

The VOTER

MAY 2023

VOL 88, NO.5

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO
6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109
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Message from the Co-Presidents

Karen M. Douglas and Donna Sandoval

Our **Annual Meeting May 6th** will be followed by a gala event, the **LWVCNM 75th Anniversary**, drawing members who haven't participated in festivities since the in-person LWV 100th Birthday Party February 2020, held immediately prior to the Pandemic. The initial lockdown, which mandated seclusion, also redirected our resources for both survival and communication, resulting in Zoom and MS TEAMS meetings to interact and conduct business and online ordering of even essential items and services. This also refocused NM to consider those without broadband access that further distanced those residents already struggling to learn and compete in business and education.



LWVCNM subsequently has held primarily virtual Zoom meetings since the Pandemic with occasional Hybrid options presenting additional technology challenges. Spring 2023 LWVCNM Board research indicated that the cost of in-person hotel luncheon meetings is now prohibitive and, consequently, these may be rarely scheduled. Although minimizing hotel gatherings may be disappointing to many, the lease of the 6739 Academy Rd. NE office space with conference rooms was also considered a monthly meeting option, thereby justifying the additional expense of the facility. Additional LWVCNM deliberations will follow and the LWVCNM Board encourages you to voice your preference. Participation in LWVCNM Calendar Planning Saturday, June 10th will also be an opportunity to select topics and speakers for presentations which interest you and address the current social and legal issues facing our community and our nation.



**Wanted...Your Ideas!
Annual Calendar Planning Meeting
Saturday, June 10, 10 AM—Noon
Zoom-only**

Please join the LWVCNM on Saturday, June 10, from 10 AM—Noon for our 2023 Calendar Planning meeting. Share your ideas for topics and speakers for our next round of monthly educational meetings (September 2023—August 2024). This is a great opportunity to let us know what you would like to learn about in the upcoming LWVCNM program year

We are looking for new, innovative ideas. Perhaps, for example, delving deeper into an issue with a two or three part series or hosting occasional evening meetings to better accommodate our working members. Several members have suggested we look into hosting a LWVCNM Book Club.

Can't attend the meeting, but have a program idea? Send your idea to jblack8162@gmail.com.

To accommodate busy Saturday schedules, this planning meeting will be held via Zoom. Please watch for Zoom information in upcoming *Topics* announcements.

We look forward to planning another timely program schedule with you...and for you.

~Jennifer Black

NEW! You are invited to the monthly
Brown Bag LUNCH & LEARN Series



With our membership split between returning to in-person monthly educational meetings and those who prefer to stay on Zoom, we have hopefully found a solution that addresses both options.

Beginning with the **Thursday, June 8 meeting**, we will inaugurate the hybrid model, with an in-person or Zoom option to attend. Bring a bag lunch to our LWVCNM Office Conference Room at 6739 Academy Road NE (ample lot parking), visit with other members, enjoy the presentation, and stay for a “dessert bar,” hosted by the LWVCNM Board. Prefer the comfort of your home or convenience of your office? Join us on Zoom, a link will be provided.

For those attending in-person, please RSVP at 505-884-8441, the LWVCNM office phone. Leave your name, phone number (*just in case we need to reach you*) and how many members and/or guests you are registering. Thank you in advance for registering...as this will help us with the room set up.

JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

Attend in person at LWVCNM Conference Room or join on Zoom (details to follow)

Thursday, June 8, Noon – 1 PM • Bag lunch welcome!

Stay after the program to socialize with other members and enjoy a Dessert Bar hosted by the LWVCNM Board.

TOPIC: Civic Engagement in Albuquerque

Hear from panelists from Albuquerque Public Schools, One Albuquerque and the Chamber of Commerce how each of these entities is engaging students, volunteers and the business community in civic responsibility for the city. Learn how the League can assist with their endeavors.



LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Karen Douglas & Donna Sandoval

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LWVCNM CALENDAR

May 6th (Saturday)

LWVCNM Annual Meeting and 75th Year Anniversary Celebration!

In person at the

**Sheraton Uptown Hotel,
10 am to 2 pm**

JUNE 8th (Thursday) NOON – 1 PM

**LWVCNM Monthly meeting,
in person & via Zoom**

TOPIC: “Civic Engagement in Albuquerque”

June 10th (Saturday) 10 AM – NOON

**Calendar Planning Meeting
Via Zoom only**

JULY 13th (Thursday) NOON – 1 PM

**LWVCNM Monthly meeting,
in person & via Zoom**

TOPIC: Inmates/Sentencing/Recidivism

If you need help with Zoom, please reach out to Zoom host, Starlyn Brown, sbrown@unm.edu

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at:



Time to renew your membership?

