

# LWVCNM Observer's Report

Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

February 7, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

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

## Description of Issues Relevant to the League

### Citizen's Rights to Public Participation & Civil Engagement/Discourse

The Commission discussed the adoption of Resolution No. 2-7-24.11A ([Agenda item 11.B](#)), which amends items 7 (Public Comments) and 8 (Addressing the Commission) of the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners Rules of Procedure. The main changes are that

- Public comments must address an agenda item.
- Speakers may not distribute handouts to Commissioners during public comment or use County staff to do so, but may distribute handouts by email before or after the meeting.
- Speakers must address comments to the Chair and not individual commissioners, staff, or the audience.
- Speakers shall not address Commissioners by their given names.
- Speakers shall speak to issues, not personalities.
- During Commissioner comment, Commissioners shall confine their remarks to agenda items, commission business or matters discussed during the meeting.

During the ensuing discussion (<https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/296848> 1:12:25), the first Commissioner recognized for comment vented hurt feelings at fellow Commissioners through name calling and personal attacks. After this Commissioner shouted down another Commissioner recognized for comment, the Chair shouted down the Commissioners and read the sections of Thomas Jefferson's manual on decorum and of Roberts Rules of Order on which the amendments were based. After more discussion on the appropriateness of presenting lengthy views on national news during Commission meetings, the Commission voted 3 to 2 to postpone voting on the Resolution until they could revisit parts of it with the County Attorney.

**As background**, LWVUS supports protection of citizens to publicly participate in government decision making. In addition, LWVNM promotes civil discourse, which means, at a minimum, mutually respectful, courteous, constructive, and orderly communication.

## Meeting Basic Human Needs

The Commission voted 3 to 2 along party lines to adopt Resolution No. 2-7-24.11D ([Agenda item 11.D](#)) to oppose the Paid Family and Medical Leave bill (SB3) currently in front of the New Mexico Legislature. Some who voted for the Resolution said they favor Paid Family and Medical Leave, but not this specific bill.

***As background***, LWVUS supports programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

## **Additional Comments**

### Public Comment

Seventeen of 25 speakers spoke against the proposed amendments to the Sandoval County Board of County Commissioners Rules of Procedure, items 7 & 8. Most objected to being required to address an agenda item. Four speakers expressed distrust of past elections, two speakers expressed disdain for the sheriff and two speakers were gavelled down for attempting to campaign.

## **Sandoval County Commission Website**

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