



The VOTER

DECEMBER 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

President Report

By Starlyn Brown

The 2024 General Election is over. The following statements were made by The League of Women Voters of the United States President Dianna Wynn and CEO Celina Stewart on the 2024 election results:

“The 2024 election underscores the dedication of poll workers, election officials, and volunteers nationwide, who ensured that every eligible vote was counted, and every voice was heard. This year’s election was marked by integrity, transparency, and high turnout. The American people have spoken.”

“Given the disturbing rhetoric made during this election season, we are deeply concerned about challenges we may face, particularly regarding the issues that disproportionately affect women, from health care and reproductive rights to economic security and equal representation. However, we are deeply concerned for the future of women in the United States — as well as LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown, and Immigrant communities.”

The big election winner was **Democracy**. LWVCNM was involved in so many ways. Voter turnout was high nationwide. The message that voting is important was heard. New Mexico had 1,382,761 eligible voters and 928,154 of those eligible voted. In the four counties that we serve the voter turnout was: Bernalillo County – 70.54%, Sandoval County 71.29%, Torrance County 68.94%, and Valencia County 69.75%. Same Day Voter Registration (SDR) was in such high demand on election day that the system was overwhelmed, and more computing capacity was quickly added. As a comparison, in 2023, about 4,900 voters used same day voter registration. This election, there were more than 52,000 same day voter registration as of 5 pm on election day.

What’s next? So many things! We will continue our work defending democracy and will remain steadfast in our commitment to advocate for policies that uplift women and ensure equitable representation in all levels of government. LWVCNM joined the NM Black Leadership Council in denouncing racist texts and mailed hate by signing on to their open letter denouncing **Racist Messages and Hate Speech**.

There is always another election to prepare for. The Equal Rights Amendment needs to be passed. Action and advocacy in the 2025 Legislative session is fast approaching. Continuing to maintain and strengthen our many relationships with other organizations. Look for and establish new relationships. I believe in collaboration, not reinventing the wheel, and strength in numbers. Continuing to observe and report on the activities of local and state elected officials and governing bodies. Shine a light on the policies, rules, and laws being enacted. Grow our civics education program. Housing, immigration,

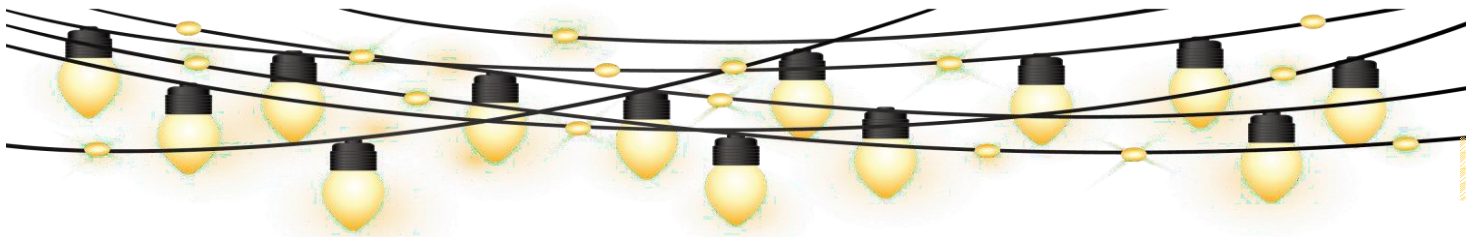
health care, modernization of the NM Legislature, fair districting, climate change, and more. What are your ideas?

Who knows what's coming. Remember we are the League of Women Voters, with a proud history and a respected reputation. We are not going away. Your membership, input, ideas, and engagement strengthen our foundation and determine what we can accomplish together.

I'm looking forward to our Holiday Party on Sunday, December 8th at 2 pm. I hope you can join us for this fun event. I'm looking forward to seeing and catching up with each of you. More event information can be found just below.

Heads up: A new LWV membership system is going to be implemented early next year. We will be communicating with all members about the change in January.

I wish each and every one of you a joyous and peaceful holiday season with family and friends. As always, feel free to reach out at president@lwvnm.org or call the office (505) 884-8441 and leave a message for me.



