

LWVCNM Observer's Report

Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

March 13, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

League Recognition

The Commission recognized the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico in their Women's History Month Proclamation, with Donna Rigano and Mary Templeton representing LWVCNM. Mary presented a brief background of the League.

State Legislative Session Report (Sandoval County Lobbyist)

2024 election: All 112 state legislators are up for re-election in November 2024, following redistricting after the last census. Thirteen senate seats and ten house seats will turn over.

Budget: A general fund excess of \$3.5 billion came primarily from oil and gas revenues. \$10.2 billion passed as budget with reserves of ~32%. Allotments include raises for city employees and state police, fire fighter recruiting, corrections and law enforcement recruitment, housing and homelessness, roads and infrastructure, higher education internships and water projects.

Legislation: Two gun bills passed: HB 129: 7-day waiting period and SB5: (No) Firearms Near Polling Places. The Family Paid Medical Leave Act (SB 3) passed the senate, but failed to pass the house by 2 votes.

As background: LWVNM supports regulation of firearms for public safety. LWVUS supports regulation of firearms for consumer safety and advocates to protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

Election Transparency

The County Clerk's Office has redesigned the Bureau of Elections Warehouse to make room for poll workers, watchers, and challengers, as well as certification of tabulators. They added a secure area that is off limits to the public where ballots are held in compliance with state statute, and will also increase Internet speed to facilitate more rapid results reporting. This project will be complete by the November 2024 election.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Twelve of 17 speakers spoke against a proposed ordinance to create a Library Board for Sandoval County on the grounds that the composition would favor Rio Rancho libraries over smaller community libraries. Three people voiced concerns about elections.

Request for a Motion to Adopt Ordinance No. 3-13-24.10 to create a Library Board for Sandoval County

The proposed Library Board Ordinance was indefinitely postponed by a unanimous vote. Commissioners voiced consensus that all meetings regarding how funding amounts are established for County libraries be conducted under the provision of the Open Meetings Act.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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