors courses are being developed. Educators want to shift conversations about grades to conversations about meaningful learning. Vertical alignment with high school courses is also important. “Honors classes” have more enrichment and deeper understandings of concepts than regular classes.

Deputy Superintendent Jacquez updated on COVID-19 operations. The number of cases is dropping; hospital rates are also declining. Vaccination progress of fully vaccinated individuals is at 81.6% in our community. With the entire school district, the last 7-day percent of cases is 1.45%, with some schools being at 0%. The District has a Medical Advisory Team helping to make decisions to address control of the virus in schools.



LAS CRUCES CITY COUNCIL • Work Session

February 22, 2022 • Observer: Kathy Brook

Infrastructure: Martin Chavez, former Albuquerque Mayor and current NM infrastructure adviser, spoke during the public participation portion of the meeting. He reported that the ARPA funds to the state are now fully appropriated and that the bipartisan infrastructure money from Congress (\$3.7 billion for NM) will be coming. Of the latter funds, 60% will be distributed by formula through expansion of existing programs and the remainder distributed through grants. The state is developing a dashboard to track the dollars from DC to contracts on the ground. There is some concern about our capacity constraints in “getting the money out the door.”

ARPA Funds: A major topic, and a source of frustration to many, was the attempt to distribute ARPA funds (federal funds to address challenges associated with Covid-19) through non-profit organizations. Issues had been raised concerning subjectivity and transparency (and there was subsequently an audit of the process). The Council is now trying to determine how to proceed in distributing the funds. Staff will come back with a new process.

Complete Streets: The council approved a Complete Streets Ordinance to establish a complete street review committee and ensure that complete street principles are considered in new street projects and major renovations. The principles focus on access for users of all ages and abilities with various modes of transportation. Public comment was taken from Doña Ana Communities United (Abraham Sanchez), Velo Las Cruces, and Sherry Thomas.

Other: Jamey Rickman has retired from her position as community engagement manager for the City of Las Cruces.

SOUTH CENTRAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY • Regular Meeting

February 17, 2022 • 9:00 a.m. • Zoom

Observer: Johnnie Aldrich

Members Present: City Councilors Kasandra Gandara and Becki Graham, Mayor Ken Miyagishima; County Commissioners Lynn Ellins, Manuel Sanchez and Diana Murillo-Trujillo, County Manager Fernando Macias

Solid waste and recycle bins were collected as usual during the holidays and the opening weeks of 2022. However, this meeting of the governing Authority (a board consisting of representatives from both the Las Cruces City Council and the Doña Ana County Commission) was the first gathering of this group since late November 2021. It was a long one.

After the convening formalities the first order of business was the selection of a new chair and vice-chair. Commissioner Manuel Sanchez, who has been Acting Chair since November, was selected to continue as Chair. City Councilor Becki Graham will be this year’s Vice-Chair.

As usual, Director Patrick Peck’s Administrative Report to the Authority began with tonnage numbers: Also as usual, the highest amount of waste collection was 19,084 tons in December and the total waste tonnage for calendar year 2021 was 200,200 tons. Of those, 9,232 tons of recycling materials were collected during the year, the highest amount ever recorded since the inception of the single-stream recycling program in 2008.

Additional information about recycling:

1. Crews are currently exchanging 96-gallon recycling containers throughout Las Cruces. About 70,000 containers are being swapped at over 2,500 containers per week.
2. The Authority will receive a million dollars for recycling expenses from the NM Legislature in the state’s new budget.

—continued next page

3. The authority currently has containers in 45 public schools in the city and county, and its budget includes \$100,000 for promoting recycling, which will again be emphasized once a new Recycling Coordinator is hired.
4. The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation department wants to include recycle bins in all parks, but “Public Space Recycling” is a problem because of constant misuse; contamination occurs because of non-recyclables that are too often disposed of in the containers. Director Peck will continue to work with Parks and Recreation, but extensive public education is required.

The most significant event for the Authority in the past four months has been the sale of all waste collection entities, including the Friedman Recycling facilities in El Paso and Mesilla Valley Disposal, to the Waste Connections corporation. Waste Connections (WS), according to Director Peck, “has a monopoly on the recycling market in our area [which includes the Friedman Albuquerque facilities] and will dictate processing prices and commodity pricing”....

Director Peck has met with representatives in reviewing present contracts for recycling. He says, “their wish is to honor all contracts,” but he went on to speculate that “expanding our services will be extremely difficult in the future.”

The contract review and negotiation process with WC will probably continue for several months, but the Authority did pass a Resolution “providing consent of the sale....”

Finally, of special interest to *The VOTER* readers who live on the east side of our city: The Authority approved a Resolution that will result in the development of a new Waste Collection Transfer Station at the corner of Holman Road and El Centro on what is now 40 acres of state land. Director Peck, knowing that “the capacity limits of the Amador Ave Station will soon be reached, has been working on this project for the past three years, including multiple trips with State Land Officers, in search of a suitable site for the facility.”

Peck hopes that the planning and design process, which is being financed by a \$200,000 loan from the NM Department of the Environment at .5% interest for 5 years, will be complete by the end of the fiscal year. Mayor Miyagishima suggested design elements that would “mitigate negative aspects of a ‘dump’” and Councilor Gandara expressed concerns about giving extensive public notice, in both English and Spanish, to residents and property owners in the now sparsely populated area within a mile and a half of the new facility. Director Peck assured them that both requests are already included in the planning and design process.

Questions? Call the South Central Solid Waste Administration Offices and speak to Mattie Gonzales at 575-528-3584.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS • Regular Meeting

January 11, 2022 • 9 a.m.

Observer: Elisa Sanchez

Members Present: Commissioners Lynn Ellins, Manuel Sanchez, Diana Murillo-Trujillo, Susana Chaparro, Shannon Reynolds and County Manager Fernando Macias

Election of officers for the County Commission takes place at the first meeting of each year. Manuel Sanchez, district 5, and Diana Murillo, district 2, were re-elected by acclamation as Chairman and Vice Chairwoman, respectively, for 2022. Commissioners may hold the same position for two consecutive years.

Treasurer's Report

Provided by Mary Flynn, Treasurer

FEBRUARY 2022

DATE	DESCRIPTION	TRANSACTION	
February 24, 2022	BEGINNING BANK BALANCE		\$13,096.79
	NEW INCOME		
January 27, 2022	Member Donation	Bank Deposit	\$1,500.00
	TOTAL NEW BALANCE		\$14,596.79
	NEW EXPENSES		
October 11, 2021	Kathleen Burke	Check #1097	\$5,850.00
November 2, 2021	Kathleen Burke	Check #1098	\$3,150.00
January 25, 2022	New Checks for Checking Accountt	Bank Transfer	\$38.95
February 3, 2022	Consumer Cellular	Check #1099	\$19.46
February 7, 2022	Dale Yeo	Check #1102	\$95.78
February 14, 2022	Making Democracy Work Award	Check # 1105	\$250.00
February 9, 2022	We Are It	Check #1107	\$181.97
February 8, 2022	Dale Yeo	Check # 1108	\$60.00
	TOTAL NEW EXPENSES		\$9,646.16
	WORKING BALANCE		\$4,950.63
	TOAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		
February 6, 2022	USPS		\$182.00
	AVAILABLE BANK BALANCE		\$4,768.63
	COMMITTED FUNDS		
February 27, 2022	Diversity Fund		\$740.00
February 27, 2022	Youth Engagement Fund		\$625.00
February 27, 2022	Social Media Fund		\$100.00