

VAAC Meeting Minutes - April 19, 2018, 11 a.m.

In attendance: Mary Hall, Callie Meleedy, Lynnette Thornton, Judy Oliver, Berl Colley, Denise Colley, Patty McDonald, Tillie Naputi-Pullar, Carrie Wack, Larry Watkinson (call in)

New Business -

Signature Stamp Legislation

- Mary introduced the signature stamp legislation that did not pass. She's unsure why it didn't pass, but thinks it may have been a timing issue more than anything.
- The signature stamp legislation would allow voters who cannot make a consistent signature to use a stamp so their ballot does not get challenged.
- One member of the VAAC has had his signature challenged on almost every ballot he's turned in, sparking his interest in voting accessibility. He has many friends who has encountered this problem, both in Thurston and other counties. His problem with us has been resolved due to a note in his file, but it's still a concern for many people.
- This triggered a lengthy discussion on signature verification.

New Technology Brainstorm

- The group said they want to see modern technology being used in order to reduce the number of challenged ballots. Suggestions:
 - A confirmation or pass code that they could give to the elections administrators to confirm his signature is legitimate
 - Online voting
 - Fingerprinting
 - Facial recognition
- The group agreed that the entire process of voting is inaccessible- even when marking their ballots online, the steps afterwards can pose issues. Printing, signing, and mailing their ballots can prove to be challenging for people with visual impairments.
- Denise has been in contact with Democracy Live, who is working on an Amazon Alexa app. The app allows users to fill out their ballot virtually. They are also working on a system which allows you to submit online with an electronic signature.
- There is concern over the security of online voting systems. Carrie mentions that anything on wifi or a network is susceptible to trouble, thinks it's worth looking into solutions that don't travel over unsecured networks.

Website Accessibility

- Members say that they think the new website is nicely done, and that it is accessible to those using screen readers/adaptive technology.
- Social media will be looked at for the next meeting.

New outreach ideas

- Mary could speak at various places within the community – assisted living communities, senior living, youth programs, community centers, etc.

- A member brought up having elections be a topic for discussion at senior/youth chats at the senior center in Olympia. The group agreed this would be a nice way to engage more than one generation
- A podcast which discusses the elections process, with an emphasis on election security in Thurston County/Washington. Mary really liked this idea and wants to make it happen.
- Bringing the AutoMARK to high school/college ASB elections, to help educate the younger generation about the options available to people with trouble voting.
- Patty mentioned a video series done by Rooted in Rights, and how the videos are very well done and have a sign language interpreter. They cover topics that aren't constantly changing, like how to help someone vote privately, or felon voting rights. The videos also cover voting with a hearing impairment Thurston could do something similar or simply share the videos that are already available.

Membership Recruitment

- One member joined the meeting today because she saw a flyer at the senior center. This is the first time VAAC has advertised in town, and will continue doing so for more meetings in the future.
- Youth engagement- discussion of reaching out to college accessibility coordinators and ASB groups to gain new members with different perspectives.
- Mary mentioned that language barriers can be an accessibility issues, and suggested reaching out to community orgs that work with these groups.
- Scheduling presentation in the community, and plugging the VAAC during the conversation.
- Senior/youth chats would be a good place for recruitment, if there is enough interest in the conversation topic.

Old Business

AutoMARK

- The VAAC reviewed the AutoMARK usage from the recent elections (2017 Primary & General, 2018 February & April)
- We will be making sure facilities are putting the Roadshow on their activity calendars, newsletters, and reader boards.

Annual Plan

- The 2017 plan was discussed in detail. Ideas for the 2018 plan are:
 - Recurring meetings – four times a year, 4th Monday of the month seems to work best for most members.
 - Looking into what VAACs in other states are doing to increase participation.
 - Doing research on digital voting.
 - Making sure that AutoMARK events are well publicized, and during hours that work for the communities we are visiting.

Meeting adjourned at 12:20.