

**Mason County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee  
Minutes - June 24, 2016**

**Attendees:** Karen Herr, Pat Kevin, Becky Frankeberger, Kevin Frankeberger, Chuck Orthmann, Nathan Tobin, Cynthia Middleton

**Purpose of this committee:** Improving access to voting and voting materials for persons with disabilities.

**Introductions** – Karen introduced Nathan Tobin – our newest committee member

**Discussion on Accessible Voting:**

- **How can a visually impaired or blind voter find information about candidates?**

On TV or computer. The Secretary of State provides an audio voters' guide on their website.

- **Do we have signage and materials in Spanish?**

The Federal Department of Justice has oversight of this. When the census shows a high enough percentage of those needing materials in a language other than English in any given county, it will be required.

- **What are difficulties in using the AVU?**

Nathan has used the AVU in our office for many years. He mentioned the volume of the speaker on the AVU is inconsistent and is a hassle to use.

- **How accessible is it to enter our office?**

Nathan, who has climbed the stairs to access our office to vote on the AVU for years, stated it was quite easy except it would be ideal if there was an elevator in our building. There is! Possible solution: have a recorded welcome message stating where offices are in our building to assist the visually impaired.

**Discussion on AVU, large print ballots, SOS MyVote system, new technology:**

- Make voting accessible online.
- We should continue to offer large print ballot, but the preference is to vote and research candidates on-line.
- Would the mailing system used for military voters work for the disabled community? Yes, if we remove the step requiring that it is scanned. Not everyone can afford a scanner. Could there be a pilot program for the military and disabled voters to try on-line voting in the future?
- Mason County is planning to purchase a new voting system in the future. Any new system will have vast improvements to the Accessible Voting Unit.
- Ability to vote by Smart phone was preferred by all committee members.

**Discussion on voter outreach:**

- Methods: registration drives, transit center, ADA voting centers, League of Women voter's registration project, and increase education in schools.

- Chuck suggested announcing at dinner at St. David's that all ballots are accepted with or without postage. Karen confirmed that we honor that and that the post office is aware of how this works.
- Mail can be marked with the wording "Free Matter for the Blind or Physically Handicapped" so that postage is not required.
- It was noted that Community Lifeline will hold mail for 2 weeks for people in the homeless community.

### **National Disability Voter Registration Week is July 11-15**

- Karen will work w/Commission to proclaim July 11 – 15 as National Disability Voter Registration week at the Commissioner meeting on July 12. All those interested are invited to attend. Chuck will bring Nathan to the meeting and Becky expressed interest in attending.

### **Update Annual Accessibility Plan**

#### **Action Items:**

- Check if braille instructions are at each elevator.
- Check on signage in Spanish
- Locations of ballot box locations in our county are not listed when requesting a ballot on the state's accessible MyVote.
- Explore having a pilot program for military and disabled voters to try on-line voting in the future.
- Karen will get information to the group on how to access the audio Voter's Guide online.
- Karen will work with Barb Wheezer and Brook Peterson re: continuing using St. David's mailing address.
- Pursue creating a rubber stamp to mark mail with the wording "Free Matter for the Blind or Physically Handicapped" so that postage is not required by the sender.
- Karen will work on language for a proclamation of National Disability Voter Registration Week July 11-15.
- Karen will work w/Commission to proclaim National Disability Voter Registration at commission meeting on July 12. All are invited to attend.
- Karen will make contacts to see if people on Secretary of State's Disability Advisory Committees can meet together in the future.
- Chuck will get back to Karen regarding our need for a physical address in order to know each voter's precinct.
- Karen will add today's ideas, and suggestions to update the accessibility plan.