

The VOTER

JANUARY 2024

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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109 lwvcnm.org (505) 884-8441

Join us for the Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series'

JANUARY EDUCATIONAL MEETING



WHEN: THURSDAY, JAN. 11th from Noon – 1 PM

WHERE: In person/Zoom, LWVCNM conference room, 6739 Academy Rd NE
(ample lot parking)

TOPIC: A Place to Call Home When You Don't Have One, Can't Afford One, or Can't Find One: Affordable Housing/Homelessness and Regional Plans to Address the Issue, Part One.

SPEAKER: TBD - Watch for Upcoming Email Announcements with Speaker Updates

Albuquerque and Bernalillo County are experiencing many problems related to a housing shortage – people living on the streets, individuals and families “couch surfing” with friends and families, and limited housing available for people new to the area, thus stifling economic development. It affects quality of life, physical and mental health, economic development, and many other issues.

This is a two-part series on the housing crisis here, how it's affecting our community, and what the various agencies of the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County are doing to solve these problems.

The **February Part Two meeting** will feature **Joseph Montoya, Deputy Director of Housing for One Albuquerque.**

Mark Your Calendars!



LWVCNM Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 20th, 2024 at the Marriott Uptown
Stay tuned for more info in future Voter Newsletters

LEAGUE DAYS AT THE 2024 LEGISLATURE

If it's January, it's time for another New Mexico Legislative session!

*The 56th Legislature opens at noon on January 16, 2024
and closes at noon on February 15, 2024*

New Mexico League Days at the Legislature are Wednesday, January 24th and Thursday, January 25th, 2024. There are many opportunities for League members to participate in various ways throughout the session.

Wednesday, January 24th schedule

8 am – 2 pm: Three informational tables in the State Capitol Building – LWV, Election Integrity, and Fair Districts

5:30 – 7:30 pm: LWVNM Reception – Rio Chama Steakhouse, with Attorney General Raul Torrez speaking. (The closest inexpensive hotel to the Roundhouse is El Sendero, formerly Garrett's Desert Inn, at 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, (505) 982-1851)

Thursday, January 25th schedule

(at New Mexico State Land Office - 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, just down the street from the Roundhouse)

10:00 – 10:30 am: Explanation of packet contents, answer questions from League members

10:30 – 12:30 pm: Presentations
Heather Balas – Redistricting
Paige Knight – Budget & Taxes

Free Time - Opportunity to visit with legislators in the afternoon



LCVCNM BOOK CLUB

The Book Club kicks off 2024 with a recent New York Times bestselling publication from historian Heather Cox Richardson, known for her daily blog Letters from an American.

Title: **Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America**

Author: Heather Cox Richardson

Date: January 31, 2024 (Wednesday) 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Place: Park Plaza 1331 Park Ave SW, Albuquerque, 87102

Per Boston College's review, Professor Richardson's book examines the long, intricate path to today's fraught, dysfunctional American political state of affairs.

Book Club coordinators, Janet Kirkpatrick, Mary Mulvany, and Laura Downing, invite you for lively discussion and conversation. Bring along a "potluck" snack--something sweet or savory--to share with the group (not required; just if you have the time). Missed the previous meetings? Visit lwvcnm.org/book-club for past selections.

Call or text Janet at 505-401-2052 with questions or directions.

The book is ranked #4 on the New York Times' bestseller list. The Rio Rancho Public Library owns 1 copy; the Albuquerque Public Library system has 5 copies on order.



LWVCNM Program Planning Meeting

Please Join LWVCNM members Saturday, February 24th from 10 AM - 12:00 Noon for a Zoom conversation regarding recommending issues for future LWV Advocacy

Would you like to see LWVCNM, LWVNM, LWVUS advocate on specific local issues such as homelessness, neighborhood safety, community policing, or another topic you believe a new or more substantial LWV Position could address?

Study Proposals from members to initiate a new LWV Position or revisit current stances are encouraged and the annual winter Program Planning is the venue for this exchange.

