

March 23, 2016

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, March 22, 2016

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) met on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 1:30pm in the Cowlitz County Administration Building General Meeting Room. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Bernie Altman, AARP and NAMI of SW Washington  
Judy Chamberlain, Community  
Linda DeCost, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Amy Filippello, Cowlitz County Chief Deputy Auditor  
Carolyn Fundingsland, Cowlitz County Elections Manager  
Larry Hansen, Larry L. Hansen Insurance  
Joanne Laurent, Department of Services for the Blind  
Tim Krueger, Cowlitz Ombudsman, SW Regional Support Network  
Mary Kate Marthaller, Director Disability Support Services, Lower Columbia College  
Susan O'Connor, Wahkiakum County Elections  
Marjorie Pitcher, Community  
Jenn Schapman, Healthy Living Collaborative S. Kelso Community Health Advocate  
Susan Schwartz, Community  
Sandy Southerland, S. Kelso Community Health Advocate  
Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor  
Linda Wilson, Disabled American Veterans  
Carla Jo Whitson, Brain Injury Association of Washington  
Sharon Weinhold, Disability Outreach Coordinator

Welcome. Attendees were welcomed and thanked for their attendance and participation. This was the thirty-first meeting of the Cowlitz County Disability Advisory Committee, which met for the first time in July 2006. Members were congratulated for continuing to be involved in making sure all people including those with disabilities have access to voting and an opportunity to vote privately and independently.

### **Introductions.**

In the interest of time, comments were made to give the speaker an idea of who was in the audience. Attendees at the meeting were from Cowlitz, Wahkiakum and Clark Counties. Representatives were from organizations that serve the blind and visually impaired, hearing impaired, other physical disabilities and cognitive disabilities.

The conversations of the Disability Advisory Committee have been focused on Barriers to Voting and How to Overcome Them. We were reminded that there are significant barriers to voting – transportation, health, mental and physical inactivity, financial issues and concern about well-being. Each year we ask members for topic ideas and insurance

was suggested as a topic. People who are prepared for emergencies, are fit and in good health, and have the right kind of insurance are less stressed, more confident, and have a brighter outlook for the future. They are more likely to take the time to vote for candidates and propositions that impact their lives and their future.

**Presentation/Discussion.**

Mr. Larry Hansen, Insurance Specialist, Larry L. Hansen Insurance in Longview, was the speaker for the meeting. He shared information about the insurance products that people, particularly those with disabilities and the elderly, may want to consider for peace of mind and to age wisely.

Mr. Hansen discussed health insurance and long-term care insurance. He provided information about the Affordable Care Act, the insurance providers participating and the differences in times to apply for those on Medicare or qualified for a subsidy and those who are not. The amount of a subsidy is based on income and family size. He said providers and plans may change every year for those getting insurance through the exchange. He mentioned long term care, which is not covered by Medicare, and the importance of applying for long term care insurance early if a decision is made to do so to keep the premium amounts lower. Individual situations must be considered when determining the right kind of insurance.

**Presidential Primary, May 24, 2016.** Carolyn Fundingsland, Elections Manager, shared information about the Presidential Primary and said this is a unique Primary that may occur once every four years. The Presidential Primary ballot is a consolidated ballot with both Republican and Democratic candidates. She distributed a preliminary ballot and the Party Declarations that must be marked for a vote to count. She emphasized that if a person marks the Republican Party declaration, they must vote for one Republican candidate on the ballot for their vote to count. If a person marks the Democratic Party declaration, they must vote for one Democratic candidate for their vote to count. It is the only election that a person must identify a party and stressed the political parties decide how they will use the results of the Presidential Primary. In response to questions, she said caucuses are run by the political parties, not the Elections Department. A person can participate in a caucus and vote in the Presidential Primary, but must participate with the same party. The Washington Presidential Primary exists because the legislature passed a law in 1989 in response to an initiative from the people. It offers the opportunity to all Washington voters to participate in the nomination process, not just those who are able to participate in the caucuses. More information is available on the Elections Department's website at: [www.vote.wa.gov/cowlitz](http://www.vote.wa.gov/cowlitz).

**2016 Elections Calendar.** Sharon said in addition to the Presidential Primary, there will be two more elections during 2016 – the Primary on August 2 and the General / Presidential Election on November 8. Candidate filing week is May 16 to May 27. Local positions up for Election in 2016 include 2 positions for Commissioner, 4 positions for Superior Court Judge, a PUD Commissioner and 72 Precinct Committee Officers for each Party. Federal positions open include the Office of the President, U.S. Senator and U.S. Representatives; State wide positions open include the Governor's office and his

staff, State Senators; State Representatives and various judicial positions. Details are at [wei.sos.wa.gov/agency/osos/en/candidatefiling/Pages/OfficesOpenForElection.aspx](http://wei.sos.wa.gov/agency/osos/en/candidatefiling/Pages/OfficesOpenForElection.aspx).

Linda Wilson asked about 17 year olds being eligible to vote. Kris responded by saying voters must be 18 years old to vote for Federal candidates and issues. Some states, however, are allowing 17 year olds to vote for local positions. Washington State is exploring allowing 17 years olds to register to vote and storing their information in the database. When they turn 18 they will receive a ballot and be allowed to vote.

### **Other Opportunities.**

- Bernie Altman. Shared recent experiences with insurance.
- Marjorie Pitcher. The Senior Centers spring rummage sale is on April 2.
- Sue O'Connor. Wahkiakum County Elections is preparing for the Presidential Primary.
- Joanne Laurent. She is preparing a list for her clients of where and when accessible voting units are available in the various counties.
- Linda Wilson. Working with Disabled American Veterans.
- Tim Krueger. The Behavioral Health Organization that includes Cowlitz County will be reorganized on April 1 and will now include Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. The BHOs are single, local entities that assume responsibility and financial risk for providing substance use disorder treatment and mental health services previously overseen by the counties and the Regional Support Networks. These include inpatient and outpatient treatment, involuntary treatment and crisis services.
- Linda Decost. Busy serving Department of Vocational Rehabilitation clients.
- Sandy Southern. The South Kelso Community Health Advocates are helping elderly residents connect with the Agency on Aging and Disabilities.
- Jenn Schapman. Working with Wallace School to improve safety and accessibility.
- Mary Kate Marthaller. Spring quarter begins on April 4.
- Carla Jo Whitson. Traumatic Brain Injury Conference, April 18-19; Insurance Seminar on May 19 in Seattle.
- Susan Schwartz. Democratic caucuses this Saturday. Contact her with any questions.
- Sharon Weinhold. New ballot drop boxes have been installed throughout the County. All are in the same location except the Kelso Box which is now located on Bridge Market Lane, between LJ's Furness Drug Co. and the Allen Street Bridge. Carolyn added that the drop boxes are the safest way to return a ballot because ballots are picked up every day.

Our speaker, Mr. Larry Hansen, was thanked again and received a round of applause.

The meeting adjourned at 2:32pm. The next meeting tentatively will be in July 2016.

Sharon Weinhold  
Cowlitz County Elections

Disability Advisory Committee  
Meeting Agenda  
County Administration Building  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
Tuesday, March 22, 2016, 1:30 – 2:30PM

Welcome

Introductions

Presentation, Larry Hansen, Insurance Specialist – What kinds of insurance should be considered for peace of mind and to age wisely?

Presidential Primary, May 24, 2016 – How can we participate?

2016 Elections Calendar

Opportunities and Happenings A-Round the Room

Next meeting, July 2016