*Celebrate the Season !
Holiday Open House
Sunday, December 8th, 2 - 4 PM*

However you celebrate the busy holiday season, take a quiet breather and enjoy an afternoon with League friends and colleagues.

*Join us for a holiday celebration at the home of
LWVCNM board member Betsy Carlson,
1931 Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Albuquerque*

Parking is available in the Sunshine Flowers parking lot on Rio Grande or on the side streets nearby.

There will be light refreshments, conversation, and an opportunity to share our latest accomplishments, news and plans for the future!

RSVP: Liz Shields 559-578-5670 or elizs44@yahoo.com

Join us for the Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series



DECEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

Thursday, December 12th at Noon

WHERE: In person (members and guests only), Conference room, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, ample parking available; Zoom (members and general public)

TOPIC: **Beyond Detention Walls: Understanding Immigrant Detention in New Mexico Presented by the Dignity Not Detention Coalition of New Mexico.**

SPEAKERS: *Sophia Genovese*, Managing Attorney for the Asylum and Detention Programs and *Alondra Reyes*, Policy and Partnerships Manager: New Mexico Immigrant Law Center

With over 200 ICE facilities across the country, the United States has the largest immigration detention system in the world. The U.S. immigration system often results in the detention of those apprehended by Customs and Border Protection or Immigration and Customs Enforcement as they await removal proceedings. Over time, this system has expanded and incorporated harsher measures, resulting in the growth of the detained population in ICE custody.

New Mexico has three Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities, including Cibola County Correctional Center (Cibola), Torrance County Detention Facility (Torrance), and Otero Processing Center (Otero). These three facilities negatively impact not just those detained but our entire community by profiting off of the dehumanization of non-citizens. Previously and currently detained non-citizens from all three facilities have expressed suffering and/or witnessing excessive use of force and inadequate subsequent care, sexual abuse and assault, use of solitary confinement, lack of medical and mental health care, lack of access to legal information and resources, and other inhumane treatment. New Mexico has witnessed deaths caused by medical neglect and suicides due to these conditions.

The Dignity Not Detention Coalition in New Mexico is actively working towards joining other states like California, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, Colorado, and Washington, in the passing of the Dignity Not Detention Act, an intergovernmental services agreement ban aimed to prohibit public entities from entering into contracts to detain people for civil immigration violations. Our ultimate goal in passing this bill is for the New Mexico legislators to attempt to build a more humane immigration system and turn away from destructive economies harming all residents.

Whether you're an activist, ally, or simply curious about the detaining of non-citizens, we encourage you to join us for this enlightening discussion. Let's stand together to protect our rights, promote equality, and build a more inclusive society for all.

Our speakers' biographies:



**Sophia Genovese (she/hers/her)
New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC)- Managing Attorney
for the Asylum and Detention Programs**

Sophia Genovese is the Managing Attorney for the asylum and detention programs at the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center. Sophia is also the legal expert for the Dignity Not Detention bill at the New Mexico State Legislature which, if passed, would prohibit state public entities from participating in the civil immigration detention of asylum seekers in New Mexico.

Prior to joining NMILC, Sophia founded a pro bono detention representation program in New York State, focusing her practice on the intersection of law and community organizing. Before that, she was a Staff Attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center, providing direct representation to detained immigrants in rural Georgia. Sophia is a frequent speaker and lecturer on detention representation, border

policies, and community lawyering. She graduated from Brooklyn Law School in the 2-year accelerated JD program, and summa cum laude from Whittier College.

**Alondra Reyes (she/hers/her)
New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC) - Policy and
Partnerships Manager**

As a proud first-generation Mexican American, Alondra has been and continues to work in direct legal services and community-led advocacy fighting for immigrant rights. She began at the NMILC in 2021 after interning her senior year of college. She has worked in various capacities and departments within the organization and now is focused on passing and educating community members on pro-immigrant policies. Currently, Alondra is focused on the passing of the Dignity Not Detention Act, aimed to stop the detaining of immigrants in New Mexico.

