



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO**

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

**President Report**

**by Starlyn Brown**

You may have noticed that the heading is President Report and not Co-President Report. In October of 2023, Donna Sandoval accepted the position of Director of Finance and Administrative Services for the City of Albuquerque. I'm sure you can appreciate that it is a very time-consuming position with long hours. In addition to her position with the city, beginning in June 2024, Donna will take on her dream role in a professional association she has been active in for the past 15 years. The Association of Government Accountants (AGA) national governing board elected her as Treasurer-Elect. As Treasure-Elect Donna will be traveling more to fulfill the duties of her new role.

Given the two exceptional achievements and opportunities in Donna's life, she made the difficult decision to resign as Co-President of LWVCNM effective immediately. As Co-President for the last three years, Donna has been a consistent and involved leader. Her input, involvement and guidance will be greatly missed. However, we are very excited for her two new ventures and wish her the very best and much success.

Donna does intend to continue her membership in LWVCNM and participate in future league events. We will hold her to it!



June and July will feature a two-part Educational Program series focusing on  
*Democracy in Danger.*

**June's Topic:** Democracy in Danger, Part One: LGBTQ+ Community and Rights Under Fire  
**with Speakers:** Adrien Lawyer, Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico and Marshall Martinez, Equality New Mexico. **NOTE SPECIAL DATE AND TIME!**

**July's Topic:** Democracy in Danger, Part 2: A Deep Dive into the Challenges to Democracy  
**with Speaker:** TBD

Join us for the Brown Bag Lunch and Learn Series'



NOTE Special  
Date & Time!!

## JUNE EDUCATIONAL MEETING

Thursday, June 6, 2024 • 7:00 - 8:30 PM

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

**TOPIC:** *Democracy in Danger, Part One: LGBTQ+ Community and Rights Under Fire*

**SPEAKERS:** *Adrien Lawyer*, Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico - Director of Education & Co-Founder, and *Marshall Martinez*, Equality New Mexico - Executive Director

We've all heard about "don't say gay" laws and campaigns to ban books, prohibit certain topics being included in school curriculums, restrict bathroom access, deny transgender athletes from participation in sports, etc. The League has a wide variety of public policy positions recognizing that all people have a critical role in democracy. Two of these positions are particularly relevant to our summer series, *Democracy in Danger*:

\* certain *Individual Liberties* are guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, and these individual rights now protected by the Constitution should not be weakened.

\* all levels of government must provide *Equality of Opportunity* for education, employment, and housing for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. The League supports extending existing civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination against lesbians and gay men in jobs, housing and public accommodations, including protections for health care benefits and marriage equality for same-sex couples.

In celebration of LGBTQ+ Pride Month, the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico is thrilled to welcome two of New Mexico's strongest advocates of the LGBTQ + community, Adrien Lawyer, Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico - Director of Education & Co-Founder and Marshall Martinez, Equality New Mexico - Executive Director. Our panel will delve into the intersection of democracy, LGBTQ+ rights, and advocacy. In the face of mounting threats to democracy, it's imperative to understand how these challenges uniquely impact the LGBTQ+ community both locally in New Mexico and across the United States.

Our esteemed speakers (see bios below) will lead an insightful conversation exploring the multifaceted ways in which the ongoing erosion of democratic principles affects LGBTQ+ individuals. From legislative attacks to social discrimination, they will shed light on the current landscape and its repercussions on our rights and well-being. They will share the challenges but also strategize on effective advocacy efforts needed to safeguard LGBTQ+ rights and promote inclusivity within our democratic framework. Your participation and voice are crucial as we collectively navigate these turbulent times.

Whether you're an activist, ally, or simply curious about the intersection of LGBTQ+ rights and democracy, 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.

**Adrien Lawyer (he/him/his)**

**Transgender Resource Center of New Mexico - Director of Education & Co-Founder**

Adrien co-founded TGRCNM in 2008 with Zane Stephens to be a clearinghouse of direct services, education and advocacy for the transgender community. Adrien has delivered Transgender Cultural Fluency trainings in thousands of settings, including public and private schools, police and public safety departments, every correctional institution in New Mexico, healthcare and social service facilities, federal, state and local government agencies, and private businesses, foundations and nonprofit organizations. He has also led successful advocacy efforts for model transgender student policies, gender-neutral restrooms, trans inclusion in social service facilities, statewide bullying prevention and birth certificate gender marker change.

