

VAAC Meeting

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Thurston County Courthouse Room 280

In attendance: VAAC members Denise and Berl Colley, Patty McDonald, Matthew Annal (who arrived late), Lynnette Thornton, Asst. Manager of Elections, Sandy Baxter, Voter Outreach Coordinator

The meeting started at 5:35 after Patty McDonald called Jim Masters about the meeting; unfortunately he was unable to attend.

Patty McDonald said she had talked to Michael Rogers and he is still interested in serving on the VAAC committee. Sandy indicated she would contact him.

The January 13, 2011 minutes were approved without changes.

Lynnette gave information on the April 1 HAVA grant deadline. She explained there is \$300,000 available to all 39 counties, although not all counties may apply for a grant.

Lynnette reported on the Democracy Live demonstration to the Thurston County Auditor's Election staff in late February. She noted Democracy Live has 3 different components to their web based product:

- 1) My ballot, which allows the voter to track their ballot – date of receipt.
- 2) The Video/Closed captioning voter pamphlet which the voter could access to view candidate statements. The video could be closed captioned by making arrangements with a local community college. She noted the candidates would contact Democracy Live Rep. themselves and also pay a fee to have their video voter pamphlet statement filmed. The fee ranged from \$25 - \$45.
- 3) The mark able "live ballot" was the third component of this system. Lynnette noted this is the most exciting aspect of their program since it would allow voters to mark their ballot at home and we would put instructions on how to print the affidavits/oath and put the ballot in their envelope. This part of the web based software would also be used by overseas voters (UOCAVA voters).

Lynnette next presented her spreadsheets for the VAAC committee to review. She explained the last sheet was a history of the previous two HAVA grants (2008 & the primary of 2009) and then the second HAVA grant with expenditures for the 2009 General, and the 2010 primary and general elections.

The 2008 HAVA grant included the purchase of the video camera (\$3127.33) and the first commercials (\$8805), air time of the commercial (\$9396) with a non-deaf actor doing ASL pamphlet interpretations (\$989.91) in the 09 Primary the ASL was divided between a non-deaf actor and Billy Seago, a deaf actor (\$2143).

The 2009 HAVA grant spent \$9781 on the new commercials with deaf actor interpretations for 3 elections costing \$6567.45. Advertising for these 3 elections 2009 General, 2010 Primary and General Elections was \$15,155.

The next sheet was a list of the requests for new HAVA grant. The proposed 2011 expenditures would be \$5,000 for the 2011 Primary and \$7500 for the 2011 General Election. The 2012 Primary would be \$7,000 and the General would be \$8,500. The total amount of the grant could be \$15,500 since there was \$11,572 remaining in the old HAVA grant.

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Discussion followed on Democracy Live and their proposal for \$28,950 for the one time set up and license for their web based software with yearly subscription and support fee of \$4950.00 the sales tax would be \$2915.40 for a total cost of \$36,815.40. This would not include the purchase of any computer hardware to bring the software to persons who did not have computer access or touch screen computers. Berl asked about the maintenance agreement on the AutoMARKs. Lynnette said it was about ½ or \$2900.00

Lynnette and Denise both noted the “live ballot” aspect of the program was very appealing and this aspect helped to address concerns about “voters who don’t want to go anywhere to vote,” as Denise noted. Berl noted there would be a number of people from the Council of the Blind who would not use the computer to vote their ballot – that they preferred the AutoMARK. Lynnette noted the state is currently working on a “mark able state-wide ballot” that was in production. Patty Murphy had mentioned to Lynnette that she would like someone to do testing. Denise stated she would be willing to be tester of the state’s ballot. Lynnette said she would put Patty in contact with Denise.

Berl and Denise also asked about the number of steps necessary to vote the online ballot and there was some discussion about the skill set of some visually impaired voters who might find this difficult.

The VAAC committee brought up the use of the ASL and PSA’s and that they liked this accessibility component and wondered if Billy Seago had any deaf contacts who would like to join our committee.

Patty McDonald suggested that with redistricting occurring in 2012 and the increase in the county’s population we may want to increase the amount of the HAVA grant request for use in 2012 and perhaps reduce the TV advertising for the 2011 Primary to \$2000 and add the \$500 to the Primary 2012 advertising budget - \$4500. Patty also suggested staff ask Auditor Kim Wyman about any other information/accessibility costs associated with the redistricting that we may want to include in the HAVA grant request. Lynnette stated she would do so. It was suggested a special ASL video on the redistricting process might be advisable.

The meeting ended with the VAAC committee deciding not to purchase the Democracy Live software at this time but to continue with our PSA’s, and continue the ASL and Audio versions of the voter’s pamphlet, with some increase in the HAVA request for any costs associated with making Redistricting information accessible.

New Business:

Matthew reminded the VAAC committee about some upcoming events he would like to see the committee/staff/Auditor attend. On March 30 the Independent Living Day Rally would be held at the Capitol. April 17 there would be a “Tip a Cop” event at Red Robin. One half of this money would go to the Special Olympics. Matt said Sheriff John Snaza was involved in the planning of this event. Matt asked if Auditor Kim Wyman might want to attend. Matt also noted Emily Rogers might be interested in working with the VAAC committee again.