Alondra graduated cum laude from the University of New Mexico in 2021 with a double Bachelor's in Spanish and Psychology. She previously worked as a UNM Service Corp Researcher for PB&J

Family Services, where she led research aimed to understand the relationship between familial poverty, incarceration, and/or addiction on pre-school students' access to and success in academia. She also worked at the Bernalillo County Youth Services Center as a UNM Service Corps Journalist, focused on leading education and research on creating and maintaining alternatives to detention through supervision programs that promote education, healthy lifestyles, and positive choices for youth.

Additionally, she was also heavily involved in research focused on the healthcare and education experiences of Latinx in the U.S. Lastly, she was also a Research Institute for Students of Equity Fellow (RISE) at the North Carolina Central University where she focused on pursuing research on how Latinx and Black, female-identifying individuals utilize their cultural capital to succeed in higher education. Alondra is committed to uplifting her community through community-led advocacy.



January LWVCNM Educational Meeting

Our January 9, 2025 LWVCNM Educational meeting will focus on the upcoming NM Legislature and how potential reductions in federal funding to NM will shape the decisions lawmakers reach to mitigate impacts to our vital programs serving NM residents. LWVNM Advocacy Co-Chairs Akkana Peck & Dick Mason will provide this annual discussion of the upcoming 2025 NM 60-day Legislative Session. Please plan to join us Thursday 1/9/25 at 12:00 pm for this hybrid meeting which will offer either in-person attendance at the LWV Conference room or zoom participation.

LWVCNM Book Club Special Event Save-the-Date!

LWVCNM Book Club 2025 Kick-Off Event

Join us for a **SPECIAL BOOK & AUTHOR** event to launch the 2025 Book Club season. We are honored to host Deborah Jackson Taffa, 2024 National Book Award Finalist for her inspiring memoir *Whiskey Tender*. With so much national political news emerging daily, we decided to bring our January selection “home” to New Mexico. The book discussion will be followed by a Potluck Dinner Social Hour. Bring along a favorite dish to share with League members.

Date: Wednesday, January 22, 2025

Time: 5:00-7:30 p.m. (Note: earlier start time)

Location: 6739 Academy Road NE, Albuquerque, 87109

LWVCNM Office Conference Room, Ample Parking Available

Title: *Whiskey Tender* by Deborah Taffa (Harper Collins Harper)

Along with being a National Book Award Finalist, *Whiskey Tender* has been named to best lists at Oprah Daily, The Washington Post, Elle, and Esquire Magazines. With praise from the The New Yorker, The NY Times, Zibby Mag, San Fran Chronicle, Publisher’s Weekly, and Electric Lit, *Whiskey Tender* is an Amazon Editor’s Best Choice Book. Taffa is the Director of the MFACW program at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM (IAIA's Mission: To empower creativity and leadership in Indigenous arts and cultures through higher education, lifelong learning, and community engagement). A citizen of the Quechan (Yuma) Nation and Laguna Pueblo, Deborah earned her MFA in Creative Writing at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. For a full bio, visit deborahaffa.com.

Here is one accolade of many by Tommy Orange, fellow award-winning Native American author for Taffa’s memoir:

“In a memoir populated by dreams but legislated by family and culture and reality, Deborah Taffa suggests that if we are going to heal, we need to be able to remember our wounds. In a style that is by turns measured, then biting, then humorous, then humble, then soaring, Taffa has a personal and moral conversation with an untold history. This story—which centers around being both Native and American at the same time—is a great lesson for how we can hold, and even embrace, our divisions and our tensions to create a new mosaic for the future.”

LWVCNM BOOK CLUB, continued

New members are always welcome! If you are not able to complete a book before the session, no worries...join the session and complete the book at your convenience. Great conversation and a way to better get to know LWVCNM members. The LWVCNM Book Club meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month. Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.

With 2024 coming to an end, we thought it would be a good time to review the books we have read and discussed since the Book Club's inception in June 2023—a blend of political, cultural and sociological topics.

June 2023

Evicted – Poverty and Profit in The American City by Matthew Desmond.

