

VAAC Meeting  
Thursday, May 2, 2013  
Thurston County Courthouse Auditor's Conference Room

In attendance: VAAC members Denise and Berl Colley; Patty McDonald, and new members Wesley Shockey and Gary Ernest. In attendance from the Auditor's Office were: Gary Alexander, Thurston County Auditor; Ron Harding, Deputy Auditor; Steve Homan, Elections Manager; Carrie Wack, Business Applications Manager; Lynnette Thornton, Asst. Manager of Elections; and Sandy Baxter, Voter Outreach Coordinator. Cristina Labra, Voter Education and Outreach Coordinator from the Secretary of State's Office, was unable to attend.

The meeting started at 2:30 p.m.

The new Auditor and Deputy Auditor were introduced to the VAAC members and the two new members, Gary Ernest and Wesley Shockey were introduced to everyone in attendance.

Auditor Gary Alexander welcomed the VAAC committee and noted his support for the committee's efforts and that the Auditor's Office would continue to reach out to disabled citizens of Thurston County.

#### **Announcements:**

Carrie Wack asked for assistance from the VAAC committee in her revision of the main pages of the Auditor's webpage. She asked about the type of readers used by the visually impaired and whether the VAAC used our web page. Denise noted some persons with low vision found it useful to be able to change the font size and Gary Ernest said he was able to read yellow on black background better than black on white. Wesley asked about the possibility of an app for smart phones to get election results and view the voter pamphlet. Carrie noted the Secretary of State's Office had more control over the elections results but she would keep the idea of an app in mind for a future project.

Berl directed Carrie to the Council of the Blind's web page, [www.cccbinfo.org](http://www.cccbinfo.org), as a good example of a webpage easily navigated by the visually impaired. Denise noted PDF's can be problematic for the visually impaired, she explained that text based PDF's are ok but image PDF's are not read by the software. Some members of the VAAC asked about accessibility of the web page to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. It was explained that our voter pamphlet, drop box locations, and AutoMARK™ information is available in American Sign Language on our website. We were asked about what we have available on the webpage for dyslexic voters, and it was explained that the voters' pamphlet is also posted on the website in an audio version along with the location of drop boxes, and other important election information from the voters' pamphlets.

Carrie will be given the VAAC members' email address so she can send them links to review both the current and proposed web pages.

#### **Minutes:**

Since the April 3, 2012 minutes had already been approved. No action was taken. Sandy and Lynnette presented a report to the VAAC group based on the committee's 2012 recommendations. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.

**Old Business:**

Lynnette provided an update of our 2013 HAVA funds. She reminded the committee although we only had \$6,500 in 2012 to fund our Public Service Announcements (PSAs) but we were able to dip into the General fund for an additional \$3500 to spend \$5,000 for both the Primary and General elections. We were also able to run PSAs at Panorama and TCTV at no cost.

Lynnette remarked, even though we have no HAVA funds and the Secretary of State is not willing to fund established programs, Gary Alexander, the current Auditor is committed to providing an ASL version of the voter pamphlet in 2013. Lynnette reported the 2011 Primary Voter Pamphlet was 12 pages and the General Election pamphlet was 36 pages, which means the cost of the ASL will be much higher than the translation for 2012. However, to help with the workload a 3<sup>rd</sup> ASL taping was scheduled with Billy Seago in July. This ASL session will allow us to do an earlier taping of a larger portion of the General Election Voters' Pamphlet

The AutoMARK™ usage figures for the Primary and General Elections were reviewed. While the numbers continue to increase for both usage of the AutoMARK™ and "hits" on the ASL pages, Lynnette explained we are concerned about the resources spent for this service. We are currently tracking not just the cost of Billy Seago but also tracking staff time. Lynnette outlined the process to the VAAC committee to give them a better idea of what was involved in doing the ASL translation of the local voters' pamphlet. It was also noted Thurston is the only county in the state doing ASL translation.

**New Business:**

The 2012 VAAC plan was presented to the committee and after general discussion it was decided to submit the plan to the SOS as our 2013 plan since our activities have remained basically unchanged. Patty suggested we add another bullet to the Education and Outreach portion of the plan: Assistance with voter registration. Wesley motioned approval of the revised plan; it was seconded by Gary, and passed by the Committee.

Lynnette and Sandy talked about attending the Thurston County Recreation Services registration on March 13 where we demonstrated the AutoMARK™ machine and recruited Wesley to serve on the VAAC committee. Wesley expressed concern about the lack of funding for Special Olympics because of Thurston County's connection with the recreation programs. (Wesley could you explain this a bit more).

Berl and Patty asked about the VAAC committee participating in various summer parades, such as Lakefair and the Tumwater Historical parade, and also the Thurston County Fair to provide additional exposure of the AutoMARK™ machines. It was decided after much discussion to not tow the AutoMARK™ due to the possibility of damage to this expensive equipment. Patty McDonald will check with a friend about using his convertible for VAAC members to ride in with a banner on the side of the car touting the AutoMARK™. The idea of posters was discussed to further advertise the AutoMARK™ while riding in various parades, events or inclusion on IT buses.

Lynnette noted we had investigated posters on buses before but the cost was prohibitive. Wesley noted he would talk to Ann at Intercity Transit about having a free poster in the IT buses in addition to Sandy's article in the DASH newsletter. Sandy also noted she does articles for various assisted living newsletters and the Senior News did a full page story with photo of the AutoMARK™ during the fall of 2012. There was also discussion about placing posters at Group Health.

Berl asked about bringing the AutoMARK™ machine to Red Wing Casino or talking to the Nisqually Tribe. Sandy reported she had made contact with the tribe but they were not responsive.

Wesley, a student at SPSCC, also volunteered to work with Sandy and perhaps do a registration drive with AutoMARK™ brochures at SPSCC. He indicated he would talk to Cindy Yurich, the Activities Coordinator.

Wesley had questions about a ballot drop box at SPSCC since Evergreen had a ballot drop box. It was explained Evergreen did not have a drop box, although there had been some proposed legislation that would mandate ballot drop boxes at college campuses. This legislation did not pass this session, Steve Homan explained, It may be brought up again during the special session of the WA state legislature. Lynnette further explained when Thurston did its original drop box study it was based on population densities. Steve and Lynnette also noted in the past, Evergreen had received stamps that could be given to students to assist them in mailing their ballots. This service could also be done for SPSCC students.

As part of improving communication with the VAAC committee and to reach out to persons who may also have a disability, it was decided to include the VAAC members on the Media Contact list, so the VAAC committee would receive all election/voter registration press releases.

**Other:**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 p.m.