



Kitsap County Auditor – Elections Division

Voter Access Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2020, 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Attendees

Steve Gardner, David Frisk, Hazel Simpson, Tina Agnew, Shanar Fox, Tressa Johnson (Kitsap Regional Library), Darryl Daugs, Paul Andrews, Karen Fusco (Olympic College), Melissa Lund – Kitsap County Parent Coalition

Steve opened meeting with introductions. Paul thanked the group for serving. We have learned quite a bit implementing the ideas from the group. He looks forward to what will come next with the new equipment. David spoke about the current Special Election, was the Bremerton and portion of North Mason School Districts, did not have anyone come in on election day that required the use of the Accessible Voting equipment.

Agenda Items

2019 Accomplishments

- We have acquired new accessible voting equipment.
- Steve provided the group with statistics for AVU usage
- New vote center in Bremerton. Daryl provided location and background on the site. We did an analysis of where we are the most underserved. The largest underserved area was in West Bremerton. We have added a new vote center at the Marvin Williams Recreation Center. It was used in the February 11, Special Election. Daryl added we looked at several locations. Marvin Williams Rec Center was a central location with good parking, walkable with easy access, and they were excited about partnering with us. The Center will be open on Election Day. During high volume elections it will be open on Saturdays, Mondays, and Election Day. There is a significant number of homeless people the congregate in this area. Paul added this Center is an attempt to remove another barrier to voting. This location allows homeless persons the ability to receive a ballot, making it easier for them to vote. David added our new voter registration system can precinct them to a point on a map where they lay their head.
- Steve spoke on Mobile Voting Schedule
- Ramping up the social media campaign
- David shared an update of the new tabulation system. The trend for voting has changed. The machine is very mobile and user friendly. Hazel demonstrated the new AVU. There is an audio headset to go along with it. Provides more options than the old system, including high contrast color or black and white. Settings can be changed at any time. The voter can review choices and print a ballot that is scannable in our new system. No need to duplicate the AVU voted ballots anymore. There are screens for each side for privacy. Paul suggested there may be a need for a folding template to help with folding the ballot. A secrecy sleeve is provided. May be good to ask for feedback from voters that use the AVU to help approve our process. Melissa



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says her older clientele would like to bring an assistant. Older voters may want to practice and have it demonstrated. Some younger voters may need an assistant as well. David mentioned we are taking the AVU to location and getting feedback.

Mobile Voting Locations

David spoke to the group about Mobile Voting Program. It has been in use for several years, but lately usage has been tapering off. This may be attributed to being all vote by mail with paid postage or the number of drop boxes now available. Prior to the August Primary and November General Election, the mobile voting crew take ballots to 10 locations, 4 libraries and Olympic College. Most of the ballots received are being dropped off. Over the last 4 years we have had a dramatic reduction in activity. We spend about \$4,000, teams drive over 500 miles each election, to collect an average of one ballot per location. Melissa asked what was the time frame to ballot numbers to go from 150 to 15? David replied it was a four-year period. There is usually more interest in the larger elections, last November 91 ballots collected by mobile voting. This year there will be a lot more interest because of the Presidential Election. Other counties are reaching out to individual voters. David wants to see if we can do something different. He provided the group with a Pierce County brochure that is handed out to assisted living facilities. He suggested in August, we could visit locations and provide a similar brochure. One of the reasons to scale down, with a more simplified brochure, is many tend to tune out and do not read items with a lot of text. Keep the message direct and simple. Karen suggested separating the information into two brochures, one for voters and one for the staff of the assisted living facility. A trifold allows for more sharing of pamphlet instead of a booklet. Melissa thinks we can consolidate the brochure as well. Melissa also mentioned guardians should only assist with voting, not tell them how to vote.

David would like to hear feedback from the group on discontinuing the August Mobile Voting effort. There is a risk involved with mobile voting, the workers are elderly, they are on the road for over 500 miles, loading and unloading equipment. During past election, seven of the 15 sites received zero ballots, with no action or participation. The group discussed targeting specific populations. Olympic College has contacts to people with information on this. In November there will be interest. Shawn agrees there is more interest in targeting specific audiences these days, and it would be okay to skip OC in August because there are not many people on campus. The mobile voting crew is set up in a very visible location, but students are not using it. David mentioned most people vote the ballot, drop off, or get the ballot online.

Tressa said if more people knew about the voter's pamphlet being available with screen reader. One of the challenges with disabilities there is not a community for most. Tressa said talk to various groups that they may encounter. Steve has visited the group. They are connected and aware. Steve will work harder with connecting with this group. Seniors are intimidated, people are functionally literate and when a computer works differently than what they are used to they don't know what is going on. People who have lost sight later in life do not know as much as someone who has lived



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without vision. They believe there is nobody to help them with this. Melissa adds a piece on voting in her newsletters, it goes out to contacts Kitsap Mental Help, Doctors, Holly Ridge, Job Corp, Easter Seals, the information is getting out there and they pass it on. It does help. People not connected with a group are visiting their Doctors with vision or hearing issues. Shawn mentioned using social media and brochures that may move the needle. Online Ballot Access uses screen readers, we have data on how many ballots are returned. We do not know if they are disabled or not. Tressa says the site lets you access but not print. MyVote is not saving anything. David says we do not know how anyone votes; we try to communicate that the best we can. If you cannot vote because of an accessibility issue we are here to help you. Vote by mail would have made a big difference. We want people to vote the way they want to vote. Tressa mentioned a team from the League of Women Voters does registration drives at libraries, providing them a brochure would be a good idea.

2020 Voter Access Plan Review

Steve shared the review of the plan, worth mentioning, especially this year with the history of the 2016 Russian attempts at interference. The plan risk, lack of confidence, voters overall may have less trust in the election process. Voters with disabilities vote in slightly lower numbers. This is a factor that we deal with. Steve provides staff with news related to elections. See lots of lack of trust, there is an open invitation to come and see the process. Melissa says her advocates are afraid of being targeted. Photographed individuals are worried about being targeted or have their ballot ripped up. They do not comprehend what they are reading, maybe too literally. There are strange ideas out there and they are paranoid. We think it's a great campaign, but their response is no, keep me out of this. Better to target a group, when there are hundreds it is more comfortable. Having more inclusive photographs. Steve had to select what picture to use. You can become a target. Shawn has a couple of free photography site, that may help. He will share the link. Melissa says I Vote DD is the campaign. We are living in a very fearful society.

An OC student would like to have a drop box on campus. We have people at every box on Election night closing the boxes. Hard to consider closing locations because of access. Providing access and letting them know it is available. Karen states that struck her at how complicated and confusing the ballot is. It is hard for intelligent people to understand. David heard that there is proposed legislation to remove the Advisory Votes. There are so many voters out there that are not going to be informed. Make sure you look at your ballot after it is printed. It is personal responsibility as well.

Steve asked if there was anything else to add? David asked the group to please share ideas with us. Steve will provide the meeting minutes and final plan. This has been very helpful.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Action Items

Steve will provide meeting minutes and final plan to group.