August 2023

The Soul of America – The Battle for our Better Angels by Jon Meacham

October 2023

The Persuaders – At the Front Lines of the Fight for Hearts, Minds, and Democracy by Anand Giridharadas

January 2024

Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America by Heather Cox Richardson

March 2024

At the Precipice: New Mexico's Changing Climate by Laura Paskus
(The author joined us for a special “Meet the Author” session)

May 2024

Why We're Polarized by Ezra Klein

July 2024

Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

September 2024

The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together by Heather McGhee

November 2024

Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community by Robert D. Putnam
(A special screening of *Join or Die*, a documentary based on the book, was hosted by the Guild Cinema)

Making a Statement – LWV Program Planning for Advocacy

By Karen M. Douglas

Issues of interest to LWV members abound and frequently arouse the desire to make a public statement or support/oppose legislation. However, LWV Bylaws restrict our advocacy to specific positions resulting from study and member consensus.

Program Planning is the opportunity for LWV members to identify omissions in the current LWV Program and Positions which, if newly developed, revised, or supplemented, could adequately support LWV desires to address situations existing in our community, state, or nation needing resolution or improvement.

To this end, the LWVCNM will host our annual *Program Planning meeting Saturday January 25, 2025, from 10:00 – Noon via Zoom.* Study proposal introductions by members is strongly encouraged and the study, consensus, and position approval process, which is strictly defined, will be discussed.

Members wishing to take part are urged to review information on Local and State Positions (LWVCNM pp.36-39; LWWNM pp. 8-33 of the gray 2024-25 LWVCNM member Handbook) looking for gaps and policies that need to be updated. Ideas from members introduced during the annual Program Planning will be considered for further action.

Local study proposals must then be presented during the March 2025 LWVCNM Board meeting, and published in the 2025 Annual Meeting Voter newsletter. LWWNM state study proposals must be presented at the March 2025 LWWNM Board Meeting and published in the spring 2025 LWWNM La Palabra newsletter.

Alternatively, supplementing current Positions by concurrence with other state or local League Positions is an option but also requires member approval by the LWVCNM Annual Meeting attendees (May 10, 2025) or LWWNM Convention Delegates (April 26-27, 2025).

Please reserve Saturday 1/25/25 to participate in LWVCNM Program Planning for issues members would like to address and discuss the process to develop these proposals into approved LWV Positions. LWVCNM needs your participation and perspective to better address issues in our local community and state.

Please **contact Karen M. Douglas (505-263-3297 or douglaskm@alumni.stanford.edu)** for additional information or questions regarding the objectives of Program Planning.

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 before we make our payments 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.

I'm happy to announce that 61 new members have joined LWVCNM so far this year.

Our Holiday Celebration: Looking forward to seeing many of you at our Holiday Celebration on Sunday, December 8th, 2 – 4 pm at the home of Betsy Carlson, 1931 Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Albuquerque when we can relax and enjoy the calm before the holiday “storm”.

Please RSVP to Liz Shields at elizs44@yahoo.com or call 559-578-5670.

Voter Guide Committee Report

by Lani Desaulniers

The LWVCNM Voter Guide for the November 5th general election was completed at the end of September. It was posted on our website and printed by the Santa Fe New Mexican.

By the numbers:

- 74 races were managed by LWVCNM in VOTE411 (the National League of Women Voters on-line Voter Guide). Our candidate response rate was 81% overall, 78% for print guide [3 candidates entered responses into VOTE411 after the print deadline.
- The print *Voter Guide* was printed and distributed to libraries and community and senior centers 11 days ahead of Early Voting. Guides were then delivered to the county clerks in Bernalillo, Tarrant, and Valencia Counties for use in polling places, as well as to 14 tribal communities. Our volunteers delivered guides to more than 125 other sites in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Tarrant, and Valencia Counties during the following week.
- 28,000 guides were printed in September. An additional 4,000 were reprinted due to popular demand.
- Fundraising efforts were very successful thanks to the great efforts of our development team. We raised enough donations to fully support the cost of printing the guide as well as publicity materials and flyers.
- 60 members contributed to the work of producing and distributing the guide!!!

In addition to the print *Voter Guide*, we created and maintained pages on the Voting and Elections page of the lwcnm.org website with links to a pdf version of the Voter Guide and VOTE411. VOTE411 also provided individualized ballot information to voters based on their address. At this time we do not have usage data available, but we anticipate that we will be able to review that in the coming months.