If so, please click on the following link and renew your membership using PayPal at <https://www.lwvcnm.org/join-renew/>

Or you may fill out the membership form at [Join / Renew](#) and mail it with your check to:

League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico.

6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124

Albuquerque, NM 87109

(Note: Observer Reports on pp. 5 – 7 are included here, as they were not featured in the April hardcopy Voter due to space limitations.)

OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting 22 February/6 March 2023

Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick

Transit

R-23-110 Approving the Transit Department's Service Equity Analysis of Proposed Service Suspensions Due to Staffing Shortages. The Council voted unanimously to approve the Transit Equity Analysis which proposes service suspensions. The analysis is available at Councilor Peña's webpage: [Transit Equity Analysis](#)

Housing

R-23-106 Declaring the City's Intent to Collaborate with Bernalillo County in the Acquisition of Affordable Housing.... The Council voted unanimously to approve a resolution stating the City's intent to pursue a Joint Powers Agreement to establish the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative. The resolution provides for the establishment of the Collaborative within six months. The mayor signed the resolution. R-23-106 is available at [City's Intent to Collaborate With Bernalillo County](#)

Residential Tenant Protection Ordinance

O-22-60. The Council, by a 4-5 vote, rejected an ordinance that would have required landlords to return application fees in certain cases and to make written disclosures of fees. A landlord would have been required to return application fees to an applicant if the unit was rented to someone else prior to the application being processed. The ordinance would have limited rental application fees to \$150. Five property owners spoke against the ordinance, 13 members of the public spoke in favor. See the terms of the failed ordinance at [O-22-60 Residential Tenant Protection](#)

Regulation of Catalytic Converter Secondhand Purchase

O-22-61 Secondhand Catalytic Converter Purchase Ordinance. In an effort to deter thefts of catalytic converters from vehicles, the Council unanimously passed an ordinance which requires entities that purchase secondhand catalytic converters to record the identity of individuals selling catalytic converters. Additionally, they are required to record information about the vehicle from which the catalytic converter is obtained. The mayor signed O-22-61. The ordinance, which outlines the specific record-keeping requirements is available at [O-22-61 Catalytic Converter](#)

Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency Downtown and Railroad Areas Development

EC-223 Approving the Downtowner Development Disposition Agreement. The Council approved a Development & Disposition Agreement with Alb. Downtowner LLC (partners Rembe Urban Design & Development, Insight Construction, and Mullen Heller Architects). The agreement includes land and a \$1.8M financing grant for development of a multi-story project including 208 units. [EC-223 Downtown and Railroad Metropolitan Area Development](#)



**Observer Corps Report
Sandoval County Commission regular meeting
February 22, 2023**

Mary Templeton, observer

Present: Katherine Bruch, Jay Block, Michael Meek (Vice Chair), David Heil (Chair), Joshua Jones (video)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No issues relevant to the League were taken up during this meeting.

Additional Comments

Two commissioners opened and closed the meeting during the announcements and discussions section by venting ire about the passage of HB7 in State Legislature. This bill assures access to reproductive and gender-affirming healthcare. The commissioners characterized the bill as taking away parental rights and control, allowing “groomers” to manipulate children toward gender-affirming treatments, and child mutilation (with a focus on female body parts). At one point, one commissioner pointed out a baby in the gallery and told the parents that they no longer have control over their son. He then asked attendees for a show of hands if they believe in mutilating their children. My reading of the HB7 is that it mentions neither minor children nor parents, but addresses actions prohibited of “public bodies”.

Sandoval County Commission Website <https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



**Observer Corps Report – Sandoval County Commission regular meeting
March 8, 2023**

Mary Templeton, observer (via video)

Present: Katherine Bruch (video), Jay Block, Michael Meek (Vice Chair, video), David Heil (Chair), Joshua Jones

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No issues relevant to the League were taken up during this meeting.

Additional Comments

A recurring feature of Sandoval County Commission meetings are public comments by members of Sandoval and neighboring counties regarding elections. This group goes by New Mexico Election Transparency Network or NMET. They advocate for requiring photo IDs in order to vote, frequent voter role purging, prohibition of ballot drop boxes, added restrictions to absentee voting and automatic post-election audits in 10% of precincts. More details are in the Rio Rancho Observer article, “Group Has Been Working to Bring Election Transparency to New Mexico” from March 14, 2023 (<https://robserver.com/group-has-been-working-to-bring-election-transparency-to-new-mexico/>). Commissioners appear to be working with this group to teach them how government works in practice and have expressed openness to constructive suggestions that might improve the County election process.



