
REBECCA SPENCER
Registrar of Voters



ART TINOCO
Assistant Registrar of Voters

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

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

Committee Members:

Julie Caban, Chair
Larry Smith, Co-Chair
John Kopp, Committee Member
Feliciano Godoy, Committee Member
Ruthee Goldkorn, Committee Member
Selina Bremenstuhl, Committee Member
Pauline Gaeta, Committee Member
Roderic Ballance, Committee Member
Gabriel Taylor, Committee Member
Mario Janesin, Committee Member

Guests:

Lisa Price
Belinda Rojas
Len Wittrock
Ray Kennedy, Conference Call
Foster Tucker, Conference Call

Registrar of Voters Staff:

Rebecca Spencer, Registrar of Voters
Art Tinoco, Assistant Registrar of Voters
Chris Neubauer, Chief Deputy Registrar of EO & Polls Division
Annette Canada, Elections Coordinator

Meeting Commenced at 10:00 a.m.

I. Welcome/Introductions

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

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II. Purpose of the Group

Rebecca Spencer stated at the January 2016 VAAC meeting, the committee gave a lot of feedback regarding bringing more structure to the meetings as well as a request for establishing goals and a mission statement. In response to that feedback, Ms. Spencer introduced Len Whittrock, who has an expertise in assisting groups with setting goals and making progress. Mr. Whittrock gave a brief background on his organizational development work; his role will be to assist the committee in effectively working together to achieve goals.

Mr. Whittrock began by asking the committee what they felt was the purpose of the VAAC meetings. Ruthee Goldkorn stated that the VAAC meetings were established by the Secretary of State's Office to address the needs of the Disability Community, voters with disabilities and the committee is typically run by people with disabilities. The VAAC meetings are designed to be an information conduit for the needs of voters with disabilities so they have equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process. Gabriel Taylor stated that the VAAC meetings should create collaboration with the ROV and the Disability Community to ensure increased accessibility and provide opportunities for voters with disabilities to have equal access to the election process and an equal voice regarding procedures that provide services to the Disability Community. Mario Janesin stated the Disability Community should be able to provide information to the ROV and the VAAC regarding what the needs are from voters with different types of disabilities. Lisa Price stated that there are many different disabilities and everyone should have an equal voice; she also agreed with Mr. Janesin's and Ms. Goldkorn's statements. Selina Bremenstuhl stated the main purpose of the VAAC should be accessibility and also identifying the major problems in Riverside County and working on one or two of them to make a difference. Ms. Bremenstuhl asked for clarification on whether you need a disability to be a member of the VAAC. Ms. Goldkorn stated that the VAAC addresses the needs of voters with disabilities; however, you do not need to have a disability to participate. John Kopp stated that the VAAC members should identify the barriers in governance and make recommendations to fix those discrepancies. Feliciano Godoy agrees with Mr. Janesin's statement and he feels that the sub-committees will help make the VAAC stronger. Pauline Gaeta stated that she has learned a lot about other disabilities and hopes to help voters with disabilities at the polls so they have equal access. Roderic Ballance stated that he agrees with the other statements and feels that some of the issues brought up in the January 2016 VAAC meeting have been addressed. Mr. Whittrock thanked everyone for their perspectives on the purpose of the VAAC. It seems everyone is in agreement that the VAAC's purpose is to identify barriers for voters with disabilities and fix them to help the community. The group should allow every person to share their thoughts and opinions freely and in a respectful way.

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III. Ground Rules & Deal Breaker

Mr. Whittrock reviewed ground rules that will help the VAAC be successful and serves the needs of everyone. The ground rules are as follows:

1. One conversation at a time – be respectful
2. Build on ideas – give feedback on how things can be made better
3. Defer judgment – listen and be open

These ground rules are put in place to ensure everyone has a voice and that the group works together to make progress on a common goals. Mr. Whittrock asked how to effectively handle a situation when someone violates the ground rules or challenges an idea. Mr. Kopp stated that the group should have stability and courtesy for one another. He also suggested having a moderator elected from the group or someone from the ROV office. Ms. Goldkorn stated that the sub-committee is working on by-laws that define the chair of the committee being responsible for running the meeting. The chair should follow the agenda and runs the meeting instead of a moderator. Foster Tucker asked that the person leading the meeting keep in mind that the people on the teleconference may want to add to the meeting. He also stated that all official communications coming from the ROV should be acceptable in multiple formats, including the website. A special effort should be made to sensitize candidates and political parties and make campaign materials and outreach more inclusive. Mr. Whittrock identified Julie Caban as the chair of the VAAC; Ms. Caban stated that she is fine with leading the meetings. Mr. Whittrock made a suggestion of using a tool, such as a bell, as an effective way to handle a person that is speaking out of turn and helping the group refocus. Ms. Goldkorn stated that the group should object a person speaking instead of using a bell. Ms. Gaeta stated that there should be a supervisor that observes the group to tell a person when they are out of line. She also suggested having a feedback form for each meeting to see how the group felt about the meeting. Mr. Taylor stated that the main issue of the committee is that there are 10-12 official members and everyone has their own personal agenda. The committee should have common goals in order for the VAAC meetings to be successful and gain credibility. Ms. Goldkorn stated that the by-laws and mission statement should be the guiding principal of the committee. The by-laws have been finished and will be sent out soon. Mr. Kopp stated that the chair should be responsible for structuring the meeting and pointing out what issues need to be addressed. Ms. Spencer stated that ROV is open to restructuring the meetings and naming a different member of the committee as chair. Mr. Janesin stated due to this being an election year, the group should hold off on restructuring until 2017 and at that time a member of the Disability Community can run the committee. Ms. Goldkorn stated the by-laws will be presented to the VAAC for ratification at the July 2016 meeting and will not be put into place until January 2017.