On a national level, Adrien presents and consults on many issues impacting the trans community, including TGRCNM as a successful model for local service provision. In his spare time, he enjoys being a father and playing guitar with A Band Named Sue.



**Marshall Martinez**

**Equality New Mexico - Executive Director**

Marshall is an organizer and has been a political strategist for multiple candidates and organizations; from fighting climate change with the League of Conservation Voters to working for fair pay and safe working conditions with AFSCME-the public employees labor union. All personal fights because, like all of us, he has lived a multi-issue life.

Born and raised in Alamogordo, New Mexico, to a working-class family and a group of particularly strong women (and a few great men, too!) in High School he worked to educate young people about safer sex. Marshall’s policy expertise focuses on Gender and Sexuality, Bodily Autonomy, and Reproductive and Sexual Healthcare. Marshall also prides himself on his skill set for navigating attacks against our values, in ways that build power for the communities being attacked rather than just winning the short-term fight. Marshall strongly believes in the African Proverb “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.”

**THEN, FOR OUR JULY PROGRAM . . .**

**Thursday, July 11, Noon - 1 PM, in person and via Zoom**

**Topic/Title:** Democracy in Danger, Part 2: A Deep Dive into the Challenges to Democracy

**Speaker:** TBD

## Environmental Justice Follow-Up Message from Dr. Johnnye Lewis

Thank you again for inviting me to speak to LWVCNM last month. I really enjoyed the discussion and the interest expressed. I want to make sure people who are interested have contact information to follow up. I would be happy to connect you with whatever resources we have available. For me, please distribute [jlewis@cybermesa.com](mailto:jlewis@cybermesa.com) for contact info to those at the meeting.

Please also send out Dr. Tamar Ginossar's contact information, [ginossar@unm.edu](mailto:ginossar@unm.edu). Dr. Ginossar is leading the community engagement section for the INSPIRES Center at UNM as she mentioned on the zoom at the meeting. That center has a non-toxicant specific focus and also has a multidisciplinary team that can be mobilized in response to community questions. Here is the link:

**New Mexico Integrative Science Program Incorporating Research in Environmental Sciences (NM-INSPIRES) Center | UNM College of Pharmacy [hsc.unm.edu](http://hsc.unm.edu)**

Regarding the Superfund Research Center (SRP) that I also mentioned in reference to the question about how to engage physical scientists, this center has some very creative outreach programs as well as programs to engage students to pursue careers in these important areas.

Thank you for your interest in our work and these important issues, and thanks to the League for keeping me an informed voter for all these years!

*Johnnye Lewis, Ph.D., Professor Emerita*

*Director, UNM METALS Superfund Research Center*

*Co-Director*

*Community Environmental Health Program - UNM HSC COP NBCS ECHO*

*Center for Native EH Equity*



## LWVCNM Updates & Happenings

### Election Updates

The Voter Guide committee completed work for the June 4<sup>th</sup> primary voter guide on the VOTE411.org platform. We greatly appreciated the work of our volunteers who called candidates and encouraged them to respond. Many went the extra mile to assist with calls to candidates around the state.

Information about the primary and general election, as well as a link to VOTE411, can now be found the LWVCNM website or on our dedicated web page [www.centralnmvoterguide.org](http://www.centralnmvoterguide.org). We publicized this information to our email contacts and provided press releases to many media outlets.

At the request of the Bernalillo County Clerk, we printed flyers and table-tent cards with information about how to access the online voter guide which will be made available at polling places. We distributed these materials to the four County Clerks Offices, to the libraries, community centers, organizations, and businesses in the region. Many thanks to the volunteers who delivered them to places near and far.

Plans for the print guide for the November 5<sup>th</sup> general election are moving forward. We will still use VOTE411 but plan to create a printed voter guide and a PDF which will be posted on our website. We are pursuing various fundraising strategies to support the costs.

We are still seeking volunteers, both new and experienced, to help with the *Voter Guide*. We are especially in need of members who can assist in identifying sites in the community to stock the guides, and who will be available to deliver them in October. We still need help with publicity and fundraising.