Publicity efforts for the on-line and print guides included distribution of tent cards and flyers to county clerks, libraries, and community centers, as well as flyers for Albertson's grocery stores. Karen Wentworth provided news releases and articles to several media outlets. She was interviewed by Prime Time Magazine and submitted columns to the NM Jewish Journal and the NM Press Association on the Constitutional Amendments. Starlyn Brown was interviewed by KOAT, KKOB, and KUNM. We held an event at the Railyards Market to provide Voter information and guides. We have some guides remaining that will be repurposed by our Civics Education team for outreach to Social Studies teachers in the schools.

We are truly grateful to the many individuals who contributed their time to create a valuable and valued resource for our communities. It has been a privilege to have such great support for this project from our members.

LWVCNM Website Played Its Part in The General Election

LWVCNM provided an immense amount of information for the 2024 General Election. On our website lwvcnm.org, we provided all the information that was in the hard copy Voter Guide and more detailed information (for example detailed bond projects lists) than could be the Voter Guide.

We had three web pages with identical information, in order to more widely provide information for people doing web searches. These pages were our home page, our Voters and Elections page, and our stand-alone page CentralNMVoterGuide.

Here are some statistics about how many times various election-related website pages and documents were accessed from September 1 to November 5:

Pages		Documents (cont.)	
Home page	32,524	Ciudad S & W Cons. Dist. Mill Levy	277
Bernalillo County General Election	7,116	Constitutional Amendment 1	1,400
CentralNMVoterGuide	4,698	Constitutional Amendment 2	1,011
Gen. Elect. Statewide Ballot Issues	3,587	Constitutional Amendment 3	1,658
Other NM Voter Guides	458	Constitutional Amendment 4	1,588
Sandoval County Gen. Elect. Info.	1,753	Full Page Flyer	509
Torrance County Gen. Elect. Info.	561	General Election Voter Guide	24,046
Valencia County Gen. Elect. Info.	736	Sandoval County Early Voting Loc.	86
Voters and Elections	8,161	Sandoval Cty. Elect. Day Voting Loc.	48
		Sandoval County GO Bonds	300
		State GO Bonds	850
		Torrance County Voting Locations	217
ABQ City Charter Amendments	1,462	UNM Valencia GO Bond	79
Bernalillo Cty Early Voting Locations	536	Valencia County Voting Locations	90
Bernalillo Cty Elect. Day Voting Loc.	183	Voter Guide Distribution Sites	1,038
Bernalillo County GO Bonds	1,408		
Bernalillo County Mill Levies	892		



2025 Legislative Session

The 60 day Legislative Session starts January 21st at noon and ends March 22nd at noon. The LWVNM Action Committee has been active all year speaking with Legislators and attending committee meetings. What happens at the NM Legislature affects NM every day. Get involved by talking with your Legislators. They will listen to their constituents. League Days at the legislature are February 5th and 6th. Attending is a great way to learn how the Legislature works and make your voice heard.

LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:
Starlyn Brown

1st Co-Vice Presidents/Voter Guide:
Karen Wentworth & Lani Desaulniers

2nd Vice President/Membership:
Elizabeth Shields

3rd Vice President/Program:
Karen Douglas

4th Vice President/Development:
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Terry Quinn

Director/Historian & Special Projects:
Jennifer Black

Director/Webmaster/Zoom Host:
Linda Miller

Voter Guide Distribution: Lani Desaulniers

Advocacy Team/Observer Corps:
Karen Wentworth

Volunteer Coordinator:
Linda Miller

If you need help with Zoom,
please reach out to Zoom host, Linda Miller,
lmiller@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

December 4th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
**LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further
notice. All members welcome.**

December 8th (Sunday) 2 – 4 pm
***HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
CELEBRATION***
see page 2

December 12th (Thursday) 12 Noon
**LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM**
**Topic: Beyond Detention Walls: Understanding
Immigrant Detention in New Mexico**
**Speakers: *Sophia Genovese and
Alondra Reyes***

January 8th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm
**LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further
notice. All members welcome.**

January 9th (Thursday) 12 Noon
**LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting
In person and ZOOM**
Topic: 2025 Legislative Session
Speaker: Dick Mason

