

March 26, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee, Meeting Minutes, March 26, 2008

The Disability Advisory Committee had a virtual meeting to discuss a proposed Voting Accessibility Grant Application. The discussion on this grant application follows initial related discussions that took place at previous meetings of the Disability Advisory Committee.

Participants were:

Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor
Amee Paxton, Chief Deputy Auditor
Carolyn Myers, Elections Supervisor
Sharon Weinhold, Voter Outreach Coordinator
Sunnie Smith, DisAbility Resources
Audrey Jolley, DisAbility Resources
Maurine Coon, LCOD/LCCB
Judy Chamberlin, DisAbility Resources
Karla Black, DisAbility Resources
Mike Freeman, National Federation of the Blind
Geri Rister, the ARC
Diane Tischer, Wahkiakum County Auditor
Jim Baker, DisAbility Resources, Vancouver Office
David Lord, Advisor/Consultant

The members were given the Voting Accessibility Grant Application in advance. Each member reviewed the application and either provided suggestions and comments or concurred with the application as written.

Voting Accessibility Grant Application, Disability Outreach Advocate.

All of the Disability Advisory Committee members are very enthusiastic about this grant application. They think it is extremely important to pursue this approach if we are to reach a greater number of voters with disabilities now and in the future. Gaining approval of this grant request will help us a great deal to find the people we can help.

One member said it is very important to focus on seniors. She said that “as the population ages, the percentage of voters with disabilities will increase. Educating the seniors now on voting accommodations and assistance available will make them better prepared and more likely to vote in the future.”

Another member saw this effort as a way to meet new people with other disabilities, identify obstacles they see to voting, and develop workable solutions. Also, it will give us an opportunity to get fresh ideas and suggestions for improving accessibility to voting.

The members recognized that having an organization like DisAbility Resources, that works within the disabled community on a daily basis and has gained a unique knowledge of the community and their needs, will definitely contribute to reaching and helping a greater number of the population. That organization, working in partnership with the Cowlitz County and Wahkiakum County Elections Offices, will be a powerful way to identify and help voters with disabilities today and in the future. It will greatly improve the administration of elections.

Sharon Weinhold
Cowlitz County Elections