Observer Corps Report Update APS Board of Education meetings, (18 January, 1 February, 15 February and March 2023)

Laura J. Downing

The Board of Education meetings all follow a similar structure: presentation of the agenda, a public forum and then the Board Members discuss Board internal business. I “attend” the YouTube live stream of the meetings; I don’t attend in person. I report on topics most relevant to LWVCNM policy positions.

The public forum section of all 4 recent meetings was dominated by statements (members of the public have a one to two minutes, timed, to make statements) expressing concerns about safety issues at West Mesa High School, reacting to a recent incident where a gun went off in a class. <https://www.krqe.com/news/albuquerque-metro/student-arrested-after-gun-goes-off-at-west-mesa-high-school/> Specifically, a number of students and staff – including teachers reading statements by their students – are concerned about the presence of guns on campus and the potential for more on campus shootings, as well as other criminal activity. Many called for more and better-paid security personnel on campus.

Other issues raised at the public forums were: 1- the need to improve services to immigrant and refugee newcomer students and parents in the APS system. In particular, more information in more languages is needed, along with better, more accessible statistics about refugee student population. 2- owners of private pre-schools are concerned that if APS starts providing pre-school classes, APS will run some of the private pre-schools out of business without really replacing the services they currently provide.

A new development at the 1 March meeting is the return of some of the same people who were attending the public forum in the fall to accuse APS schools of “grooming” students to assume LGBTQ+ identities and of not involving parents enough in counselling and curriculum decisions at schools. (These accusations are obviously not well-founded.) At the 1 March meeting, members of this group attempted to play a video made by Project Veritas, characterized by Wikipedia as a far-right activist group, which supposedly showed a teacher proposing not to share gender identity information with parents. The Rio Rancho Observer has reported on this video: <https://rrobserver.com/project-veritas-hits-metro-school/>

The Board internal business at all meetings involved extensive, detailed discussion of developing a strategic plan for APS in order to satisfy the settlement requirements of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, which addressed inequities faced by certain groups of students in the New Mexico public school system: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/yazzie-martinez-updates/>

Specific issues discussed were:

- how to improve the curriculum to comply with the Yazzie-Martinez settlement;
- how to define and track interim goals that are intended to insure equity across the school districts (taking into account differences in the economic resources and ethnic makeup of different districts);
- formalization of a strategic plan defining desired student outcomes.

It was emphasized that the community needs to be involved in defining goals and assessing outcomes, to ensure community values are respected and that the Board of Education is held accountable by the affected

communities. The discussion involves not only the Board but also APS Supervisor Scott Elder and members of his team, and an outside advisor. I have written the President of the Board of Education to ask if the drafts of the Strategic Goals document can be shared with the LWVCNM.



Observer Corps Report – APD Forward Update

April 2023

Karen M. Douglas

The Third Amended Court Approved Settlement Agreement (CASA, aka Consent Decree) between the US DOJ and the City of Albuquerque was released April 12, 2023 (1st Amendment March 2018 and 2nd Amendment July 2019). The initial CASA was entered into November 2014 due to Excessive Use of Force by APD Officers. This 3rd amendment decreases the reporting requirements for the CABQ Albuquerque Police Department due to marked improvement since the 16th quarterly reporting period (February – July 2022) of the Independent Monitor, Dr. James Ginger.

During February 2021, US DOJ and CABQ entered into a Stipulated Agreement resulting from lack of adequate progress in Internal Affairs investigations of Use of Force and lack of success in introducing Lessons Learned into APD Academy Training of both Cadets and Sworn Officers. The Stipulated Agreement was followed by External Force Investigation Team (EFIT) selection with operations initiating July 2021. EFIT professionals have law enforcement experience and are deployed advising and assisting APD officers from crime response including suspect detention with APD Internal Affairs investigation to Civilian Police Oversight Agency sustained excessive UOF charges warranting officer discipline, and including APD Training Academy incorporation of Lessons Learned into Training with resultant decrease in operational UOF instances.

Recent noteworthy improvements leading to this 3rd CASA Amendment include:

- Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Albuquerque Police Officers Association extending the deadline for Internal Affairs completion of UOF Investigations from 90 days to 120 days.
- Albuquerque Community Services (ACS) assuming non-violent 911 crisis intervention responses for mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness calls not requiring a sworn, armed police officer. ACS has responded to >16,000 911 calls since inception September 2021. ACS will be relocating to the new HQ facility at San Mateo Blvd and Kathryn Ave to better serve the International District.
- Community Policing Council admission requirements no longer include participation in the Civilian Police Academy, permitting those with minor law violations to serve in this role between APD and community residents.
- Additional progress was noted with formation of the APD Data Analytics unit, creation of the Bureau of Police Reform, and delegating investigation of Level 1 UOF (no injury) to civilian Internal Affairs personnel.