Please contact Lani Desaulniers (LMDesaul@aol.com), Karen Wentworth (kwentworth17@comcast.net), or the office at 505-884-8441 if you are interested in helping out.

### Who's Who Update

Many thanks to Ashley Benning who updated the Who's Who Guide following the recent municipal elections in Sandoval County. The new version is posted on our website. It contains information about the municipal officials who were elected in March. Copies of the printed Who's Who are in the LWVCNM office and will be available at our meetings.

### MEMBERSHIP CORNER

The 2024-2025 Member Handbook is being assembled currently.

Please let Liz Shields (559.578.5670 or [elizs44@yahoo.com](mailto:elizs44@yahoo.com)) know of any changes to your address, phone number or email address.

Also, let her know if you do not want this information published in the Handbook.

## Calendar Planning Meeting

LWVCNM will host our annual Calendar Planning Meeting

Saturday, June 22, 10 AM—Noon via Zoom-only

LWVCNM needs your ideas and recommendations for topics and speakers for our monthly educational meetings scheduled September 2024 through August 2025. Soliciting your ideas helps LWVCNM understand the issues you find most pressing or topics requiring greater attention for the upcoming LWVCNM program year.

During our 2023-24 program season LWVCNM initiated hybrid meetings starting June 2023 to seek increased participation. LWVCNM also addressed several topics more fully by featuring them during sequential meetings, with 2-part series addressing Housing & Homelessness, Municipal Elections, and Democracy in Danger. This in-depth approach permits LWV to consider issues which may warrant future advocacy and promotes member study introduction during the Winter 2025 Program Planning to develop a Position (LWV Bylaws prohibit Advocacy without an approved Position – please contact Karen Douglas [douglaskm@alumni.stanford.edu](mailto:douglaskm@alumni.stanford.edu) for details regarding the LWV Program process).

If you can't join us for this June 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, please contact Karen Douglas (505-263-3297) to offer your recommendations. Please also watch for Zoom Calendar Planning announcements to participate. LWVCNM needs your involvement to offer monthly educational programs addressing the needs of our community.

### The LWVCNM Book Club

meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each odd-numbered month. The group selected the following title for the upcoming July meeting.

Date: Wednesday, July 24, 2024

Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: TBD

Title: *Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants,*

a nationwide bestseller by author Robin Wall Kimmerer.

From the book jacket:

As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these lenses of knowledge together to show that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings are we capable of understanding the generosity of the earth and learning to give our own gifts in return.



Contact Janet at 505-401-2052 for questions.

## **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:**  
Betsy Carlson

**Treasurer:** Gina Mahfouz

**Secretary:** Vivian Skadron

**Director/Voter Services Chair:** Vacant

**Director/Sustainability/Climate Change:**  
Jeanne Logsdon

**Director/Office Manager:** Terry Quinn

**Director/Historian & Special Events:**  
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, Starlyn Brown,  
[lmiller@unm.edu](mailto:lmiller@unm.edu)

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by  
the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at:  
[VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com](mailto:VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com)

## **LWVCNM CALENDAR**

June 4<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)  
New Mexico major party Primary Day

June 5<sup>th</sup> (first Wednesday) 5:30 pm  
LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further notice.  
All members welcome

June 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 7:00 – 8:30 pm  
**Special Date and Time**  
LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting  
In person and ZOOM  
“Democracy in Danger, Part One: LGBTQ+ Community  
and Rights Under Fire”  
Speakers: Adrien Lawyer and  
Marshall Martinez

June 22<sup>nd</sup> (Saturday) 10:00 am – 12 noon  
Annual LWVCNM Calendar Planning Meeting.  
Via Zoom only  
See info p. 5

July 2<sup>nd</sup> (first Wednesday) 5:30 pm  
LWVCNM Board Meeting, ZOOM until further notice.  
All members welcome.