January 22nd (Wednesday) 5:30-7:30 p.m.
**LWVCNM Book Club
Book and Author Special Event**
Selection: *Whiskey Tender* by Deborah Taffa
see pg. 5

January 25th (Saturday) 10 am – Noon
Program Planning Meeting
see pg. 7
Zoom Only

OBSERVER REPORTS

Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting



21 October / 4 November 2024

Mary Mulvany / Janet Kirkpatrick

All nine councilors were present at the 21 Oct and 4 Nov meetings: Louie Sanchez – District 1, Joaquin Baca – District 2, Klarissa Peña – District 3, Brook Bassan – District 4, Dan Lewis – District 5, Nichole Rogers – District 6, Tammy Fiebelkorn – District 7, Dan Champine – District 8, Renée Grout, District 9.

General Public Comment:

The Public Comment section of the 21 Oct meeting began at 8:25 p.m. This was after the council held a one hour and twenty minute executive session closed to the public, and after a half hour dinner break. During the Public Comment section, 23 people spoke to protest the officer-involved shooting of Matthew Solo Garcia by an APD officer on 18 Oct at the Tewa Lodge on Central Ave. The speakers called for the release of all officer body camera footage and firing of the officers involved.

The Public Comment section of the 4 Nov meeting began at 6:37 p.m. Ten people spoke against a proposed update to the city's homeless encampment policy. According to the speakers the policy redefines the Priority 1 encampments in a way to apply to more encampments. Priority 1 encampments are those which are dismantled with the least notice to the inhabitants.

City Charter Review Task Force-Failed Veto Override

The Council passed a resolution at the 7 Oct meeting calling for creation of a City Charter Review Task Force. The resolution called for an eleven-member task force: one member selected by each city councilor, one at-large member selected by the City Council who would chair the task force, and one member appointed by the mayor. The vote was seven in favor (Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, Peña, Rogers, Sanchez) and two opposed (Baca, Fiebelkorn). [R-24-85](#)

Mayor Keller vetoed this resolution, expressing that he supported the idea of establishing a 10-year task force to review the City Charter. However, he stated this resolution as written does not “maintain an appropriate balance between the geographic representation or legislative and executive branch obligations outlined in the current City Charter.” [EC-253](#)

The Council failed to override the veto at the 21 Oct meeting. The vote was five in favor of override (Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, Sanchez) and four opposed (Baca, Fiebelkorn, Peña, Rogers).

LEDA (Local Economic Development Act) Funding Kairos Power LLC

At the 4 Nov meeting the Council voted to administer and disburse LEDA funding to Kairos Power, LLC. for the acquisition, renovation, development, and improvement of advanced energy technology research and development facilities, the addition of 100 new employees, and the operation of the facility within the City for a minimum of ten years. The amount of the funding is \$3.5 million (\$3 million from the State Economic Development Department, and \$500k from the city). Eight councilors voted for the measure (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Grout, Lewis, Peña, Rogers, Sanchez) and one voted against (Fiebelkorn). [O-24-51](#)

The Council had previously voted at the 16 Sept meeting to authorize issuance of an Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) on behalf of Kairos Power LLC in the amount of \$300M. [O-24-45](#)



Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

December 2024

Karen Wentworth

Present: Barbara Baca, Adriann Barboa, Eric Olivas, Walt Benson, excused Steven Quesada

Bernalillo County Commission Learns about Election Impacts, Works to Increase Housing

Oct. 24, 2024

County Assessor Damien Lara explained the impact the passage of New Mexico Constitutional Amendment #1 and #2 may have on the county budget. Both amendments involve increasing property tax exemptions for veterans. Lara says the potential impact would be between \$2.5 million and \$12 million.

The uncertainty of the impact comes from the lack of data about the number of partially disabled veterans living and owning property in the county. Constitutional Amendment #1 would give partial tax exemptions to veterans according to the percentage of their disability. A veteran who is 30% disabled would receive a property tax exemption of 30%. But the county assessor does not have data detailing partial disability of veterans. The county will have to decide whether to cut costs or raise taxes to deal with the impact, but the effect will not be immediate. The NM Legislature must pass legislation detailing how the exemptions will be handled by the 33 county tax assessors.

