

**Pierce County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee
January 8, 2010 Minutes**

Attendance

Voting Members:

Robert Wardell; Ron Stone; Christine Seymour; Penny Condoll; Wayne Terry; Ruth Anderson; David Rand; Lynn Stagg; Dan Eberle

Non-voting Members:

Trina Forest; Chris Ensor; Julie Anderson; Lori Augino; Cindy Hartman

Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The meeting was opened at 12:15 with a welcome and introductions by Christine Seymour, Chair.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was called to approve the October 26, 2009 minutes. With the addition of Christine's suggestion for an ASL format on page 3, Wayne moved to accept the minutes. Dan seconded. All approved to accept the minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

Ballot Drop Box Update

Cindy is researching transit centers and post offices for possible drop box sites. Post offices would serve the mobile public and are already set up logistically. Transit centers would serve voters using public transportation.

Cindy reported the need to explore new vendor and style options to enable us to purchase larger boxes and get the quantity we need. Larger drop boxes are required. The current vendor quote, for the larger size, significantly reduced the number of boxes that could be purchased within the grant's budget. Lori explained that the envelope size, used in the General Election, and turnout justified the need for larger capacity boxes.

Dan suggested that the boxes increase in depth and set on the ground, allowing the drop slot to remain the same height.

Wayne suggested using the same forward pattern, making it wider to enlarge. He suggested buying surplus boxes from the post office. Cindy will follow up on that possibility and possibly combine our box purchases with another county to get a better price.

Lynn mentioned that once it gets dark at transit centers riders stay close to bus stops for safety. The boxes need to be well lit.

Julie offered to ask Pierce Transit what percentage of commuters are registered voters and what turnout will be like. Getting capacity numbers will ensure our new boxes are large enough. The Pierce County Annex box was the most affected by the General Election turnout. TACID had frequent pick-ups, along with the box in Gig Harbor.

The possibility of adding another box next to current boxes was suggested by Dan. Wayne brought up the need for a box at the Sounder station. Julie added that the Tacoma Dome was a critical spot, also.

Christine asked for volunteers to form a sub-committee.. The following members volunteered: Robert, Dan, Christine, Lynn, and Wayne. Each site visit should be conducted during rush hour and again at night to ensure proper lighting, curbing, and absence of obstacles present that would be an impediment to accessibility. Ron moved to establish the sub-committee for sites and Dan seconded. Motion passed.

Accessible Voting Site Extensions

Trina had no new information where CFI will go after their current lease is up in May. She will keep us updated. Christine voiced a desire to replace CFI for the Lakewood area but Lori cited that turnout was low. They only had three voters at the General Election. This may be due to CFI's location. TACID has better advertisement. Better signage will be used in the future. Election dates could be affixed with Velcro and displayed multiple days prior to each election.

Additional accessible voting sites will not be researched while polls are open. Until the County makes the transition to Vote-By-Mail, we will wait given the 56 other sites to vote, and considering the turnout during elections.

The committee was asked whether they wanted to apply for an amendment to the HAVA grant so \$300-\$400 could be allocated for durable signs. Lynn moved for an amendment to our grant, allowing expenditure for signage. Wayne seconded. All approved.

Alternate Formats of Voters' Pamphlet

Lori had hoped to partner with someone from TACID to voice-record information to our website for the August Primary. CD availability would be adequate. The County will need to work with Christine for budgeting and recruiting for an ASL format. It's already in the grant. She and Lori can work offline.

Audio Format

Lori reported that the CD's could be mailed for voters to listen to at home. TACID and CFI could provide CD's for use on-site. Dave cautioned that the website formats need to be downloadable for iPods and Blackberrys. Lori said CD's are inexpensive and can be produced on demand. Ideas for a marketing plan for the CD's were requested. The CD's should be in a MP3 format. Wayne asked how many types of communication would be on one CD. Lori thought there should be a specific format for each request.

Literacy Concerns

Ruth could work with her staff, using audio, to make the Voters' Pamphlet easier to understand. She wants to continue using the candidate pamphlet. CFI hired a consultant on accessible websites to update their website. Accessibility of the download is critical. Julie and Lori will discuss how to post accessible information. Pdf formats are currently used. Each voter has specific needs and formats. WC3 has the formats available for all types of downloads.

Lynn worked with illiterate elderly and they recognize symbols. The ballot, as it is currently written, makes it hard for them to vote. Ballots could use symbols for "Did you sign your ballot" and for initiatives. Dave reminded us that countries where citizens are predominately illiterate hold elections. They use symbols.

David asked how the information and formats would be advertised. Non-readers wouldn't see a newspaper notice. Julie asked for their ideas on how to market it. Some suggestions were to use visual marketing tools, television or radio announcements, city buses, and a reader board at the Pierce County Annex. These are ideas for the next grant cycle. Meanwhile, we can use our public outlet markets, namely TV12 and Pierce County television.