Assistance to prepare a Study Proposal or discussion of the Program Process by LWVCNM members will be available to any interested member.

LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Donna Sandoval

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Karen Wentworth & Lani Desaulniers

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Directors

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Linda Miller

Program

Karen Douglas

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:
VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com

LWVCNM CALENDAR

January 4th (first Thursday) 5:30 pm

**LWVCNM Board Meeting on ZOOM. All members
welcome.**

Jan. 11th (Thursday) 12 – 1 pm

LWVCNM Monthly meeting, hybrid In-person & ZOOM

**The first in a two-part series on
Homeless/Housing Issues.**

**Topic/Title: A Place to Call Home When You Don't
Have One, Can't Afford One, or Can't Find One:**

Affordable Housing/Homelessness and

Regional Plans to Address the Issue, Part One.

Speaker – TBD, Watch for email updates

Wednesday, January 24th & Thursday, January 25th

**New Mexico League Days at the Legislature and
evening LWVCNM reception**

(see details on p. 2)

January 31st (Wednesday) 5:30 – 7:30 pm

LWVCNM Book Club

Location: Park Plaza, 1331 Park Ave SW, 87102

February 1st (first Thursday) 5:30 pm

**LWVCNM Board Meeting on ZOOM. All members
welcome.**

Feb. 8th (Thursday). 12 – 1 pm

LWVCNM Monthly meeting, hybrid In-person & ZOOM

**The second in a two-part series on
Homeless/Housing Issues.**

**Topic/Title: A Place to Call Home When You Don't
Have One, Can't Afford One, or Can't Find One:**

Affordable Housing/Homelessness and

Regional Plans to Address the Issue, Part Two.

**Speaker: Joseph Montoya, Deputy Director of Housing
for One Albuquerque**

Saturday, February 24th 10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

**LWVCNM Program Planning Meeting
Via ZOOM only. More info to come.**



Membership Corner

Thank you to all the members who have renewed their dues.

If you have forgotten, there is still time until we revise our roster in early January and before we make our payment to the National League.

Dues are \$65 per member and \$33 for additional household members.

You may use our PayPal account available at <https://www.lwvcnm.org/join-renew/> or send a check made out to LWVCNM to:

League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico,
6739 Academy RD. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque NM 87109-3352

December Holiday Open House

Around 30 members and their guests enjoyed an afternoon of lively conversation at the 2023 Holiday Open House, while enjoying a snack buffet compliments of the LWVCNM Board. LWVCNM President Donna Sandoval graciously hosted the afternoon get-together in her lovely home.



As is true of any League event, discussions were engaging and wide-ranging. Some members reviewed and commented on events in 2023, while others suggested ideas for a variety of League engagement opportunities in 2024. And, some conversations were just about catching up on the lives of League friends and colleagues. The Holiday Open House was a wonderful opportunity for warm conversation with longstanding League friends and new League members.



Election Update and VOTE411 Analytics

We now have some analytics for VOTE411 use in the 2023 Municipal Election:

In Albuquerque 6,267 people used VOTE411. Most of them were new users.

In Rio Rancho, 571 people accessed VOTE411, which was a little odd because Rio Rancho does not have municipal elections until March 2024.

In Bernalillo, which also did not have an election this year, 42 people searched for information.

In other communities the number of people accessing VOTE411 looked like this:

Los Lunas - 154

Corrales - 26

Belen - 45

Moriarity - 21

Edgewood - 48

Bosque Farms - 7

These numbers tell us we need a much greater emphasis on publicity in 2024 so voters will know where to look for information.

- Karen Wentworth will focus on publicity and media relations in 2024 and is looking for team members to aid in that effort.
- Lani Desaulniers will lead the VOTE411/Voter Guide activities in 2024. Ellen Kelly will assist her.
- Jeanne Logsdon will put together a team for the questions, and
- Cheryl Haaker and Linda Miller will focus on VOTE411 activities.

