

November 7, 2011

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, November 4, 2011

The Disability Advisory Committee met on November 4, 2011 at the Cowlitz County Administration Building. The meeting agenda is attached.

Attendees were:

Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor  
Carolyn Myers, Cowlitz County Elections Supervisor  
Audrey Jolley, Disability Resources  
Bernie Altman, AARP/SW Regional Support Network  
Anita Hopkins, CAP  
Doug Hooper, Southwest Agency on Aging and Disabilities  
Judy Chamberlin, Disability Resources  
Sharon Weinhold, Voter Outreach Coordinator

Welcome/Introductions. Appreciation was expressed for everyone's attendance. The Committee members introduced themselves to each other.

Status of General Election.

Committee members were made aware of the status of the November 8, 2011 General Election. This is a county wide election; 56,747 ballots were mailed on October 21, 2011. As of November 4, 16,219, or 28.6%, of the ballots were returned. The Elections Department projects a return rate of 55%.

The Elections Department was invited to bring the eSlate to the Americana Health and Rehabilitation Center earlier today. Three voters voted on the eSlate. Several Disability Advisory Committee members voted on the eSlate before the meeting.

Silver Lake Grange, Honoring Seniors Who Have Voted for 50 Years – Feedback.

There was considerable discussion about the event on Monday, October 24, at the Silver Lake Grange to honor seniors who have voted 50 years or more. Turnout was good with 46 people in attendance. Cowlitz County Commissioner James Misner and Cowlitz County Auditor Kristina Swanson served as Master of Ceremonies and key note speaker, respectively. Kris discussed the history of voting in Cowlitz County and showed a series of old voting pictures and equipment and the changes that have been made. After the keynote address, Commissioner Misner and Kris presented certificates of appreciation to the voters and gave them the opportunity to share stories about their voting experiences. The Elections Department brought the eSlate, demonstration eSlate and other accessibility materials to share with the attendees. Anita brought materials for the

SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) Program, and Doug, representing the South West Agency on Aging and Disabilities (SWAAD) shared information on services available for Seniors 60 years of age and older.

Kris remarked this event was a wonderful start to the series of events the Elections Department plans to host, in partnership with SHIBA and SWAAD, to educate voters about the eSlate and other accessibility improvements for seniors and voters with disabilities in Cowlitz County. Kris particularly enjoyed the voting stories relayed by the seniors in attendance. Carolyn noted the attendees were a very close knit active group and they seemed to really enjoy the interaction at the event. Anita thought the event was wonderful, the invitations were impressive and there was good interest in the vendor's information before and after the ceremony. Doug said he enjoyed meeting the seniors and had received several follow up calls on the information he provided. Sharon said the piano prelude of patriotic music by Jean Bruner, saying the Pledge of Allegiance and singing America the Beautiful was a nice beginning to the event. The certificates recognizing the voters were very well received.

Next Events, Locations, Dates. Bernie and Audrey asked about plans for follow-on events. The Elections Department received grant funding to test this approach to educating voters about the eSlate and accessibility enhancements made for voters. The plan is to host 6 or more of these events through December 31, 2012. Discussion continued on where the next events should be held. Suggestions were: Kalama Community Building, Kelso Senior Center, Longview Senior Center, First Baptist Church, Canterbury Park Senior Community, Monticello Park Retirement and Assisted Living Community, Rose Valley Grange, Pleasant Hill Grange, Stella Grange, Ryderwood Community Center and Lower Columbia College.

After discussion of the pros/cons of each location, the committee members leaned toward these locations for the next events: The Kelso Senior Center, Kalama Community Building, Rose Valley Grange, Canterbury Park Senior Community, and Pleasant Hill Grange. These locations cover the geographic area of the county.

Anita suggested we consider adding vendors to bring more information to the seniors. Possible vendors included: Catholic Community Services, AARP, Goodwill and Life Works.

Sharon will contact the Kelso Senior Center and explore the feasibility of holding the next event during the first or second week in December. Once a date is determined, she will contact vendors to determine their interest in participating in the event.

Ideas for New Accessibility Grant Cycle, due 12/16/2011.

The details of the next grant cycle were reviewed. During this upcoming 2012 grant cycle, only three types of requests can be made – Hiring Staff, Capital Improvements and Accessible Ballot Drop Boxes. Cowlitz County qualifies only for the Capital Improvement funding. The capital improvement projects must improve physical access

to voting centers for voters with the full range of disabilities. The projects must be completed prior to the November 6, 2012 Presidential Election. Before and After pictures must be taken. Maximum funding is \$50,000.

There was discussion on potential projects that would qualify for funding. Ideas included a curtain that could be drawn around the eSlate for more privacy and wiring so the JBC can reside inside the Elections Department while the eSlate is available for voting.

Sharon will meet with the County Facilities Engineering people to explore capital improvement ideas. Committee members will be kept apprised of any grant proposal ideas and will be invited to provide their input and comments.

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Cowlitz County Elections  
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