July 11<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) 12 noon – 1pm  
LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting,  
In person and ZOOM  
“Democracy in Danger, Part Two:  
A Deep Dive into the Challenges to Democracy  
Speaker: TBD

July 24<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
LWV CNM Book Club Meeting  
Title: Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom,  
Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants, by  
Robin Wall Kimmerer.  
See more info on p. 5 or check this [Book Club link](#)

## **Albuquerque Affordable Housing and Homeless Initiatives Updates- May 2024**

### **Affordable Housing Advocacy Letter Submitted to Albuquerque Mayor and Councilors, May 5, 2024**

The Board of the League of Women Voters Central New Mexico (LWVCNM) submitted a Letter on May 5, 2024 to the City of Albuquerque Mayor and City Councilors during their FY25 Budget deliberations to advocate for the need for funding the creation of more affordable housing in Albuquerque. The Letter is supported by LWVCNM's position regarding Housing that states: *Local government has primary responsibility for making available, facilitating, and coordinating provision of affordable, decent, and safe housing using federal, state, county, or city funds.*

Per an Albuquerque City Council Resolution to the Budget Committee of the Whole, there was only one affordable housing project proposed (a hotel acquisition and conversion) for consideration in the FY25 Objectives: 'convert at least 100 hotel rooms into safe affordable rental units.' This one project represents only 10% (100 units) of the 1,000 housing unit annual goal set by the Mayor's Housing Forward Initiative.

In the letter, the League advocated for \$20,000,000 to be allocated in the City's FY25 Budget to meet the annual goal of creating 1,000 affordable housing units (as part of the five year/5,000 housing units Housing Forward goal for FY24-FY29). This potential lack of funding for new affordable housing will thus increase competition for housing where households with less financial assets will be pushed down the affordable housing ladder and will lead to a continued increase in the unhoused population in Albuquerque. The League recognizes that the City must continue to effectively leverage all Federal, State and local resources to create more affordable housing to address the local housing market crisis for the sake of all its citizens – housed, precariously housed and unhoused.

### **Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative (MRGHC) Update**

Meeting held Thursday, May 8, 3:00 pm at the Middle Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) Offices

Commission Members Present: Talia Friedman (Interim Chair), Sergio Martinez, Dan Majewski (Lawrence Rael, absent)

Administrative Updates: The Collaborative will vote at the June meeting on finalizing the Executive Director job description; and, whether an independent fiscal agent will be utilized to receive both City and County monetary contributions and provide financial oversight for expenditures of the MRGHC. The Commission also agreed to set a standing meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month at 3:00 pm at the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments offices.

Actions Taken: Ian Robertson, Director of Development with Titan Development, Ltd., was appointed as the fifth Collaborative member. Mr. Robertson is an architect and has expertise in real estate development in market rate housing development.

For informational purposes, the Joint City/County Administrative Resolution regarding the MRGHC, states that the "focus of this collaborative effort shall be long-range planning for the development and re-development of property for the purpose of planning, creating, and preserving affordable housing"; and, "to advance mutual interests in the provision of safe, sustainable, and affordable housing within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County, including but not limited to through the funding, development, acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and delivery of affordable housing to qualified individuals and families."



# **OBSERVER REPORTS**



## **Observer Corps Report – Albuquerque City Council meeting**

**15 April / 6 May, 2024**

**Mary Mulvany /Janet Kirkpatrick**

All nine councilors were present on April 15 and May 6: 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.

### **Proposed Changes to City Charter**

Proposed voter propositions. During the May 6 council meeting numerous bills were introduced which would call for propositions to be put to the voters to change portions of the City of Albuquerque Charter. Proposed changes to the city charter can only be passed by a vote of a majority of the council plus one. These bills are scheduled to be discussed at the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- [P-24-1](#) Would change the minimum number of votes required for election of a mayoral or council candidate from 50% to 40%. (Introduced by Councilors Lewis and Peña)
- [P-24-2](#) Among other changes to the hiring and firing of the City Attorney and City Clerk, the city council could terminate the City Attorney’s employment contract with a two-thirds vote of the council. (Introduced by Councilors Lewis and Grout)
- [P-24-3](#) Among other changes to the appointment and firing of the Police Chief and the Fire Chief, the city council could terminate the Police and Fire Chief’s contracts with a two-thirds vote of the council. (Introduced by Councilors Lewis and Peña)

### Proposed resolution to amend the immigrant friendly policy.

During the May 6 council meeting, resolution [R-24-45](#) was introduced which would deny the policy’s protections “...when an individual has been charged with a felony involving violence, human trafficking, or trafficking of controlled substances. In such circumstances the City shall contact and cooperate with federal immigration authorities...” (Introduced by Councilors Bassan and Grout). This resolution was referred to the Finance and Government Operations Committee.

