

**Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Minutes
May 25, 2012 – EFI Administration Building**

In Attendance:

Members:

Karen Herr, Chair, Mason County Auditor
Libby Covell, Mason Transit Community Center
Carol Boyd, Chief Executive Officer for EFI
Lynda Ring-Erickson, Chair, Mason County Commissioner
Pat Kevin, Citizen Advocate
Valerie Sorenson, Mason County Accessibility Coordinator

Special guests:

Becky and Kevin Frankeberger, Tom Allman – WA State Accessibility Coordinator

Karen called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. while members enjoyed wonderful homemade macaroons and coffee provided by Carol (CEO of EFI).

Karen updated the members on the latest HAVA grant project that allowed the county to become more accessible for elections. She praised John Keates on his superb job in acquiring bids and completing the latest project for new curb cuts, additional accessible parking spaces, along with the re-surfacing of the stairs in Building 1 that included vertical risers and slip proof mats.

Lynda Ring-Erickson said she was very happy about the stairs and had wanted them to be redone for a long time and was thankful federal money was available for such projects! She also said she was happy about John Keates being the new Facilities and Grounds manager and gave a big thanks to Karen for all the upgrades she has been getting done in Building 1. She also suggested installing accessible counter pull outs in all county offices, not just the Auditor's office.

The HAVA grant also allowed John's crew to lower all the ballot drop boxes thru-out Mason County in order to meet Americas' with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines of 48 inches. Libby gave a big thank you for that effort!

Karen introduced the new Accessibilities Coordinator, Valerie Sorenson, and explained her responsibilities in this new position and what the committee could expect of her. Her first challenge is to create and print a new brochure to use in educating people on accessible voting in Mason County. Valerie has also scheduled a booth to demonstrate the AVU at both Allyn Days on July 21st and at the Mason Area Fair the weekend of July 27th-29th. Voters will also have the opportunity to vote on the AVU for the Primary Election on Friday afternoon the 27th. Lynda offered the crew from F&G to help bring supplies and set up the canopy for both events. Libby offered to help out at the Mason Area Fair.

Valerie gave a quick overview of the draft brochure, and asked the members for their ideas. She also asked them for suggestions of other places in which to conduct her outreach. Lynda suggested community associations at Grapeview, Victor, Pickering, Pioneer, Kiwanis, Lions club, and churches. Libby said she goes to the Coalition of Churches, and would help with that. Pat mentioned the Taste of Belfair in August, and Carol offered to share her booth at Shelton's Relay for Life in June to demonstrate the AVU. Others suggested attending the Relay for Life event at North Mason also. Lynda suggested we consider demos at the Shelton High School (North Mason, Mary M. Knight). "People are pumped up there." Tom added youth programs, colleges, disability advisory groups, and Veteran organizations.

Becky and Kevin suggested putting announcements on the radio, and using bigger print with Arial font on our website. They also suggested adding the completed brochure to the website.

Tom asked about disabled people getting to the AVU. Karen said Mason Transit has agreed to transport voters to any location in order for them to vote on the AVU and they will wait for them to take them home. Libby, who works for Mason Transit, agreed and said yes they would.

Tom, introduced himself and talked about who he is and where he works and what he does. He answered Becky's question about the iPads in OR and he said WA State has looked into it but doesn't see it coming anytime soon. He talked about HAVA giving \$500,000-\$900,000 for all the upgrades to the VRDB, and said the few glitches they were currently experiencing were being quickly ironed out. Also, the state is working on bringing accessibility to the next level, "Washington is doing a great job, and only getting better. " He said he goes to many counties and wishes everyone would apply and use the HAVA money to make voting more accessible for everyone.

Becky asked if large print ballots for site impaired voters would be covered under HAVA? Tom said no, because DOJ provides equal opportunity and access to everyone by providing the AVU which has audio access.

Discussion ensued on how locally we could make voting more accessible in Mason County? Kevin and Becky both said how great it would be to be able to call a phone number and hear the ballot and measures. This would give them time to discuss the issues and candidates prior to voting on the AVU. Karen said she would look into this option, but Lynda doubted if the county's phone system could accommodate this request.

Lynda suggested we contact Kitsap County to inquire whether we could borrow their accessible van for a couple of days prior to each election in order to accommodate more voters with using the AVU – which is located in the van. Everyone really thought this was a great idea!

Committee members agreed to meet again after the primary election, but before the general election. Carol offered to once again host the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25

Minutes submitted by Valerie Sorenson