

In attendance: Denise and Burl Colley, Patty McDonald, and Steve Peck from the VAAC committee. Thurston County Auditor Kim Wyman and the following Election Division personnel: Lynnette Thornton and Sandy Baxter. Deb Kuschik acted as interpreter for Steven Peck.

Start time approximately 5:30 p.m. (Deb K was incorrectly told 5:45 p.m.)

Steven Peck announced he has been asked by his boss to step down from the VAAC committee that he should try to find a member of deaf and/or hard of hearing community to replace him. There was much discussion about this with much concern about the loss of Steve's expertise and valuable input. It was suggested we use his home email for correspondence. Steve indicated his home email was scpeck4@msn.com

Minutes were approved as read. Still need to draft a letter to various disabled groups and get assistance from Patty McDonald with contacts. Sandy will follow up on this project.

The group offered the following observations on the web page:

- It is hard to find the ASL portion of the voter pamphlet on the web page because of the number of steps. He suggested the ASL should be on the first page of both the Auditor's web page and the Elections web page.
- Suggested the icon ASL be linked
- Separate clips for How to Vote, How to get a Ballot, Ballot drop boxes, Location of AutoMARKs, and How to Register might be less expensive so these don't have to be redone all the time. Some discussion about having these as the only items of the VP in ASL in the future(?)
- Use of icons/pictures are often easier for persons with a disability to understand. Text can be too much to go through. Suggested people learn better with pictures.
- Get more input from the Developmentally Disabled community on what type of improvements to the web they think would improve use of the website. Check with Michael & Emily Rogers, VAAC members

HAVA Update:

Lynnette Thornton provided an update on the HAVA grant – basically confirming we had received the money and with the funds we were able to air commercials for the General Election and hire a deaf actor for the ASL interpretation of the General Voter Pamphlet.

AutoMARK™ Update:

Sandy noted the numbers for the General Election had increased (See attached Chart), but we were still not reaching all those persons who might find the AutoMark useful. Sandy noted the number of repeat visits to various senior facilities showed increased usage for

seniors. In addition to usage at various senior assisted living centers the AutoMARK was also brought directly to people in their homes, Lynnette noted.

Problems seniors had with the AutoMARK were difficulty understanding the “computer voice” and feeling uncomfortable with the technology.

Additional input to increase usage of AutoMARKs™ and number of persons with disabilities being reached

- Suggested we put an AutoMARK™ in the SOS office or the Capital Building during one of the 20 days before an election. [Sandy will check with Tracy Buckles in CT].
- Check with literacy folks and manual labor people who have a disability as to what would improve their use of the AutoMARK and how to better display information on the website.
- Do a Fact Sheet of successes in 2009 and post this on the web.
- Bring two AutoMARKs to some of the larger turnout events, such as the Council for the Blind Meetings held in October, Panorama City and Olympics West.

Future of AutoMarks

Auditor Wyman wanted to bring up the idea of perhaps changing the technology in a couple of years to something that did not require a paper ballot. General concern that voters have to bring their ballot to use the AutoMARK causes the usage to be lower. General discussion about reasons for use of the AutoMARK and future technology improvements followed.

ASL

Auditor Wyman noted the odd year pamphlet is the biggest pamphlet done by the Auditor’s Office and the ASL portion of the pamphlet was \$15,000 with usage limited to 2 persons. Approximately 290 hours of staff time was used to do the ASL portion of the pamphlet. Staff hours are not currently reimbursed by the HAVA grant, although this may change in the future, Lynnette noted. The cost of the ASL portion of the pamphlet when contrasted to usage makes it hard to justify, Auditor Wyman observed.

Auditor Wyman asked about different approaches to reach the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. Thurston County is the only county in the state currently doing an ASL Voter Pamphlet. Suggestions:

- Hire someone in the office to do translation and then make a CD or DVD upon request. This would make the ASL video specific for the voter. Stephen Peck was concerned this also would not be very cost effective due to large number of

VAAC Meeting

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

Page3

deaf/hard of people in the County. Problem of reaching this community was mentioned. Deb Kunschik also expressed concern that interpreters would need advance preparation time to do translation of the voter pamphlet.

- Steve Peck said the best way was word of mouth. One suggestion was to have information [the Fact Sheet?] available to interpreters to give out at job fairs or other events they attend as part of their interpretation duties.
- Discussion about built in barriers within the blind and deaf communities. Colley's mentioned the need for attitude shift by persons with disabilities.

It was decided to do PSA slots or commercials of people with disabilities talking about voting and use of the ASL Voter Pamphlet. The importance of voting in secrecy without the help of a caregiver and empowering aspect of educating yourself about election issues.

Burl Colley suggested having the October VAAC meeting broadcast. Additional discussion about use of an Accessibility Panel. Auditor Wyman will check with the BoCC regarding use of TCTV panel format to see a time slot can be allocated to an "Accessibility Panel".

The VAAC committee gave unanimous approval for Lynnette to change the scope of the HAVA grant to the development of commercials or PSA's highlighting persons with disabilities talking about voting. Scripts will be developed - (not sure who was assigned this. I would like to have Steve, Patty, Burl, and Denise help write the scripts since they know the best way to reach their target groups.)

It was decided to have a VAAC meeting in March and Sandy will send an email around to find the best dates.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.