Fifteen members of the public spoke in opposition to this resolution, citing concerns about lack of due process, racial profiling, and fear of calling the police or other authorities. This fear could result in unreported crimes and make immigrants vulnerable to wage theft, etc.

### **Air Quality Board Appeal**

During the April 15<sup>th</sup> administration question and answer period Council President Lewis asked if the City Attorney had submitted a letter to the court regarding an appeal of the Air Quality Board’s decision. (It was not clarified to which decision he was referring.) The City Attorney’s representative responded that no docking statement was submitted regarding the appeal because it was felt that other parties were adequately representing the positions. She further stated that it was her understanding the appeal would be dismissed because of the lack of the docking statement. Councilor Lewis expressed his

disappointment about the status of the relationship between the council and the City Attorney and her ability to be influenced by the administration.

### **Leave Payout to Departing CAO Nair**

During the May 6 administration question and answer period Councilor Sanchez stated he has received calls from upset constituents about a news story involving a leave payout to Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Sarita Nair when she resigned. He maintains the payout of Paid Leave Other (PLO) was not done in compliance with Merit Ordinance 3-1-16. According to current CAO Dr. Sengel, the ordinance states, "Leave with pay may also be authorized by the Chief Administrative Officer for services or activities of an employee outside of the scope of his or her employment which can be reasonably anticipated to directly or indirectly benefit the city."

Councilor Sanchez asked the current CAO to report to the city council who authorized the payment.

### **Opioid Settlement Fund Project (EC-24-29)**

Councilor Baca proposed a bill to expend opioid settlement funds for a pallet home project focused on providing addiction recovery services. The project is to be located on Pan American at the State's vacant former MVD building. Councilor Fiebelkorn objected to using opioid settlement funding for operating costs with no plan for covering the operating costs after the settlement funding is gone. She and Councilor Grout also objected to appropriating Opioid Settlement money prior to completion of a joint city/county comprehensive plan for use of the settlement funds. The measure passed with a vote of 5 in favor (Baca, Bassan, Champine, Peña, and Rogers) and 4 opposed (Fiebelkorn, Grout, Lewis, and Sanchez). [EC-24-29](#)

### **ABQ Ride - Transit**

During the April 15th administration question and answer period Councilor Fiebelkorn asked the Transit Department representative about a recently implemented policy. The Rules to Ride policy now limits the size of carts that individuals can take onto the bus. According to the discussion the cart size is limited to 16"x16"x43". Councilor Fiebelkorn indicated that seniors often use these carts to haul groceries from the grocery store and wondered what effort had been made to educate riders about the change. Discussion ensued about what would be an appropriate size limit. We note that upon checking the Rules to Ride on Transit's website, the limit is now stated as 20"x20"x43".

### **City Lights B.R.A.I.N. System**

During the April 15th administration question and answer period Councilor Rogers asked if the new lighting scheduled for her district would be compatible with the city's Balanced Resource Acquisition and Information Network (BRAIN). This system analyzes data from connected lights and building systems to identify energy saving changes. The administration representative indicated, if possible, all new lights are part of the system. For more information see the CABQ website: [BRAIN System](#).

### **General Public Comment**

Israel/Gaza. At the April 15th meeting 11 members of the public spoke to urge the city council to pass a resolution demanding a cease fire in Gaza and/or discontinuing Albuquerque's sister city program with Rehovot, Israel. After each comment, Councilor Bassan added the phrase "including immediate release of all Israeli hostages."

Chief Medina. At the April 15th meeting three members of the public spoke to urge councilors to take action to remove Chief Medina from the APD.

Public Library IT Funding. At the April 15<sup>th</sup> meeting two individuals asked the council to reinstate \$400K of funding for library IT services. These services were previously funded using revenue bonds, but this has been switched in recent years to funding through general operating funds.



