

October 13, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, October 13, 2015

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) met on Tuesday, October 13, 2015 beginning at 1:30pm, at the Cowlitz County Administration Building, General Meeting Room. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Bernie Altman, AARP and NAMI of SW Washington  
Regina Beer, Cowlitz County Elections  
Steve Chapman, Lower Columbia College Disability Support Services  
Kathleen Chilson, Goodwill Work Opportunity  
Diane Craft, Koelsch Senior Communities  
Linda DeCost, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Amy Filippello, Cowlitz County (new Chief Deputy Auditor effective October 16)  
Carolyn Fundingsland, Cowlitz County Elections Supervisor  
Meredith Hardin, Department of Services for the Blind  
Laura Hilty, Lower Columbia CAP, RSVP  
Joanne Laurent, Department of Services for the Blind  
Tim Krueger, Cowlitz Ombudsman, SWRSN  
Susan O'Connor, Wahkiakum County Elections  
Heather O'Shea, S. Kelso Community Health Advocates  
Marjorie Pitcher, Community  
Jenn Schapman, S. Kelso Community Health Advocates  
Susan Schwartz, Community  
Carolyn Shepard, SHIBA  
Sandy Southerland, S. Kelso Community Health Advocates  
Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor  
Sharon Weinhold, Disability Outreach Coordinator  
Lisa White, Cowlitz County Assessor's Office

Welcome and Introductions. Attendees were welcomed and introduced themselves and identified the organization or group they were representing.

Disability Advisory Committee. Since there were quite a few new attendees, brief comments were made on the purpose of a Disability Advisory Committee. As a result of Washington State Law, each county has an advisory committee that includes people with disabilities and those who serve people with disabilities. A primary purpose of the Disability Advisory Committee is to provide input to county Elections Departments regarding reasonable accommodations that may be needed to ensure equal access so voters with disabilities can vote privately and independently. The Cowlitz County Disability Advisory Committee met for the first time in July 2006. Six attendees participated in that meeting. Since that time, participation has grown. The Committee has

provided valuable input to the Elections Department on the construct of the ballot drop boxes, the purchase of our accessible voting equipment, and topics for discussion at Disability Advisory Committee meetings. Today's topic was one suggested by the Committee members.

#### Presentation/Discussion

The topic of the meeting was Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care. When is the right time to move? What are the barriers to voting and how are those barriers addressed.

The guest speaker, Diane Craft, Community Liaison for Koelsch Senior Communities, gave an excellent description of the three levels of living and the services offered for each. Although living at home for as long as possible is often the optimal solution, she gave numerous examples of when it may be time to move from the home and the benefits to be gained. She mentioned many of the resources and supports available in the community that can help a person live as fulfilling of a life as possible. Giving residents the opportunity to vote is important, and facility staffs work with residents and their families to make sure residents can vote if they choose and get the help they need to mark and return their ballot. She added that many people are returning to the Longview area after living elsewhere, and assuring they are registered to vote is important as well.

Diane said she works with organizations in the community that provide support for residents such as the Southwest Agency on Aging and Disabilities, Catholic Community Services, and many others. She provided information about a Veteran's Pension Program that gives financial support to eligible veterans and their surviving spouses to help them live a quality life. She offered to share many of the valuable tips and resources she has found over the years that give people added supports as they age.

**General Election 2015.** Regina Beer, Elections Deputy, gave information about the November 3, 2015 General Election. Voters' Pamphlets, which contain information about the candidates and measures on the ballot are in the mail. Also included in the Voters' Pamphlet is information about the location of the ballot drop boxes, availability of the accessible voting equipment, and the number to call for questions. Ballots will be mailed on October 16. If a ballot is not received by October 20, contact the Elections Department. The Sample Ballot and Voter's Pamphlets were available for attendees. Information also is available on the Elections Department's website at: [www.vote.wa.gov/cowlitz](http://www.vote.wa.gov/cowlitz).

**MyVote.** Carolyn Fundingsland briefly described the features of MyVote, which gives a voter information about their voter registration, districts and elected officials, candidates and ballot measures, and voting history. MyVote also allows voters to change their address if they move to help get their ballot to them at their new location in a timely manner. Voters can access MyVote at: [www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/).