In 2024, Municipal elections will be held on March 5th in Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, Jemez Springs, and Cuba. The filing deadline for candidates is January 9th, so we will begin work early in the New Year.

Planning for the general election will start in June and July. Anyone with an interest in working on VOTE411 and the Voter Guide in 2024 this for the municipal election should contact Lani (LMDesaul@aol.com) as soon as possible. If you are interested in helping with the general election, let her know.

We will need many volunteers this year.

Betsy Carlson and Linda Miller put together cookie trays for county clerks.

Members of the Voter Guide Committee have completed our final task for 2023. We baked cookies and candy for the county clerks in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance and Valencia counties, and took it to them after the Thanksgiving holiday.



OBSERVER REPORTS



Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting 20 November and 4 December 2023 Mary Mulvany/Janet Kirkpatrick

All nine councilors were present at the November 20 and December 4 meetings:

Louie Sanchez – District 1, Isaac Benton – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Pat Davis – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Trudy Jones – District 8, Renée Grout – District 9.

Industrial Revenue Bond – Maxeon Solar Technologies

At the November 20th meeting the City Council voted unanimously to pass two ordinances relating to Maxeon Solar Technologies' construction of a solar panel manufacturing site to be located at Mesa del Sol.

[O-23-90](#) authorizes issuance of \$2.4 Billion in industrial revenue bonds.

[O-23-91](#) authorizes \$20 Million Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) money toward the project.

The city provides \$2 Million and the state provides \$18 Million.

Maxeon estimates the facility will employ 1500 people. The mayor signed the ordinances on December 5th.

United Soccer Stadium Lease at Balloon Fiesta Park

At the November 20th meeting the City Council voted on approval of a lease agreement which allows the United soccer team to build a stadium at Balloon Fiesta Park. Twenty-six members of the community spoke in favor of the lease, including three individuals who live in the area and a Balloon Fiesta Vendor who cited the planned infrastructure improvements as a benefit to the Balloon Fiesta. Ten members of the community spoke against the lease approval citing concerns about ambiguous lease terms and lack of restrictions on fireworks and noise levels.

The council approved the lease agreement in a seven to two vote. Councilors Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn, Jones, Lewis, Peña, and Sanchez voted in favor of the lease agreement. Councilors Bassan and Grout voted against the agreement, citing concerns about the lack of detail in the lease agreement.

[EC-375](#)

Air Quality Control Board

Recap: at the November 8th meeting the City Council passed two bills related to the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Air Quality Control Board changing it from an independent board to a structure more closely controlled by the City Council. [O-23-88](#) revamped the structure of the board to provide more oversight by the City Council. [R-23-176](#) imposed a moratorium on any action by the Board until February 1, 2024. Both measures passed by a vote of five in favor (Bassan, Grout, Jones, Lewis, Sanchez) to four opposed (Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn, Peña). Mayor Keller vetoed both measures on November 22, 2023.

At the December 4th meeting the City Council voted to override the mayor's veto of O-23-88 (to change the structure of the Air Quality Control Board) by a vote of seven for (Bassan, Davis, Grout, Jones, Lewis, Peña, Sanchez) to two against (Benton, Fiebelkorn). Councilor Davis stated he voted to override the veto in the interest of creating a more structured process and to avoid intractable litigation. Councilor Peña provided no comment as to why she voted to override the veto despite having voted for the original bill.

At the December 4th meeting the City Council voted to override the mayor's veto of R-23-176 (imposing a moratorium on any action by the Board until February 1, 2024). Six councilors voted to override the veto (Bassan, Grout, Jones, Lewis, Pena, Sanchez). Three councilors voted to sustain the veto (Benton, Davis, Fiebelkorn).

After overriding the mayor's veto, the City Council voted unanimously to create a joint City/County working group to improve the operation of the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Joint Air Quality Control Board. [R-23-176](#)

Departing City Councilors

The December 4 City Council meeting was the last meeting for three councilors who did not run for reelection. Joaquin Baca replaces Isaac Benton in District 2. Nichole Rogers replaces Pat Davis in District 6. Dan Champine replaces Trudy Jones in District 8.