Disability Awareness Handbook

The handbook would be used for training staff that help voters register. Progress was reported from TACID on new materials being gathered in light of the committee's feedback. The Auditor's Office reported that the handbook funding was permissible under the current grant; however a cost estimate is needed from TACID. Chris mentioned that he can't do a cost estimate without knowing how big the manual will be.

Mary Beth Quincey's report was handed out. Chris reported that we're looking for a stand-alone handbook that would benefit both training and individuals. Its purpose would be to enable people to understand how to treat people with disabilities. It was stated that this is not a textbook on disabilities. It's on how to treat *voters* with disabilities. Treatment of voters with various disabilities would be kept brief, with reference material provided for follow up on the disability itself. Chris asked for discussion.

Ron agreed that the handbook should address functional impairment, not diagnosis, to keep from getting bogged down. Lynn will report back with input for his disability.

Trina agreed with the need to limit the size, but she'd like to see more included about mental health disabilities because there are so many misunderstandings about it. Lynn belongs to a free program that sends two representatives to speak of their disability, relaying the worst time of their illness and the progress to health. He asked for referral opportunities to relay information on mental health disorders, hoping to reduce the stigma they are faced with. Trina will work with Lori on drafting the mental health disability section of the manual.

Dan mentioned that the State decided to limit disabilities to nine categories. They had to combine disabilities together to keep the handbook brief. Mental health had its own field. He would give that list to Mary Beth.

Ruth wanted to ensure that the handbook differentiated between voters that can't read or write, and those with English as a second language. There is a large group in this county. They are disadvantaged. She said we need to acknowledge ESL with web references. ESL classes are helpful for other disabilities, too.

David asked if we printed ballots in languages other than English. Lori foretold the possible census results requiring Pierce County to add one or two languages to all election material. Those multi-lingual formats will be produced by the 2011 Primary, if required.

Christine cautioned against too much reading. The less reading required, the better likelihood people will read and remember what is presented. If poll workers are given a 40 page book on disabilities, they won't read or remember it. Information on how to identify each disability would be crucial, followed by how to help. The handbook could present clues to recognize a disability. Wayne reported that Boeing found using visual aids produced 20% information retention. Christine will send information to Chris.

Tacoma Community House Advertizing

Ruth got the new Voters' Pamphlet in the hands of thirty-five voters trained by her staff. She will take Voters' Pamphlets to the February 18, 2010 Rotary 8 meeting. Lori will attend, also, and bring 400 Accessible Voting brochures.

Advisory Committee Memberships

Chris confirmed seven members that will be continuing to serve on the advisory committee have so far provided their contact information and affiliations.

Alice Stevenson, representing the sight impaired, is interested. The committee includes representatives for the following organizations: Hard of Hearing, Brain Injury, Deafness and Hard of Hearing, Developmental and Physical Disabilities.

Christine suggested adding Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Wayne suggested adding YADA - Youth Awareness Disability. The organization introduces kids to disabilities, hoping they can carry the information into their adult lives.

Committee Training Discussion

Trina asked for suggestions of people able to facilitate the training. She thought there might be pieces we could do without a paid facilitator. An article of incorporation isn't needed. What we needed clarified was: who was a member, maintaining membership, etc. We needed something that stated that voting members were people with disabilities or representing people with disabilities. Trina asked the group to decide how to proceed. She asked if we should review Roberts Rules of Order and talk about what it means to be a good committee member.

Christine commented that the committee members have full time jobs so we needed the help of an outside facilitator. The use of a role model organization's bi-laws was mentioned. Successors of the committee need to know what we're doing.

David suggested not creating more bi-laws than we have to. It is counterproductive. He offered to write up a one page guideline, based on the questions posed at the meeting. He stated that a guideline for everything bogs down productivity. Robert agreed. He would rather see a one page sheet. Trina asked Lori to provide original grant guidelines on forming a qualifying committee to David.

It was qualified that since members from TACID and CFI receive a financial portion to carry out the grant, they are non-voting members. Christine's group helps, but doesn't get financial reimbursement, so she qualifies as a voting member.

NEW BUSINESS

Future Grant Cycle Goals

Lori solicited new ideas for the next grant application. The deadline for submittal is March 31, 2010. So far, the list included: funding for the easy-to-read Voters' Pamphlet, ASL formats of voting materials, more ballot drop boxes, CD MP3 format for the web, and monies needed for CD marketing and distribution. Lori will bring the draft of Grant #3 to the next meeting.

March Meeting Date

The new grant must be submitted by March 31, 2010. Chris will send out possible dates and come up with one that accommodates the most members. He will email the chosen date to committee members. Robert asked for his notification to be mailed.

Ruth moved to conclude the meeting. Robert seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:01 p.m.