The commission passed a \$205,000,000 Industrial Revenue Bond to assist Sun Lasso in building a battery storage facility, a \$15,700,000 IRB bond to assist NOI Sawmill Mixed Use in building 140 apartments, an extended stay hotel with 101 rooms for the Film Industry, and a 115- room hotel in the Sawmill area. The hotel project received a \$76,000,000 IRB.

Nov. 12, 2024

The county also appropriated \$800,000 for a housing project the City of Albuquerque is preparing. The Recovery Housing Complex will be built at 3401 Pan American Freeway NE and is expected to encompass 50-pre-manufactured structures with showers, laundry room and community buildings. To qualify for the Recovery Housing Complex, individuals must have a substance abuse diagnosis. The project is part of an ongoing cooperative effort between the City of Albuquerque and the County of Bernalillo to ease the problem of homeless people on the streets.

The commission also approved Project Revenue Bonds for multifamily housing of \$33,500,00 to St. Anthony Plaza Community Partners LP to rehab 11 separate 2-story residential buildings with 160 living units.

The commission passed a revision to the Drug and Alcohol Workplace policy to allow employees to use medicinal marijuana when they are off duty. Firefighters strongly supported the policy change as a way to manage chronic pain, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. The commission discussed potential problems with enforcement, since there is no accepted way to test whether an employee is under the influence of the drug while at work but decided to pass the policy revision.

The county Behavioral Health Department is putting together a strategic plan to handle the \$145 million dollars the county expects to receive over the next 10 years from the Opioid Settlement Agreement.

Among the initial information released was an assessment of who is most commonly overdosing in Albuquerque.

The rate of fatal overdoses occurs most frequently among Black, Hispanic, and Native American people. Fatal overdoses occur most frequently among males between 35-44 years old.

In the years 2018 – 2022, these zip codes saw the greatest number of overdoses:

87108	17.65%
87106	15.35%
87105	9.43%
87102	9.10%
87121	7.67%

Between May 2022 and April 2024 Albuquerque Fire and Rescue Emergency Medical Services responded to 1,450 suspected overdoses.

Between April 2022 and April 2024 Bernalillo County Emergency Medical Services responded to 1,110 suspected overdoses.



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

October 23, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

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

Katherine Bruch

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

No agenda items were taken up for which the League has a policy position.

Additional Comments

Public Comment

Four of thirteen speakers commented on elections and voting machines. Two others expressed gratitude for commission support of a local substance abuse rehabilitation center. The mayor of Cochiti Lake asked the commission to include risk management assessment with respect to aquifer contamination in their plans for a new landfill.

Commissioner Discussion

One commissioner expressed appreciation to the Clerk's office for their work amid a record turnout on the first day of early voting.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

November 13, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

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

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

Behavioral Health Programs

Sandoval Regional Medical Center (SRMC) is partnered with the City of Rio Rancho around Behavioral Health. All Rio Rancho Police Department (RRPD) officers have received Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training and RRPD now has a dedicated CIT of two officers plus a behavioral health clinician provided by SMRC who respond to behavioral health needs in Rio Rancho.

An additional program is funded for SMRC to train and deploy full-time behavioral health response teams county-wide, which will reduce the number of public safety officers responding to behavioral health incidents, and will provide specialized care for those who need it. This program will begin January 2025.

The SRMC will restart a program with the county jail that follows up with inmates with behavioral health needs to connect them with resources, reducing ineffective use of the jail. A Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) program will provide comprehensive outpatient mental health care, substance abuse services and screening, replacing Kennedy-era mental health programs.

As background:

The LWVUS promotes a health care system for the United States that provides a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents, including behavioral health that is integrated with and achieves parity with the physical health care system. The LWVNM expects state and local governments to support an adequately funded mental health care system that provides comprehensive services, as does the LWVCNM.