## **Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission**

**May 2024**

**Karen Wentworth**

All five members of the county commission attended the meeting. Barbara Baca, Eric Olivas, Adriann Barboa, Walt Benson, Steve Quezada (via zoom)

### **Bernalillo County Commission Approves Purchases of Land in the International District for Affordable Housing**

The Bernalillo County Commission has approved the purchase of 3.18 acres of vacant land at 704 Wyoming Blvd. NE. If the purchase is completed the land will be banked for future affordable housing projects. The money for the purchase will come from a \$2.4 million grant from the state Department of Finance and Administration.

The commission also approved the purchase of .48 acres of vacant land at Acoma and Alvarado Rd. SE for future multi-family housing. And it also approved a \$400,000 purchase of .528 acres at 317 Wyoming for urban agriculture. Community members who have been working with the county attended the meeting to applaud the action.

The commission also approved ballot language to renew the mill levy set aside for the University of New Mexico Hospital. The levy question will be on the November ballot. The New Mexico constitution requires each county to provide a detention facility and a hospital for local residents, although as several rural hospitals have closed over the past two decades, more of the burden for both urban and rural hospital care has fallen on UNMH, which is underwritten by a property tax in Bernalillo County. In 2023, the tax provided about \$120 million to UNMH to support basic operating expenses.

The commission also formalized a selection process for hiring a new county manager. The current county manager plans to retire at the end of June. The commission has been in a defensive mode since three commissioners apparently agreed to a specific selection process and named members of the search committee to hire a new manager without consulting the other two members of the commission.

Since that was a possible violation of the NM Open Meetings Act, it was challenged by the New Mexico Foundation for Open Government, and the county decided to re-do the process and add a new member to the search committee suggested by the Republican member of the commission, Walt Benson. It is not clear whether the search committee will hold any open meetings.



## Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission special meeting (budget hearing)

April 19, 2024

Mary Templeton, observer

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

The purpose of this meeting was to provide commissioner input into development of the next fiscal year's budget.

### Description of Issues Relevant to the League

#### Elections

The county clerk's office requests increased funds to hire a GIS tech, plan a new, modern election warehouse, and to add more polling sites to keep up with growth.

#### **Sandoval County Commission Website**

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



## Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

April 24, 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

#### Housing

Rebuilding Together Sandoval County – a chapter of a national 501c3 that makes home repairs and improvements for very low income and disabled homeowners – gave a presentation on their program. They requested funds and contacts to expand their program. The Commission offered to work with them to secure grants and more sustained funding at the State level.

**As background:** LWVCNM supports local governments making available, facilitating, and coordinating provision of affordable, decent, and safe housing using federal, state, county, or city funds. This may also be done by coordination with private builders, nonprofit organizations, and/or foundations.

### Additional Comments

#### Public Comment

Six of 18 speakers were small business owners whose assessed commercial property values had gone up 100% or more this year. All were concerned about how to stay in business; some requested that assessment be based on income. Six speakers commented on elections, election machines and voter ID.

#### **Sandoval County Commission Website**

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



## Observer Report - Sandoval County Commission regular meeting

May 8, 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

#### Healthcare

The University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) completed acquisition of the Sandoval Regional Medical Center (SRMC) at the end of 2023, which became a campus of UNMH in January 2024. UNMH received one-time FEMA funds which they were able to apply to SRMC so that it is currently operating in the black. UNMH committed to an employee retention incentive and wage increase for employees, although labor negotiations are ongoing. Mill levy funding currently goes toward behavioral health services for inmates at the Sandoval County Detention Center (10%), a Level 3 trauma center at SRMC (76%) and a behavioral health outpatient program (13%).

**As background:** LWVCNM supports comprehensive health care, including mental health care, among other services. It believes society has a responsibility to provide comprehensive health care for the indigent and supports mill levies as a means of funding such health care. In addition, LWVNM expects state and local governments to support an adequately funded mental health care system that provides comprehensive services to the acutely, chronically, and seriously mentally ill of all ages.

### Additional Comments

#### Public Comment

Four of 9 speakers commented on elections, election machines and voter ID. One speaker from the union that represents nurses and technicians at SRMC pointed out that SRMC has a quality rating of only 1.

#### Commissioner Discussion

The Chair addressed the reasons why Sandoval County does not require voter IDs, as well as state practice for certifying election machines.

### 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](mailto: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.



**6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124  
Albuquerque, NM 87109**

**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.**