

Minutes
Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee
October 18, 2011

In Attendance:

Members:

Karen Herr, Chair, Mason County Auditor
Libby Covell, Mason Transit Community Center
Carol Boyd, Chief Executive Officer for EFI
Steve Bloomfield, Mason County Commissioner

Karen Herr called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Karen introduced new members to the committee: Carol Boyd, CEO for EFI, and Steve Bloomfield, County Commissioner, who was filling in for Lynda Ring Erickson, County Commissioner.

Karen reviewed with the members the purpose of the committee and gave an overview of the AVU (accessible voting unit) that ensures all voters with disabilities have the opportunity to vote independently and privately.

Karen updated members on the pilot program they just completed with the North Mason Resource Center. On the day of the primary, the AVU was set up at the Resource Center to accommodate voters in the north end of the county. Although not many voters participated, it will be offered again during the general election - Nov. 8th.

After discussing the increased usage of the ballot drop boxes, discussion ensued about other possible locations in the Shelton area to install additional boxes. Their suggestions were:

1. Trading Post at the Little Creek Casino.
2. Fire Station 4 on SE Old Olympic Hwy.
3. The Country Store in Union
4. Mary M Knight School District No. 311.

Karen stated that HAVA grant funds must be approved by the committee before purchasing additional boxes. Karen cautioned the members on the Auditor's limited funding and limited staffing when considering the addition of drop boxes thru-out Mason County.

Libby Covell announced that the Mason Transit Community Center has been awarded \$3.28 million in grant money to remodel their facility. She would like the committee to consider installing a ballot box and approving a designated area for AVU services after the remodel is complete.

Karen updated the members on the review the Auditor's office received from Washington's Disability Rights organization. Their suggested improvements included:

1. Lowering the ballot boxes in Belfair and in front of Building 1 for improved accessibility.
2. Enhance information on our web-site regarding the availability of the AVU and other services for voters with disabilities.
3. Recommended adding more members to the disability advisory committee.
4. Improving curb cutouts from the handicap parking to the Auditor's office.

Carol Boyd stated EFI assists and facilitates approximately 60 people throughout Shelton. Each house holds up to 3-4 individuals. Carol stated that trained staff assists the residents with voting their ballot, and stated they make a trip to the Shelton library's drop box to deliver their ballots.

Carol offered the host the next Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting at the EFI facility. It will be scheduled in early January at 2:00 p.m. One topic to be discussed is updating the committee's yearly plan.

Meeting adjourned by Herr at 3:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Susan Blankenship