This 3rd Amended CASA was signed 4/12/23 by the CABQ Attorney, US DOJ Civil Rights Division Assistant Attorney General, and the US Attorney for the District of NM.



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting

20 March/3 April 2023

Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick

Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative - Update.

At the February 22, 2023 meeting the City Council unanimously approved the resolution to pursue a joint Powers Agreement to establish the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative with Bernalillo County. The mayor signed the resolution on March 9, 2023. Per discussion with Councilor Benton on April 13, the parties are working on a Memorandum of Understanding.

APD Public Information Officer (PIO)

During the April 3 meeting's Administration Questions and Answer Period, councilors asked the city administration and the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) in particular why the APD PIO continues to issue disrespectful and unprofessional tweets on the APD Twitter account. The comments from councilors indicated this has been an ongoing problem which had previously been brought to the attention of the city administration and APD. Councilor Davis asked the APD Chief Medina to commit to restricting the PIO's access to the account until training on the city's policies could occur. Neither Chief Medina nor the city administration made this commitment, but said the situation would be addressed. Council President Davis stated that he would work to defund the APD PIO position if the situation is not addressed.

Housing

R-23-107. The council approved a resolution authorizing the acquisition of land and existing improvements and construction of a building within the downtown 2025 Metropolitan Redevelopment Area. The project by Alb. Downtowner LLC comprises 207-unit multi-family on 0.8 acres on First and Silver SW. The mayor signed the resolution March 28, 2023. [R-23-107 Text](#)

EC-23-263. At the April 3 meeting the council approved the administration's Executive Communication requesting a change order to an existing purchase order. The change order adds an Environmental Assessment to a purchase order for services related to a development project at the Uptown Transit Center. The project would include 200+ affordability-restricted multi-family units in a residential tower. [EC-23-263 Text](#)

Gibson Health Hub

EC-23-272. On April 3 the council approved a lease agreement between the city and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for space to provide services at the Gibson Health Hub.

Transit

R-23-120. At the April 3 meeting the council approved permanent elimination of fares for the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) and SunVan Paratransit Service for the disabled. This action awaits the mayor's signature. [R-23-120 Text](#)



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

April 2023

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission Working on Budget

The Bernalillo County Commission is putting together a budget for fiscal years 2023-2024 that will include major increases for the County Clerk and the Sheriff's Office.

The Clerk's office has asked for an 8.8% increase that will pay for the 54 employees of the office and costs for moving to new offices at 1301 North Broadway. That is an increase of 7 million dollars over the current year's budget. In 2022 the clerk hired more than 900 people to work during the general election.

The Sheriff's office is seeking a 1.2% increase, primarily for increased overtime for court security officers. The department is currently 41 deputies short of a full complement of authorized positions.

The budget includes pay increases for corrections officers and for recruitment of new officers.

The county has also listed federal priorities for the coming years.

- \$4 million for highway infrastructure.
- \$523,571 to Office of the Medical Investigator for cold case and indigent cremation.
- \$1.5 million to design the Carnuel Sanitary Sewer Project, phase 3
- Support to Albuquerque for expansion of the Paseo del Norte NW to the intersection of Atrisco Vista Blvd.



Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

March 22, 2023

Mary Templeton

Present: Katherine Bruch, Jay Block, Michael Meek (Vice Chair), David Heil (Chair), Joshua Jones (video)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No issues relevant to League advocacy positions were taken up during this meeting.

(cont.)

Additional Comments

Following presentation of the Sheriff's Department Annual Report, one commissioner ranted about "open borders" created by Democrats as the cause of fentanyl being seized in Sandoval County. This was followed by gallery applause and a reminder that applause is not allowed as the meeting is not a sporting event.

Sandoval County Commission Website <https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

April 12, 2023

Mary Templeton, observer (by video)

Present: Katherine Bruch, Jay Block, Michael Meek (Vice Chair), David Heil (Chair), Joshua Jones

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Education

The Commission voted to submit a letter to Martin Heinrich asking for support to establish the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) Center of Excellence in Sandoval County. The Center would provide training and support to educators and community members in emerging technologies including robotics, cybersecurity, drones, virtual reality, new media arts and high-performance computing in education and workforce development. The project would support all communities, with special emphasis on underserved populations, including tribes and pueblos, and on retraining of the labor force for higher-wage jobs.

