

February 8, 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, February 4, 2010

The Disability Advisory Committee met on Thursday, February 4, 2010 at the Cowlitz County Administration Building. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor  
Carolyn Myers, Elections Supervisor  
Maurine Coon, LCOD/LCCB, AARP  
Linda Wilson, DAV Transportation  
Anita Hopkins, Lower Columbia CAP  
Judy Chamberlin, Disability Resources  
Pam Howe, Residential Resources  
Bernie Altman, Mental Health Ombudsman  
Sharon Weinhold, Voter Outreach Coordinator

Members who were unable to attend, but may have voted or provided input were:

Audrey Jolley, Disability Resources  
Sunnie Smith, Mgr Adult Home  
Karla Black, Disability Resources  
Linda Jaques, Longview Organization for the Blind  
Linda Ross, VFW 3017  
Heather Ferguson, Emergency Shelter  
Diane Tischer, Wahkiakum County Auditor

The committee members were welcomed to their first Disability Advisory Committee meeting of 2010. Several members voted their ballot on the new accessible voting equipment, the eSlate, before the meeting or tested the eSlate demonstration ballot.

The committee reviewed the 2009 General Election results and use of the accessible voting equipment. Turnout for the General Election was at 48%, with 26,854 voters casting a ballot. Twenty two (22) voters used the accessible voting equipment, the AutoMARK, to cast their ballot. Almost 65% of the voters used one of the six accessible ballot boxes located throughout the county to return their ballot.

The committee was updated on the 2010 February Special Election. This is a partial election; almost 20,000 ballots were mailed. Two school district replacement levies are on the ballot. The ballot return rate as of February 3<sup>rd</sup> was 32%. The Elections Office received training on the eSlate at the end of January, and this is the first election the new eSlate accessible voting equipment is being used. Information about the eSlate was

added to the Elections website. For future elections, eSlate information will be included with the ballot.

Kris, Carolyn, and Sharon discussed the new Hart voting system and eSlate accessible voting equipment, and their impact ballot processing and on voters with disabilities.

- The primary difference between the eSlate and AutoMARK is the eSlate is direct recording equipment and the AutoMARK is ballot marking equipment. Voters ly cast their vote on the eSlate. All votes cast on the eSlate are added to the total count. Voters using the AutoMARK marked their ballot and put it in a ballot box.
- The Hart voting system gives Cowlitz County the opportunity to make improvements to ballot processing. Several ballot processing steps can be combined, saving time. Ballots with erroneous or stray marks can be adjudicated on the screen versus having to be manually duplicated, saving ballots and time. Ballot tabulation on Election Day is easier because votes are recorded on the equipment on a daily basis, and the votes are consolidated on Election Day to get the final result. Different ballot paper, which more flexible and lighter, results in reduced mailing costs and better formatting of the ballot.

Members reviewed the changes made to the Elections Office website. The Voters Assistance information on the website was expanded to include Voter Accessibility Enhancements, Ballot Drop Box Locations, and Disability Advisory Committee meeting minutes. The Voter Accessibility Enhancements is a brochure that describes the changes made over the last few years to improve voter accessibility and allow all voters, particularly voters with disabilities, to vote independently and privately. The Ballot Drop Box Locations lists the locations of the ballot boxes and when they are available to voters. The Disability Advisory Committee meeting minutes contains all of the minutes of the Disability Advisory Committee beginning in July 2006. The Elections Office website is available at [www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/elections/](http://www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/elections/).

The Disability Advisory Committee met in the conference room that was modified with Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grant funding. The conference room is wheelchair accessible. It has a live feed video and audio system, and the meeting activities are broadcast on four LCD flat panel TVs located in various areas in the Administration Building. Ballot counting, ballot processing, and the work of the canvassing board takes place in this conference room. The goal is to make the elections process more accessible to persons with disabilities and more visible to all voters in Cowlitz County.

Members discussed several other items.....

Cap Meetings. Anita and Sharon discussed the meetings they attend at the Lower Columbia CAP office. Representatives from various programs in the county attend these meetings and share information about their programs and upcoming events.

Senior Connections Fair. Anita and Sharon talked about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Senior Connections Fair, which will take place on May 1, 2010, from 9AM to 2PM, at the Convention Center. We plan to have a booth at the fair to demonstrate the eSlate. Members were given an event flyer and encouraged to attend.

Housing Authority. The Elections Office made contact with the Longview and Kelso Housing Authority. There may be an opportunity to demonstrate the eSlate or bring the eSlate to voters residing in the housing complexes managed by the housing authorities.

New Grant Cycle. Information about the one Accessible Grant Cycle for 2010 was disseminated to the members. The priority for this grant cycle is voter education. Members were asked for their ideas for the grant application. The members decided we should apply for funding for educational items concerning the eSlate, since it is new accessible voting equipment for Cowlitz County, or for educational items addressing the accessibility improvements Cowlitz County has made over the last few years. More specific ideas were to apply for funding for a public service announcement, pamphlet on our accessibility improvements, or educational items with a message to voters.

Attendees were thanked for participating in the meeting. They were invited to vote on the eSlate or test the eSlate demonstration ballot if they had not already done so.

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