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Mr. Taylor stated that the group should not rush into restructuring the meetings and instead work on it over time to ensure everything is done correctly.

IV. Clarity every group needs for success

Mr. Whittrock asked once the barriers are identified, how does the group work on fixing it? Mr. Ballance stated that the focus should always be on accessibility. The group should not over engineer the VAAC and work on ensuring everyone has equal and free access to voting. Ms. Goldkorn stated that the issues are the logistics of polling places, such as opening time, workers, and equipment and those barriers to accessibility need to be removed to establish successful polling places. Chris Neubauer stated that ROV does evaluate all programs for effectiveness and sets attainable goals for election processes. It is a process and the timeframes are set based on suggestions, funding and how it affects the election process. Ms. Spencer stated that ROV would be more successful by being able to focus on one item at a time; ROV is aware that there is always room for improvement and they are willing to engage in that.

V. Recommendations or Goals

Mr. Whittrock asked the group to discuss one goal that can be the focus of the committee's effort. Mr. Taylor stated that accessibility at the polls is one of the most immediate issues. He feels that the committee should stop talking about the goals that need to be accomplished and start working on them. Mr. Janesin stated that the main goal of the committee should be to provide a list of polling places to the VAAC members so they can check them for accessibility before the June 2016 election. Mr. Kopp said it is important to help voters that are not able to drive, get to the polls. He also stated that the Vote-By-Mail application should have the postage paid to make it as easy as possible for voters with mobility issues. Mr. Godoy stated that the feedback process could be improved; possibly have the voters leave an email address during registration so they can fill out a survey online. He also asked if there was an accessible format of the description of the Election Officer duties. Mr. Kopp suggested that ROV create a database of the volunteers that are willing to pick up voters and take them to the polls to vote.

VI. Next Steps

Mr. Whittrock encouraged the group to come up with a broad range of ideas that can be implemented and later they can be narrowed down and prioritized. Ms. Goldkorn stated the number one priority should be the list of polling places, when the inspections are being done, who is doing the inspecting and when the poll worker is training on setting up a

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compliant polling place. She also asked what ROV expectations were for the VAAC members in facilitating the accessibility training. Mr. Neubauer stated that the polling places are in the final stages of being selected for the June 2016 election. The surveying and selection process is ongoing for the November 2016 election. If anyone has suggestions for a polling place, please send the information to ROV. The training schedules are also being finalized as well and all the information regarding the polling places will be available soon.

VII. Subcommittee Updates

By-Laws Sub-Committee - Mr. Taylor reported that the sub-committee is working on the final stages of the draft by-laws. The draft by-laws will be sent out to the committee for review and feedback. Mr. Taylor asked that any requested revisions be sent to him. Mr. Janesin stated that no other counties have established by-laws for their VAAC. He is hopeful that Riverside County's by-laws will assist other counties in creating their own VAAC.

Mobility Sub-Committee - Ms. Goldkorn reported that she is still waiting for site locations to address mobility and path of travel at the polling places.

Visually Impaired Sub-Committee – Mr. Godoy reported that the sub-committee reviewed the site and guide techniques to assist visually impaired voters; they have identified volunteers if needed. They are also working on a training location for Accessibility Equipment Training. The sub-committee also discussed keeping the sample ballots accessible to the visually impaired voters by using compatible formats.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Sub-Committee – Ms. Price reported that the sub-committee is compiling helpful information on things that would make the voting process easier for deaf voters. They would like to see this information added to the Election Officer Handbook. Ms. Gaeta stated that she sent the information to Ms. Caban so a separate section for the deaf/hard of hearing can be added to the handbook.

VIII. June Election Updates

Mr. Neubauer report that Riverside County currently has 876,000 registered voters. They are expecting to reach 900,000 by the close of registration on May 23rd and 1,000,000 by November. For the June 2016 Election, there are 8 different elections running simultaneously with 62 ballot types and 564 voting precincts. He asked the VAAC members for their support with recruiting poll workers. Mr. Neubauer discussed the cross over ballots for No Party Preference non-partisan voters. If you are registered with a political party,

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you can only vote for a candidate running for president in that party. A “No Party Preference” voter will automatically receive a non-partisan ballot, which will have no presidential candidates listed. However, upon request, a “No Party Preference” voter can instead receive a ballot to vote the presidential ballot of the following parties:

- American Independent Party
- Democratic Party
- Libertarian Party

If you would like to re-register to change your address or political party, it must be done by May 23rd. To vote in the Republican primary, you must be registered with the Republican Party. To vote in the Peace and Freedom primary, you must be a registered Peace and Freedom Party member. To vote in the Green Party, you must be a registered member of the Green Party. To vote in the Central Committee contests, you must be a member of that party. Voters registered as No Party Preference will have until May 31st to request a ballot from 1 of the 3 parties listed above. Due to the 34 candidates in the US Senate contest, voters will be receiving a two card ballot so the US Senate candidates will be in one column. Ms. Goldkorn asked if there will be additional magnifiers at the polls due to the small size of the font on the ballots. Mr. Neubauer stated that additional magnifiers will be provided. The sample ballots for the June 2016 Election will start going in the mail today. The Vote-By-Mail ballots will start going in the mail on May 9th. The last day to register and change a party affiliation is May 23rd. Mr. Neubauer stated there is a tentative go-live date for Democracy Live on May 9th. ROV will offer the VAAC a demonstration prior to it going live. The curbside doorbell will only be utilized at residences being used as polling places. ROV will have approximately 300 permanent and temporary staff members working on Election Day. ROV is still looking for an additional 700 people to work at the polls for the June 2016 Election. The Election Officer application is available to be sent out in PDF and Word format.

IX. Questions/ Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 a.m.