

August 11, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, August 11, 2011

The Disability Advisory Committee met on August 11, 2011 at the Cowlitz County Administration Building. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Carolyn Myers, Cowlitz County Elections Supervisor
Maurine Coon, LCOD/LCCB, AARP
Linda Wilson, DAV Transportation
Audrey Jolley, Disability Resources
Anita Hopkins, CAP
Sharon Weinhold, Voter Outreach Coordinator
Doug Hooper, Southwest Agency on Aging and Disabilities, Special Guest

Welcome/Introductions. The Committee members welcomed Doug Hooper, our special guest from the Southwest Agency on Aging and Disabilities (SWAAD). Everyone introduced themselves and said a few words about the organization they were representing.

Status of Primary Election. Committee members were made aware of the status of the August 16, 2011 Primary. This is not a county wide Primary and only voters in the cities of Castle Rock and Woodland, Kelso School District, and Emergency Medical Service District 1 are eligible to vote in this election. Almost 20,000 ballots were mailed on July 29. As of August 11, 2,900 voters (about 15%) returned their ballot. Historic turnout rates for similar Primary Elections average about 30%. As of today, for this election, almost 75% of the ballots have been returned through the six accessible ballot drop boxes located throughout the county. No voters have voted on the accessible voting unit.

Grant Funding. During the 2011 grant funding cycle, the Secretary of State's Office awarded Cowlitz County a grant for a Special Project to test a new approach for reaching voters with disabilities. The funds may be used to conduct educational events for voters who have been registered to vote 50 years or more. During the grant writing phase, CAP and the SWAAD were contacted and agreed to partner with us on the Special Project and events. Expenses covered are for invitations and postage, posters, educational materials, staff time, and transportation. The funding amount is \$4,820, and is available through December 31, 2012.

Special Event Planning.

The members spent the remainder of the meeting discussing their vision for the events. An idea is to send invitations to voters who have voted for 50 years or more. Kris Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor, would be the keynote speaker and congratulate and honor the attendees for their accomplishment. There would be information on accessibility improvements for seniors and voters with disabilities. Attendees, which would include family members and friends of the honorees, would have an opportunity to test the eSlate. Audrey volunteered to demonstrate the eSlate and talk about how easy it is to use. CAP, Anita Hopkins, and SWAAD, Doug Hooper, also would provide information on their programs, e.g., Enrollment, Medicare Awareness, SHEBA, etc.

Members questioned whether any events were already planned that we could piggyback on. Carolyn suggested a large venue will be needed when Kris Swanson speaks at the events. Doug and Anita agreed, and recommended the Elections Office take the lead on those events and CAP and SWAAD would support. Doug has events scheduled in October and November, and the Elections Office is welcome to demonstrate the eSlate and have a resource table to provide educational materials at those events.

The group brainstormed locations where we may want to consider an event. Possible locations mentioned included: Wahkiakum County, Skamania County, Klickitat County, Ryderwood, Silver Lake and Toutle, Kelso, and Longview. For larger events, we would need a venue that could accommodate the attendees such as a retirement home, school, or library. Sharon said she would contact these locations to see if and when space might be available for a large event. Audrey said the First Baptist Church in Kelso might be a location we would want to consider. She added that they have a large seniors group. The Kelso Library was also mentioned as a potential site. Anita suggested a good time might be to link our events to a potluck or meal where there would be a nice turnout. Carolyn added that a grange, the old voting locations, might provide a good venue to bring voters out.

Linda asked if it were possible to bring the eSlate to Veterans living in trailer or mobile home parks, and mentioned TimWa Mobile Home Park in Lexington. We agreed it is possible if there is a community center or central location with electricity where we could bring the eSlate and offer it to all voters at the park.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Doug agreed to provide a schedule of the events he already had planned. Sharon agreed to review the schedule and identify new opportunities at locations that had not already been scheduled. She would try to find venues that could accommodate a large number of attendees.

The members agreed this is a wonderful partnership opportunity, and are looking forward to scheduling and participating in the events.

Sharon Weinhold
Cowlitz County Elections
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