Elections

The Commission voted on a resolution to establish its legislative priorities for the 2025 state session. One commissioner moved to amend the resolution, asking that an item reading:

Per Board of County Commissioners Resolution 6.22.22.10, legislation that calls for improvements in voter processes including: Photo ID, Efficient Removal of Inactive Voters, Prohibiting the Use of Unsupervised Ballot Drop Boxes, Absentee Ballot Chain of Custody, and Post-election Audits.

be deleted from the list because requiring photo IDs serves to disenfranchise many of his constituents who live in pueblos and reservations where it is often difficult to obtain a government-issued photo ID. The County Manager pointed out that because the County identified Voter ID as a legislative priority in a separate resolution, removing it from the current resolution would not omit it as a County legislative priority. Another commissioner mentioned that other activities, such as removing inactive voters and post-election audits are currently in progress.

The commission voted 3 to 2 along party lines against this amendment. In response, another commissioner gave a sweeping historic overview of how voting rights have been denied to many in the US from 1789 to the present. This valuable summary is viewable on video here:

<https://sandovalcountynm.new.swagit.com/videos/320161> (beginning 1:48:26)

The resolution establishing the 2025 legislative priorities, with the above text included, passed 3 to 2 along party lines.

As background:

LWVUS supports electoral systems that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters. LWVNM supports the protection of the right of every citizen to vote, and methods that increase voter participation, including automatic voter registration and same-day voter registration.

To better understand voter suppression on tribal lands, see the American Bar Association article [How the Native American Vote Continues to be Suppressed](#). A [2024 Pew Research Center](#) study showed that 81% of Americans (69% of Democrats and 95% of Republicans) support requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote.

Additional Comments

Taxation

Property tax exemptions passed during the 2024 General Election must make their way through the state legislature before residents can apply for them.

Public Comment

Two of nine speakers commented on elections. Two others purported that a crime syndicate took over the U.S. Government in 1871, but Trump will restore the original government.

Commissioner Discussion

The County Clerk mentioned that they were still counting ballots on November 13th.

One commissioner reminded people that while some voting requirements are easily satisfied by some voters, they remain barriers to others. She also voiced hope that the lobbyist will focus on the priorities that the entire commission agrees on in the upcoming legislative session.

Sandoval County Commission Website

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



Middle Rio Grande Housing Commission (MRGHC)

Affordable Housing Report

November 15, 2024

The MRGHC met at 3:00 pm, Thursday, October 24, 2024, at the MRCOG Board Room. The following MRGHC members were present at the meeting: Talia Friedman, Dan Majewski, Lawrence Rael, Ian Robertson. Commissioner Steve Anaya was absent.

Also in attendance was County Commissioner Barbara Baca representing Bernalillo County and City Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn representing the City of Albuquerque.

Presentations:

The MRGHC members heard presentations from Joseph Montoya of the City of Albuquerque, Amanda Colburn of Bernalillo County Housing Dept and Marcos Gonzales of the Bernalillo County Economic Development Department regarding current and proposed affordable housing projects (new construction and rehabilitation/preservation); housing development funding mechanisms and other initiatives.

Agenda Items and Updates:

Two applications have been received to date for the MRGHC Executive Director position. The position application window will close on October 25, 2024. MRGHC Chair Friedman recommended that a special meeting be held to discuss those applications.

Commissioners then discussed the formation of subcommittees. Commissioner Ian Robertson will head the MRGHC Education subcommittee and recruit speakers to provide presentations on housing development and financing mechanisms to the MRGHC members. Dan Majewski will be the liaison contact for housing developers reaching out to discuss prospective affordable housing projects for the consideration of the MRGHC. Other anticipated Subcommittees are a Finance Committee and a Bylaws Committee.

A second presentation at this meeting was focused on showing the draft elements of the new MRGHC website (mrcog-nm.gov/663/Board). The MRGHC website is currently posted on the MRCOG website, but it will eventually be its own 'standalone' website.

Discussions regarding the last two Agenda items – MRGHC Bylaws and Legislative updates were tabled and will be discussed at the next meeting.

The City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Governments have separately passed Resolutions that identify each entity's 2025 NM Legislative Priorities for addressing the need for affordable housing and the homelessness crisis. These Resolutions encourage collaboration with the NM Governor's Housing Office as well as the NM Legislature and list priority projects and community initiatives for which each entity is seeking funding.

The next MRGHC meeting date will be Monday, November 25 @ 3pm at the MRCOG Boardroom.

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.



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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.