

January 25, 2024

FOG Light

Welcome New Board Members

The FOG board elected two new members to its Board of Directors. They are: Wende Schwingendorf, the managing editor of Albuquerque Business First, and Barbara Vigil, former Supreme Court Justice and District Court Judge.

Schwingendorf has extensive experience in the business sector and is also deeply passionate about addressing transparency issues that impact the lives of New Mexicans. She is a lifelong New Mexican with strong ties to media, business and government decision-makers, nonprofits, and community organization memberships and leadership.

Vigil's legal career has spanned over three decades. After initially serving as a civil practitioner, she pivoted to pursue discrimination and civil rights claims for countless clients. She was appointed and the elected to serve as a District Court Judge in the First Judicial District covering Santa Fe, Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties and in 2012, Barbara was elected to serve on the New Mexico Supreme Court where she served as Chief Justice from 2014-2016. She was also the secretary of the state's Children Youth and Families Division. DATE

New Year New Officers

In addition to the new members, the FOG board elected new officers for the 2024 year. They include Jessica Onsurez, news director for the USA TODAY Network-New Mexico, president; Lucas Peerman, Albuquerque Journal sports editor, vice president; Rashad Mahmood, New Mexico Local News Fund co-director, secretary; and Sammy Lopez, executive director New Mexico Press Association, treasurer. As Immediate Past President, Karen Moses, retired Albuquerque Journal editor, is also a member of the board. Also members of the board's executive committee are Daniel Yohalem, Santa Fe attorney, and Mary Lynn Roper, retired general manager of KOAT TV 7.

FOG Attorney On Board

Amanda Lavin, FOG legal director, was introduced to the community at a recent meet and greet held in Albuquerque. Thank you to the NMPA for sponsoring the event and thank you to Chuck Peifer and Greg Williams of Peifer, Hanson, Mullins & Baker, P.A. for hosting FOG at their offices.

FOG Legislative Survey

Twenty-five New Mexico Legislators were brave enough to stand up for transparency and answer a survey conducted by FOG in late 2023. The legislators answered 12 questions ranging from modernizing the legislature to transparency and accountability with those responding showing support to strengthen and broaden the Inspection of Public Records Act and the Open Meetings Act. FOG intends to build on the data from the survey later this year as it hosts a series of public forums. We thank all of those lawmakers who participated in this effort. All of the details from the survey will be placed on the FOG website, nmfog.org.

Those who responded to the survey included: Rep. Gail Armstrong, Rep. John Block, Rep. Cynthia Borrego, Rep. Eleanor Chavez, Rep. Meredith Dixon, Rep. Mark Duncan, Rep. Natalie Figueroa, Rep. Susan Herrera, Rep. Dayan Hochman-Vigil, Rep. Joy Garrat, Rep. Tara Jaramillo, Rep. Alan Martinez, Rep. Jimmy Mason, Rep. Marian Matthews, Rep. Liz Thomson, Rep. Jim G. Townsend, Sen. Crystal Brantley, Sen. Siah Correa Hemphill, Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto, Sen. Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Sen. Steve Neville, Sen. Greg Nibert, Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino, Sen. Bill Tallman and Sen. Pat Woods.

2024 Legislature

FOG's Lobbyist Jason Espinoza is again monitoring the Legislature on behalf of FOG. Below are the bills that FOG is studying.

HB 157 introduced by Rep. Martin Zamora (R- Curry, DeBaca, Guadalupe, Roosevelt & San Miguel) would allow public school employees to carry firearms after receiving training. The bill asks for an additional exemption to IPRA as information about the training and employees in the program. The bill states, "The identity of a school employee appointed under this section is part of a confidential tactical plan or procedure

and shall not be disclosed in a request made pursuant to the Inspection of Public Records Act.”

HB 175 introduced by Rep. Marian Mathews (D-Bernalillo) clarifies language relating to the children's code; specifying to whom and under what circumstances information that is held by CYFD that pertains to child abuse or neglect may be shared; requiring that information be provided about child fatalities or near fatalities; protecting personal identifier information of department clients; requiring the court's written order when excluding media from an abuse or neglect proceeding, which is appealable; requiring reports on the CYFD website; and penalties for non-compliance.

Sb 6 introduced by Sen. Katy Duhigg (D-Bernalillo) explains in detail cannabis regulations. This bill includes the Cannabis Regulation Act in the Racketeering Act, the Delinquency Act and the Uniform Licensing Act. The bill asks for a new exemption to IPRA to keep confidential information developed or obtained by the Cannabis Control Division during an enforcement investigation.

Sunshine Week

It's not too early to think about Sunshine week and activities to highlight the importance of transparency. We have explored hosting a Transparency Day Happy Hour to begin those outreach efforts. We have also explored:

- drafting an opinion piece about the lack of transparency around NextRequest public records systems that municipalities and governments are using to manage public records requests.
- updating FOG's ads,
- asking a Dixon Recipient to pen an Op-Ed on the importance of Sunshine Laws,
- reworking the current FOG video, shortened for a 30-second commercial,
- developing Social Media - IPRA cards, and
- adding an IPRA Request Generator to the website.

Reminder

The first FOG board meeting of 2024 is set for Friday, January 25, beginning at 12 noon. The meetings are open to the public.

Thank you

Your support to FOG makes such a difference and we thank each of you who contributed in 2023. While the past year was extraordinarily tough, our supporters came through to make the December fund drive a success.

We have made it easy to support FOG, by allowing supporters to make monthly contributions automatically through a bank or credit card. Go to nmfog.org and click on the donate button or send a check to FOG.

Finally

Click on the link for a look at the Courthouse News court win over new pleadings. The case has been ongoing since 2021. [New Mexico judgment gives public access to court pleadings on receipt - Tucson Sentinel.](#)

Congratulations to Greg Williams, who represented Courthouse News in New Mexico.

Open-government questions? Call 505-764-3750