
REBECCA SPENCER
Registrar of Voters



ART TINOCO
Assistant Registrar of Voters

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)
Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2016 | 10:00 a.m.

Committee Members:

Julie Caban, Chair
Larry Smith, Co-Chair
John Kopp, Committee Member
Chuck Reutter, Committee Member
Feliciano Godoy, Committee Member
Ruthee Goldkorn, Committee Member
Diane Gamache, Committee Member
Selina Bremenstuhl, Committee Member
Pauline Gaeta, Committee Member
Richard Olquin, Committee Member
Roderic Ballance, Committee Member

Guests:

Ray Kennedy
Foster Tucker
Peter Benavidez
Robin Unruh
Gabe Taylor
Bernardo Beltran
Nick Thompson
Shawn Northup
Scott Barron
Tuyen Contreras
Bob Warburton
Clarissa Cervantes
Elizabeth Santos
Mario Janesin
Ronak Patel

Registrar of Voters Staff:

Rebecca Spencer, Registrar of Voters
Chris Neubauer, Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters EO & Polls Division
Annette Canada, Elections Coordinator
Carmen Mora, Elections Technician II

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Meeting Commenced at 10:00a.m.

I. Welcome/Introductions

Introductions were made of the following staff: Registrar of Voters Rebecca Spencer, Chief Deputy of the EO & Polls Division Chris Neubauer, Committee Chair Julie Caban, Committee Co-Chair Larry Smith, Elections Coordinator Annette Canada and Elections Technician II Carmen Mora. Following staff introductions, attendees of the meeting made introductions.

II. Official Appointment of VAAC Members

VAAC certificates and welcome letters were presented to the newly appointed VAAC Members, John Kopp, Chuck Reutter, Feliciano Godoy, Ruthee Goldkorn, Diane Gamache, Selina Bremenstuhl, Pauline Gaeta, Richard Olquin and Roderic Ballance. New VAAC Members appointed were congratulated by the group.

III. Local VAAC and Registrar of Voters Accessibility Updates

Chris Neubauer reviewed the accomplishments made by establishing the VAAC Committee in 2015. The accomplishments mentioned: creation of the local VAAC Committee, instituting pilot programs for Accessibility Inspector, curbside doorbells and privacy screens, increasing focus on accessibility and training, improving mitigation distribution by having the transfer companies deliver mitigation equipment to each polling location prior to Election Day, participation in State VAAC Committee, adding the option of teleconferencing to each meeting, training by Disability Rights of California, outreach to Community Access Center and Blindness Support Services, local VAAC meeting in the Coachella Valley, adding VAAC information to the candidate handbook, updating Election Officer applications to include accommodation language, and increased visibility of press releases and public notices.

Mr. Neubauer discussed the Registrar of Voters (ROV) office's 5 priorities for 2016. ROV will be focusing on increasing online accessibility including the website and sample ballot information, engaging members in the disability community to serve as Election Officers, continuing to improve accessibility at the polls with the Accessibility Inspector program, improving training on sensitivity, and improving the feedback process.

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Rebecca Spencer gave an update on the HAVA Grant Funds. Ms. Spencer stated that the 1st part of the grant funds was used to purchase the curbside doorbells. The 2nd part of the grant funds must be used by June 2016 and after careful consideration the remaining funds will be used to purchase the Democracy Live software which was presented at the September 2015 VAAC meeting. This software will improve our online sample ballots, ballots and candidate statements to make them compatible with screen readers. It also has a portal for military voters to download their ballots which is not currently offered on the ROV website. Ms. Spencer stated that the software should be in place prior to the June election.

Ms. Spencer addressed the committee's requests for ROV to hold separate sub-committees. ROV is supportive of establishing sub-committees; however we do not have the resources to allow staff to participate in those meetings. Ms. Spencer stated the ROV can provide teleconferencing, interpreters and a room to hold the sub-committee meetings. Ruthee Goldkorn asked if the priority list would be posted on the ROV website and if there would be a "VAAC portal" for members to leave comments about the priority list. Ms. Goldkorn also asked if all the grant monies would be exhausted after the purchase of the Democracy Live software. Ms. Spencer stated that there is a place on the website where VAAC information is posted and she will look into a "VAAC portal" with the IT department. Ms. Spencer also stated that all the grant monies will be spent after the purchase of the software. If there are opportunities in the future to apply for additional grant funds, ROV will absolutely apply. Scott Barron asked why the VAAC members have to re-apply every year. Ms. Spencer stated that ROV will look into longer terms for the committee members in 2017. Chuck Reutter asked if Riverside County would be going to all Mail Ballots for future elections. Mr. Neubauer stated that there are currently proposals in the legislature to change the election system that have not been signed. There are a few counties that are doing pilot programs on all Mail Ballot elections but Riverside County is not participating at this time. Ms. Goldkorn suggested developing membership by-laws for the sub-committees and a schedule for future ADA training for poll workers and VAAC members. Peter Benavidez agreed that structure is needed for the sub-committees and suggested the sub-committees include mobility impaired, deaf and hard of hearing and blindness or visually impaired. Foster Tucker asked if ROV is considering having more frequent VAAC meetings. Ms. Spencer stated that the VAAC meetings will remain on a quarterly schedule but hopes the additional trainings and sub-committee meeting will supplement the VAAC meetings. Mr. Neubauer stated that the sub-committees will be able to provide advice and feedback at the official VAAC meetings to help serve the needs of the community. Feliciano Godoy volunteers to chair the blindness and visually impaired. Ms. Goldkorn stated that there should be a sub-committee for each sub-group of disability and each sub-committee should have a variety of representation from individuals with varied

