



Kitsap County Auditor - Elections

Meeting Name – Meeting Minutes

Kitsap County Voter Access Advisory Committee, May 24, 2022, 3 p.m.

Attendees

Paul Andrews, Kitsap County Auditor
Regina McRay, Kitsap County Elections Manager
Amy Epperly, Kitsap County Elections Elections Supervisor
Steve Gardner, Kitsap County Auditor's Office Public Information Officer
John Allen, representing the hearing disability community
Tressa Johnson, Kitsap Regional Library
Kelly Oneal – Kitsap County Developmental Disability Program Coordinator
Doug Hayman – IT and Accessibility Coordinator

Action Items

Steve Gardner stated Access meeting in 2023 would be between January and March
Local Voters' pamphlet printed in Braille for the first time
To consult with Kitsap Peninsula for the Blind on whether the pamphlet works
Use of Accessible Voting Units down from hundreds in the 2012 to zero to three in 2022. Vote at home a likely reason, want to make sure.
Closed captioning is improving, not perfect yet.

Paul Andrews said committee brings perspective we don't have.
Will address how to use voting units before vote centers open. Asked how voters with visual disabilities know their ballot was marked as they intended.
Thanked the committee

Steve Gardner: We don't know if people know about the voting units

Paul Andrews: Finding out if voters are using other options could help us understand where else we need to improve access.

Steve Gardner: Signature verification – youngest are the most likely to have signature challenged. But signatures also change over time.

Paul Andrews: We know signatures won't be the ID in the future, or it won't be the only option. Looking at dual factor identification. We know signatures won't always be the thing, but we don't know what the next thing is.

Tressa Johnson: One thing to consider is, working at the library – aware that many people don't have phones that utilize two-factor identification. It's a recurrent issue.

Paul Andrews: That's why it would at first likely be an opt-in program and use would grow over time. Also, more people (95 percent) have the ability, but many choose not to use. Not going to happen in the next few years.



Kitsap County Auditor - Elections

Steve Gardner: Recalled experience with someone with injury had to get witnesses to signature. This means not voting by himself.

Kelly Oneal: Same comment as Tressa, when you have people you provide support to, also people who can't afford the technology. Also don't want to make it too complicated so people would be intimidated.

Steve Gardner: Got booted off of Facebook for technical reasons. I understand even the fear of technology.

Paul Andrews: We do recognize we need to keep it as simple as possible. Dual factor not new. Signatures may never go away. System could send a text message that ballot was received, other messages. It's not going to reach everybody, but for those using those services it could be available. Always be three voting centers. We added one because we recognized we weren't providing that service in an area of large need.

Steve Gardner: W asked what county can do better for those with hearing disabilities.

John Allen: Biggest things is the captions with the visual presentations.

Paul Andrews: What kind of videos would be useful that we're not providing. How about livestreaming?

John Allen: Open captioning is when all viewers see text on the screen as a default. Closed captioning is when people can opt in. People have trouble with the choices. If we (organization) could dictate, all videos would be open captioned. Sometimes people not careful about where captioning goes and ends up blocking something important.

Paul Andrews asked if livestream captioning is accurate.

John Allen said it's a challenge.

Tressa Johnson: It depends on software. Zoom is better than the telephone voicemail transcriptions. Captioning helps more than just people with hearing loss.

John Allen: A frustration in some places is a very standard line "the financial impact ... is " That is absolutely meaningless. Who's being impacted?", etc.

Paul Andrews: Those are advisory votes. There is a lot of discussion about removing advisory votes from the ballot. Ballots are getting so much bigger and advisory votes don't have real impact.



Kitsap County Auditor - Elections

Steve Gardner: Even on local issues it's phrased differently and can still be tough to understand. People don't know what voting either option means.

Paul Andrews: There is legislation that would require clearer language and writing it to a different grade level.

Kelly Oneal: Universal design is encouraged, such as open captioning not just for hearing disabled. Appreciates info on where ballot drop boxes and voting units will be because she shares that info with her clients. Is there any way to make that info in downloadable and printable form?

Steve Gardner: That would be easy. We print that information anyway in the voters' pamphlet page.

John Allen: County is doing great job in color contrast in printed documents.

Steve Gardner: We need to reach out more to nursing homes.

Tressa Johnson referred to Paul's question about how does someone with disabilities know that how they voted is on their ballot and asked whether CCTVs can help.

Steve Gardner said one point of clarification is the voting unit screen can be enlarged, but it's the printed ballot that is the issue.

Paul Andrews said we could look into it.

Tressa said Washington Council of the Blind loans out CCTVs.

Steve Gardner said he'd look into it. He said when he demonstrated the AVU one person used it, but no one else was interested in testing.

Doug Hayman said there are free apps SeeingAI can see optical recognition and read out what was printed. Also mentioned VoiceStreamReader

Paul Andrews: That sounds like something that would be a low cost solution.

Meeting adjourned