**2016 Elections Calendar.** Carolyn said 2016 is going to be a very busy election year. There is the potential of having five (5) elections, including two (2) Special Elections, a Presidential Primary on May 24, the Primary on August 2, and the Presidential Election

on November 8. Candidate filing week is during the week of May 16-20. There were several questions about the Presidential Primary, and more detailed information will be provided in the future

**Other Opportunities.**

Lisa White. Distributed information about the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Exemption Program. The program is available to seniors at least 61 years old or a person with a disability (no age requirement). The income level will increase from \$35,000 to \$40,000 in 2016.

Bernie Altman. Mentioned the new, nice NAMI offices on 109 Allen Street.

Susan Schwartz. Democratic Presidential candidates debate tonight.

Tim Krueger. Effective July 1, Cowlitz County has combined with the Grays Harbor County RSN (and moved from Clark County). Tim now works solely in Cowlitz County and is more available for serving Cowlitz County residents.

Meredith Hardin. The Department of Services for the Blind offers wonderful services for children, youth and older people who are blind or have low vision. There will be an Open House on Thursday, October 15, 3:30-6:30, at Fries Auditorium, WA State School for the Blind, in Vancouver, in celebration of Disability Employment Awareness Month & White Cane Safety Day. Demonstrations will be given of assistive technology equipment, mobility and cane usage, low vision aids and appliances, and simulators showing various eye conditions.

Joanne Laurent. Is an orientation & mobility specialist rehabilitation teacher for the Department of Services for the Blind, and discussed the many teaching programs for the blind, to include job training, navigation training, and skills training.

Kathleen Chilson. Mentioned the many employment training programs available at Goodwill. A new program is being added for retail.

Carolyn Shepard. Provided information about the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) Program and the many services the volunteer advisors provide to seniors. Medicare Health Insurance open enrollment begins next week and runs through December 17. Free information sessions and counseling will be given about Medicare options and plan changes for 2016.

Laura Hilty. New RSVP Program Coordinator at Lower Columbia CAP. RSVP is seeking volunteers for the RSVP Program.

Jenn Schapman. Introduced the new South Kelso Community Health Advocates, their mission and purpose, and invited everyone to a showing of the movie Paper Tigers. Paper Tigers highlights an alternative high school that has radically changed its approach to disciplining its students, becoming a promising model for how to break the cycles of poverty, violence and disease that affect families.

Heather O'Shea. Described a recent event, a Hair Cut Day at Wallace School, sponsored by the South Kelso Community Health Advocates. The hair cut day preceded picture day later in the week. It was well attended and fun for all.

Sandy Southerland. Added, that also as part of Hair Cut Day, participants were given the opportunity to list the things they liked about their community, what they would like changed, and what the community could do to make the changes. Valuable information was gained to identify challenges and make positive changes in the community.

Steve Chapman. Gave feedback on the October 9, Disability Employment Awareness Month event at LCC. Amy Roloff, who is a star on Big House Little People talked about diversity and disabilities. Her presentation was well attended and received. Also, LCC is developing a program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in applied math/English, and upon completion will award a certificate.

Attendees were offered the opportunity to walk through the process a voter with disabilities (visual and mobility impairments) would go through to vote on the accessible voting equipment.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting will be in 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45pm.

Sharon Weinhold  
Cowlitz County Elections

**Disability Advisory Committee  
Meeting Agenda  
County Administration Building  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Meeting Room  
Tuesday, October 13, 2015  
1:30 – 2:30PM**

**Welcome**

**Introductions A-Round the Room**

**Presentation/Discussion – Diane Craft, Koelsch Senior Communities - Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care. When is it the right time to move? What are the barriers to voting and how are those barriers addressed?**

**General Election, November 3, 2015**

MyVote = [www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/)

Cowlitz County Elections = [www.vote.wa.gov/cowlitz](http://www.vote.wa.gov/cowlitz)

**2016 Elections Calendar**

**Opportunities and Happenings A-Round the Room**

**Next meeting, 2016**