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disabilities. The contact information for all VAAC members will be emailed to the group so individuals interested in developing sub-committees can get in contact with each other. Ms. Goldkorn asked if sub-committees will be open to non-VAAC members and would those individuals be in an advisory capacity for that sub-committee. Mr. Neubauer stated that the chair of the sub-committee must be an official VAAC member but anyone from the community is welcome to attend and participate in the meetings. Clarissa Cervantes asked what this committee is doing to help promote access to voting for non-English speaking voters. Mr. Neubauer stated that the Community Outreach Group (COG) focuses on several different language barriers of voters; COG meets today at 2pm in the ROV Community Room. The VAAC members agreed to the following four sub-committees: Cognitive, Visually Impaired, Deaf and Mobility. John Kopp asked if a sub-committee could be developed in regards to inmate voting rights and newly released inmates on parole. An invitation was extended to the Sherriff's Department to attend VAAC. ROV will also be meeting with the Probation Department next month to discuss parolee voting rights. ROV does have a partnership with the Sheriff's Department and they provide vote-by-mail pamphlets and inmate voting rights pamphlets to use in the jails. Ms. Spencer did not feel there was a need for a sub-committee but ROV does have a liaison that communicates with the Sherriff's Department. Ms. Goldkorn suggested combining the Cognitive sub-committee to include the Mental Health and Developmentally Disabled to ensure all of the disabilities are represented. Selina Bremenstuhl suggested adding an ad-hoc sub-committee to cover miscellaneous topics including by-laws and membership terms. The committee agreed that the sub-committees should meet monthly. The following Sub-Committee Chairs were established: Deaf/Hard of Hearing – Diane Gamache, Visually Impaired – Feliciano Godoy, Mobility – Ruthee Goldkorn, and Cognitive – No volunteers as of today. Ms. Spencer stated that the Cognitive sub-committee will be left on the agenda for the next meeting. It will be the responsibility of the sub-committee chair to bring notes and/or feedback to the VAAC Committee at the quarterly meetings.

Mr. Neubauer reviewed the Accessibility Inspector (AI) pilot program that was used in the November 2015 election. The AI was expected to visit multiple sites throughout the day and offer assistance with any accessibility barriers. Because the AI was a roving position, there were instances when assistance was needed but the AI was not available. In an effort to continue to build and improve the program, ROV proposed to modify the position to Accessibility Officer (AO) for the June 2016 election. Ms. Goldkorn shared how important the AI program is to voters with disabilities and that the Precinct Inspector should also be required to take the ADA training that is given to the AI. Mr. Neubauer confirmed that the Precinct Inspector is required to complete the ADA trainings as well. Mr. Neubauer explained that the AO would have all of the same duties as the AI except they would be stationed at one polling place for the entire day on

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Election Day. Scott Barron shared a concern regarding creating a stigma with working with the other inspectors and forcing the AO to disclose a disability (if applicable). Mr. Neubauer stated that the criteria would not change and no one would be forced to disclose their disability. The AO would be an extra resource at each polling place to ensure everyone has a successful voting experience. Overall the VAAC Committee liked the AO idea but a final decision was not made at this meeting.

