

# 2 fill vacant co-op seats

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by [John Larson](#) | August 27, 2015 | Filed under: [News](#)

Members of the Socorro Electric Cooperative turned out in force for the reconvened annual meeting Saturday with 356 registering, 153 percent of the 256 required for a quorum.

John Larson — El Defensor Chieftain: Socorro Electric Co-op Board President Anne Dorough speaks during the meeting.

Don Wolberg and Leroy Anaya were formally elected to the two open trustee positions in District III.

Wolberg received 671 mail-in votes and 171 in person votes for a total of 842.

Anaya received 552 mail-in votes and 212 in person votes for a total of 764.

Their three year terms began immediately.

One reason for the high turnout at Macey Center may have been the \$25 credit offered to all those who registered, which District II trustee Charlie Wagner referred to as bribery.

President Anne Dorough congratulated Anaya and Wolberg.

“Now we are seven member board,” she said.

Wagner called for a point of order and, referring to the agenda, said he would like to give a trustee’s report.

Dorough told Wagner he would have had to present the trustee reports to her in time to be added to the agenda and “you will not be giving the trustee report, you did not present it to the chairman in time...”

When Wagner again asked to give a trustee report, he was interrupted by catcalls from the audience both supporting him and others asking him to sit down.

Wagner then accused Dorough of violating the co-ops bylaws.

Dorough said, “The order of business is an outline. The agenda is what is followed and we asked for trustee reports to be put on the agenda if they were to be made and there were no trustee reports.”

“With all due respect, you are the president of the co-op,” Wagner said, and then implied that Dorough was again violating the bylaws.

Wagner called for a point of order, but was ruled out of order by Dorough.

Wagner resigned his position Wednesday.

Dorough told El Defensor Chieftain her ruling was based on Section 4.03 of the bylaws:

“When notifying Members of any Member Meeting, the Cooperative shall include notice of any matter which a Member may raise or discuss, and intends to raise or discuss, at the Member Meeting if:

1. Requested, in writing, by a percentage of the Total Membership entitled to call a Special Member Meeting and the Cooperative receives the written request satisfying the member-identification standards set forth in Section 4.02, at least thirty (30) days prior to delivering notice of the Member Meeting; or
2. The Cooperative receives the written request at least thirty (30) days prior to delivering notice of the Member

Meeting. The Cooperative shall also notice any matter that the Board of Trustees intends to raise or discuss at the Member Meeting.

Next spring, District I, District IV, and District V seats will be up for election. One District III seat and the District II seat are up for election the next year.

At the end of the meeting the public was allowed to comment and ask questions.

Mike Scott, of District I, commented that he felt the mail-in ballot was a sham. He also wanted the new bylaws to be rescinded.

Dawn Weaver asked what the co-op pays for attorney's fees. Dorough did not have the figures at hand, but Wagner interjected, saying they were well over \$100,000 in the last year.

Loretta Lommen commented that she was happy with the co-op and recommended that board find ways to solve their differences.

Susann Mikkelson said she appreciated the co-op's staff to which received applause. She also said she would like to see all trustees work better together and wondered if there should be mediation.

Another member asked if the meeting was being recorded. Dorough said a video recording of the meeting could be viewed on the co-op's website.

Another question had to do with the City of Socorro's plan to not renew the franchise agreement with the co-op and go with PNM. "What are the consequences if the city withdraws?" Dorough said nothing has been formally presented.

"Until we know exactly what [Mayor Ravi Bhasker's plan is, we cannot speculate on the matter," she said.

Another member asked how much it cost the Cooperative to add the two additional trustees. Dorough said about \$9,000 per year.

Manny Marquez, a former trustee, said he was glad the board has increased to seven trustees, because with a five member board, just three trustees could control the board. He also said he didn't think the city could remove itself from the co-op because The USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS), the agency guaranteeing the cooperative's debt, wouldn't sell. "RUS would not let the city pay it off," he said.

According to the USDA website, "Financing from the Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service provides capital and leadership to maintain, expand, upgrade and modernize America's vast rural electric infrastructure. The loans and loan guarantees finance the construction or improvement of electric distribution, transmission and generation facilities in rural areas. The Electric Program also provides funding to support demand-side management, energy efficiency and conservation programs, and on-and off-grid renewable energy systems."