

**Minutes**  
**Mason County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting July 12, 2013**

**Attendance**

**Members:**

Karen Herr, Mason County Auditor  
Terri Jeffreys, Mason County Commissioner  
Libby Avery, EFI  
Carol Boyd, EFI

**Nonmembers:**

Fina Ormond, Superintendent of Elections  
Becky Frankenberger  
Kevin Frankenberger

---

Karen Herr opened the meeting at 9:47 a.m.

Karen introduced Terri Jeffreys as the new member of the committee from the Mason County Commissioners.

Karen gave a brief overview of the creation of the committee and what was accomplished in 2012 which included applying for a grant from the Secretary of State's Office to hire an accessibility coordinator. Valerie Sorenson was the Accessibility Coordinator and spent the year doing voter outreach and bringing the Accessible Voting Unit (AVU) to many community organizations. A copy of her report listing all the dates and locations is attached to these minutes.

One of the locations she visited was the Shelton Farmers Market and one of the people approached to register to vote said he was ineligible to vote because he was homeless and had no permanent residence. This is not true as persons with non-traditional address can be precincted based on a location they spend the majority of their time. Valerie and the Auditor's staff began also including the homeless in their outreach efforts including a visit to St. David's parish for the free evening meal to register voters and then returned a week later to issue ballots and let registered voters vote on the AVU.

Karen reported that although she was proud of the outreach work accomplished that despite all our efforts to encourage persons with disabilities to vote on the AVU that we had less than 10 people voted on the equipment and it was difficulty to justify additional staff time and resources especially since all outreach events that have ballots or the AVU must have two persons present at the event and a person at the office to check the voter registration.

The committee as a whole discussed why participation was low.

Kevin said that he was more comfortable voting at home where he can look up information about issues or candidates.

Karen also pointed out that in addition to voter outreach we also made some building improvements and asked Fina to elaborate.

Fina said that people seemed uncomfortable using the equipment and were more comfortable with a paper ballot.

Fina passed out a brochure that was created as part of the Accessibility Coordinator position with information about the AVU, drop boxes, this committee and recent improvements to the accessibility of the office. The building improvements, as was the Accessibility Coordinator, were funded through federal grant money through the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and awarded through the Washington Secretary of State's office. The improvements include putting in new curb cuts around the disabled parking and redoing the crumbling curb cuts that were already in place. The stairs to the second floor were retread, backs were put on the stairs and a yellow line was added on the first and last stair for the visually impaired. Pull out trays were installed at each customer service window and all 5 drop boxes were lowered to meet ADA standards.

Terri inquired about whether anyone had asked the League of Women Voters to provide a volunteer for some of our outreach activities so it would not require so much staffing. Karen said she would contact them.

Terri asked how a homeless person gets a ballot. Fina answered that the voter does need to provide a mailing address but they can have their mail sent to General Delivery or to a friend's house.

Karen mentioned that she had contacted the literacy center about offering the AVU for persons who spoke English as a second language. Initially, they expressed interest because many of the people they serve tend to understand spoken English better than written English but she did not get a response from them later.

Karen spoke about a new program that she is actively looking into called Democracy Live. Currently, it is used by several counties for online replacement ballots. Eventually, this would be a program that could be used for online voting or also as a replacement for the AVU. The law does not currently allow for online voting. As more information becomes available she will share it with the committee.

Kevin inquired about the availability of large print ballots. Fina responded that though it is not possible to make ballots different sizes she would look into the possibility of enlarging a ballot for specific voters that when returned would need to be duplicated.

Karen mentioned that there was legislative interest in this session mandating the number of ballot boxes in each county. She stated that there are 5 in the county and that over 50% of our ballots are received in drop boxes. She is cautious about adding additional drop boxes because they require so much additional staff time. In addition to sending two persons to pick up the ballots from the boxes throughout the election she is also required to send two people to close the box on election night. Currently, it requires every single employee of the Auditor's office to close

the 5 boxes. Karen would like to look into a ballot drop box presence, either temporary or permanent, at the tribes starting first with Squaxin Island. Terri suggested asking for a tribal volunteer to be the second person with the ballot box. She also stated that she would bring this up at the Commission & Council meeting.

Meeting adjourned by Karen Herr at 11:00 a.m..

Minutes submitted by Fina Ormond.