Mr. Tucker asked if there is an action plan for the five priorities mentioned earlier and will it be provided to the committee. Mr. Neubauer stated that the priorities are a broad overview of items to ensure ROV covers all of the disability communities in the most effective way possible. He would like the sub-committees to help measure progress by telling ROV which items need attention. Roderic Ballance suggested setting short term and long term goals for each of the priorities. Mr. Tucker asked for a conclusion of how ROV is using the information from the AI notes. Mr. Neubauer explained that one of the most common notes was regarding curbside doorbells and even though they were tested prior to deployment, they did not perform well in the field. Moving forward, the curbside doorbells will only be utilized at residences or buildings that absolutely require it. The notes have identified areas of improvement regarding the placement of mitigation equipment in general and ROV will review this topic during training. Chuck Reutter suggested that VAAC members go out on Election Day to survey different polling place so the committee has a better idea of what is going on. Mr. Neubauer stated that the committee members are welcome to visit different polling locations and provide any feedback to ROV. Mr. Barron stated that Disability Rights California has a hotline set up on Election Day to report any polling place problems to Los Angeles County and he feels Riverside County would benefit from a hotline as well. Mr. Neubauer stated that he will look into setting up a hotline with Disability Rights California. Mr. Kopp asked how far in advance polling places are selected in case someone wanted to go and see the location in their neighborhood. Mr. Neubauer stated that he was not sure of the exact date and would get back to Mr. Kopp with an answer.

Mr. Neubauer discussed the Election Officer training and the limited resources that ROV currently has to complete the Accessibility Inspector (AI) training. He proposed to the VAAC Committee that ROV outsources the AI training to an outside vendor to relieve the in-house trainers of that responsibility. Mr. Barron asked if ROV has ever considered a Poll Monitor like LA County uses to visit each polling place and report back any issues. Mr. Neubauer stated that ROV does not currently utilize a Poll Monitor to gather feedback. Ms. Goldkorn stated that she feels the responsibility of a Poll Monitor can be given to the lead Election Officer to decrease the number of workers at the polls. She also asked if ROV would be sending out an RFQ or RFP for outside vendors. Mr. Neubauer stated that ROV will not be putting out an RFP but any person

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or company interested in being a vendor for ROV can contact the office directly for further information. The committee members discussed concerns and options for outside vendors for training. Mr. Neubauer stated that the vendor training would be structured and the curriculum would be approved by ROV before deployment.

Mr. Neubauer discussed Election Officer Recruitment efforts for the June 2016 election. ROV is committed to increase the number of Election Officers with disabilities. VAAC will play a vital role in assisting ROV by reaching out to the various disability communities. ROV would like a better representation of our populous serving on Election Day. Mr. Neubauer will send the poll worker application to the committee members. It was also suggested that ROV try to engage more college students with disabilities; possibly contacting the Disabled Student Services could help. Mr. Neubauer asked if anyone had contacts with any schools they could provide to ROV to help encourage student participation. Clarissa Cervantes stated that she works closely with the Governmental Relations Office at UCR and she can reach out to them and put information together for students.

IV. Status Report on the State VAAC

Larry Smith stated that the State VAAC has finalized their schedule for 2016 and they will be meeting every other month. The next meeting will be March 23, 2016 at 1pm and will be available via teleconference at ROV. The teleconference information will be emailed to the VAAC members once it is made available. Mr. Smith reported that he received a lot of feedback regarding "Disability Sensitivity at the Polls". He took that feedback to the State VAAC and all of the recommendations were implemented into the statewide document. The Future of California Elections Conference will be taking place February 25 & 26 in Los Angeles. The Secretary of State will be swearing in the State VAAC members. If you sign-up to volunteer at the conference, the registration fee of \$75 will be waived.

V. 2016 Election Schedule

April 12 will be a mail ballot election for the city of Rancho Mirage with city council members as well as 4 measures on the ballot. The last day to register to vote in that election is March 28. The next election is the June 7 Presidential Primary Election with possibly a 2 card ballot in some areas. The sample ballots will be sent out April 28 and vote-by-mail ballots will be sent out May 9. The nomination period is February 15 – March 11. The close of registration for the June election is May 23. Ms. Goldkorn asked when the large print editions of the voter guides and any other print accommodations will be available. Ms. Caban stated that the large print guides will not be available for

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the April election in Rancho Mirage. However, the large print guides will be available for the June election on April 28 and the information is listed on the website.

VI. Questions/ Comments

Ms. Goldkorn stated that the information on the State VAAC Committee is very limited. She would like to see the local VAAC Committee's mission statement and roster of members on the ROV website after the by-laws have been created.

VII. Polling Place Accessibility Surveyor Training Video – Section 5

Signage - video was shown.

Those individuals who are joining us for the first time, packets are available. Inside the packet we have a copy of the "Accessibility Surveyor Training" video, SOS guidelines and a VAAC application. There are other handouts available, including poll worker applications, and voter registration cards. Please make sure you have signed in and given us your current email information. Next VAAC meeting will be April 28, 2016 at the Registrar of Voters' office. No other questions noted before adjournment. Meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.