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

December 2023

Karen Wentworth

Albuquerque/Bernalillo Air Quality Control Board

The Bernalillo County Commission voted unanimously to put together a working group to try to unravel the problems at the Albuquerque/Bernalillo Air Quality Control Board. This parallels a resolution passed by the Albuquerque City Council.

You may remember that the Albuquerque City Council voted to remove the members of the Air Quality Board, the Mayor then vetoed the resolution, and the City Council overrode the veto. This was pretty confusing since the Air Quality Board was in the middle of public hearings to add an environmental justice element to permits issued by the board. The Air Quality Board went ahead with the public hearings, saying they had not officially received word of the dissolution of half of the board.

The Board is made up of both city and county appointees. The City Environmental Services Department performs the air modeling and staff work for the Board. The Board is a contract between the City and the County, and is chartered to engage in rule making and to issue permits for emissions by the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Department.

If the city decides to have an Air Quality Control Board run only by the city, it still would have to apply for permission to monitor Albuquerque air quality, make regulations and issue permits for emissions from the New Mexico Environment Department.

If the county is excluded from the City Air Quality Board, it would have to make a decision regarding whether to create its own staff capacity to do air modeling, set up separate monitoring stations, and also apply to the New Mexico Environment Department to regulate air quality in Bernalillo County.

In the meantime, businesses that wish to apply for an air quality permit might have to stand in line for a hearing at the state level, along with businesses from other regions of the state.

No matter what eventually happens, air quality permits needed by business are on an indefinite delay until some solution is reached.

* * *

The County Commission also voted unanimously to extend the gross receipts tax set aside for behavioral health for five years. This tax was enacted to build a county-wide behavioral health system after Governor Susanna Martinez dismantled the statewide mental health services system.



Observer Corps Report – Sandoval County Commission regular meeting December 13, 2023

Mary Templeton, observer (via video recording)

Present: David Heil (Chair), Michael Meek (Vice Chair, video), Joshua Jones, Jay Block (Katherine Bruch had joined by zoom, but feedback with the new AV system required termination of the zoom session.)

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

High-Speed Internet

The commission approved a motion for Sandoval County to act as fiscal agent on behalf of Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative, Inc. for the State of New Mexico and Federal Broadband Grant funds received.

As background, LWVNM supports affordable universal high-speed Internet access for New Mexico.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Eight of sixteen speakers commented on elections that took place across the state in multiple counties during multiple years. One speaker expressed that post-election audit of Sandoval County voting equipment went well. Three speakers advocated for better employee conditions at the County animal shelter and requested an adoption fee waiver for returning veterans who wish to adopt an animal.

One additional reference that came up during comments had to do with a September 13, 2023 Commission vote on a resolution supporting a set of referendums against six state bills passed during the 2023 legislative session. One commissioner refused to vote on the resolution because she did not support the role of the County to weigh in on the matter, and because it expressed support for additional language contrary to the views of most of her constituents. The attendee rallying support for the referendums at past meetings filed a petition for a recall hearing for the commissioner on November 22 with the Thirteenth Judicial District Court (<https://robserver.com/recall-petition-filed-against-commissioner-bruch/>). The judge found no probable cause to let the petition progress (<https://robserver.com/judge-finds-no-probable-cause-to-let-bruch-recall-petition-to-continue/>).

As background, a resolution is a discretionary official statement of support for a position or action.

Commissioners Discussion

One commissioner wished a Merry Christmas “to all the illegals coming in” and asserted that a record number of immigrants of unknown identity and origin had arrived (<https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/291364> 2:22:30). He then claimed that the Veterans Administration was instructed to provide healthcare for immigrants, prioritizing this over healthcare for veterans.

Sandoval County Commission Website

<https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/>

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'll 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.