Additional Comments

An Emergency Declaration was passed for the Jemez area for flooding along the Hwy 4 corridor caused by rapid snow melt. Jemez Springs wastewater treatment plant has been impacted. The Sandoval County fire department is deploying resources, including swift-water rescue teams. The declaration will allow Sandoval County to receive Federal help and collaboration.

Commissioners Discussion

This evening one commissioner's rant asserted that the US is violent, with the federal government being "weaponized" to charge political opponents with crimes, and with transgender "activists" shooting children and assaulting female college athletes. Another commissioner described transgender athletes as "biological men who fantasize as females" to capture sports titles. Citing Wikipedia, he proceeded to define a "biological female" according to chromosomes, sexual or reproductive organs, and phenotypical characteristics.

Sandoval County Commission Website <https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>



Observer Corps Report, April 13, 2023

APS Board of Education meetings, 15 March and 5 April 2023

Laura J. Downing

The Board of Education meetings all follow a similar structure: a public forum and then the Board Members discuss Board internal business. I “attend” the YouTube live stream of the meetings, and I report on topics most relevant to LWVCNM policy positions.

A continuing development at the 15 March and the 5 April meetings is the presence of people accusing APS schools of manipulating students to assume LGBTQ+ identities and of not involving parents enough in counselling and curriculum decisions at schools. Some of the people presenting this point of view mention Project Veritas as a source for their accusations. Others – especially at the 15 March meeting – accused APS policies of violating NM State laws protecting the rights of parents. The people representing these points of view at the public forum sometimes give the impression of following a “parents’ rights” script: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/28/opinion/parents-rights-republicans-florida.html> Some parents and school staff at the public forum for other reasons, though, gave statements of support of the APS parental rights policy and policy towards LGBTQ+ students.

Other issues raised at the public forum sessions on 15 March and 1 April were: a continued concern about safety from gun violence from students, parents and staff at West Mesa HS, and owners of pre-K schools and day care centers continue to express concern about APS involving itself in pre-K education. At the 1 April meeting, several parents and some teaching staff expressed concerns about the new calendar and schedule, which were to be discussed and approved at that meeting.

The 15 March Board meeting proper continued to involve detailed discussion of developing a strategic plan for APS in order to satisfy the settlement requirements of the Yazzie-Martinez lawsuit, which addressed inequities faced by certain groups of students – in fact, the vast majority of students – in the New Mexico public school system: <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/yazzie-martinez-updates/> The interim goals and guardrails that have been adopted and are now being planned for in the BoE budget are found at this link: <https://www.aps.edu/about-us/board/news/goals-and-guardrails>. The approach formalized in the APS document is aligned with Student Outcomes Focused Governance policies for public schools that are being adopted in Great Cities school systems across the US: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED622543.pdf>

At the 5 April Board meeting, there was a lengthy presentation and detailed motivation of the 2023-2024 calendar. Even though concern was expressed about the increase in hours and days that students will be spending in the classroom, the increased instructional time requirement was passed into law by the 2023 NM State legislature and must be respected by APS starting with the coming school year.

Another long discussion concerned a request for expansion by East Mountain HS (a charter school). The expansion was partially approved, with a strong request from the Board to address a lack of diversity at the school and a perceived lack of recruitment from local communities to address Yazzie-Martinez goals.

There was an update on school safety, with an interim report sketching proposals around a pilot program to address gun violence in schools that will begin in the fall. The program will not only emphasize consequence for those caught in violation of the policies but also restorative practices that aim to prevent violence. Finally Superintendent Scott Elder gave a brief update about the new Student Outcomes Focused Governance policies. His office is still correlating APS guidelines with official NM State guidelines responding to the Yazzie-Martinez ruling.

Volunteer Opportunities

Because Democracy is not a Spectator Sport...

We need your skills, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to the myriad of projects always underway. From simple clerical tasks to grass roots advocacy, ongoing or project-by project, we can fit your interests to a volunteer job. Expanding our volunteer base is a top priority of LWVCNM.

How to Find Out More About Volunteering?

It's easy: Contact us at 505-884-8441 or lwvcnmoffice@gmail.com Leave a message with your name/phone number and expressing your interest in finding out more about volunteering. We will contact you to match your interests/skills with a volunteer position, explain tasks involved, review time commitment for various positions, and offer training where needed.

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico, a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization is a nonpartisan political organization, that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy by education and advocacy.

