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**ART TINOCO**  
Registrar of Voters



**MATTHEW CEBALLOS**  
Assistant Registrar of Voters

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**REGISTRAR OF VOTERS**  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

**Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 25, 2024 | 10:00 a.m.**

***Members:***

Larry Smith, Chair  
Miguel Borquez, Vice Chair  
Gabriel Taylor, Committee Member  
John Kopp, Committee Member

***Guests:***

Pilar Cole, Systems Change Advocate, Community Access Center Riverside  
Oksana Estrada, Deputy City Clerk, City of Jurupa Valley  
John Paul Maier, City Clerk, City of Hemet  
Jessica Matie, Office Specialist in City Clerk Office, City of Hemet  
Renee Castor, Executive Assistant to Superintendent, Desert Center  
Unified School District

***Registrar of Voters Staff:***

Art Tinoco, Registrar of Voters  
Matthew Ceballos, Assistant Registrar of Voters  
Alice Kim, Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters  
Alma Del Carmen, Administrative Services Analyst I

***Meeting Commenced at 10:00 a.m.***

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***I. Welcome/Introductions***

Introductions were made of the following staff: Registrar Art Tinoco and Committee Chair Larry Smith. Following staff introductions, attendees of the meeting made introductions.

***a. Welcome and Updates from Art Tinoco, Registrar of Voters***

Art Tinoco welcomed the committee and briefly summarized the focus of the VAAC committee. The VAAC is to assist the Registrar of Voters with any issues that are important to the community, especially the disability community.

Mr. Tinoco shared that he was recently appointed the Registrar of Voters for Riverside County. He has been an election administrator for over 22 years now, and most of his work has been in the County of Riverside. He is open to feedback and ideas that will assist in making the electoral process better.

Mr. Tinoco shared some of the items that he has started and will continue working on in the next few months and years: regaining the public's trust, combating misinformation, expanding the Registrar of Voters outreach footprint, and diversifying how information is delivered to the community.

Mr. Tinoco is also working on implementing recommendations made in an internal assessment written by Neal Kelley, former Registrar of Voters of Orange County. A committee consisting of Registrar of Voters staff has been formed to identify better practices and areas that require improvement. The Registrar of Voters office is also working with Westbound Communications, a communications consultant company, to strategize how to best approach the community with correct and information.

Mr. Tinoco expanded on other items that are currently being worked on. The Registrar of Voters office is working on mailing all English and Spanish Voter Information Guides and official ballots on time. Multiple positions are also

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being added to the Registrar of Voters office to increase workflow. Major building renovations have also been implemented at of the Registrar of Voters office, increasing the opportunity for constituents to observe the electoral process and conduct meaningful observation.

Mr. Tinoco shared that Julie Caban, previous Chair of the VAAC, retired in December 2023. Larry Smith was appointed as Chair and Miguel Borquez as Vice Chair. Mr. Tinoco shared his screen to show the logo that the Registrar of Voters office is using for this upcoming election. The logo's tagline is "Your Vote. Every Voice. Our Future."

Mr. Tinoco introduced the new leadership team of the Registrar of Voters office. Mr. Tinoco appointed Matthew Ceballos to Assistant Registrar of Voters. There is a current vacancy for Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters in the services division. Alice Kim is Chief Deputy Registrar of Voters in the operations division. Elizabeth Florer is the new Public Information Officer for the department.

Mr. Tinoco announced that for this upcoming March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary Election, the Registrar of Voters office would be hiring approximately 1,000 temporary employees and 1,200 Election Officers.

***II. Approval of September 28, 2023 VAAC Minutes***

John Kopp made a motion to accept the September 28, 2023 VAAC minutes; Gabriel Taylor seconded. The September 28, 2023 VAAC minutes were accepted.

***III. Discussion on New State and Federal HAVA Funds Available to Counties***

Larry Smith shared that the Secretary of State posted a CCROV, a written advisory known as CCROVs since they are directed to County Clerks & Registrars of Voters, in November 2023. This advisory stated that for fiscal

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year 2023 and 2024, 4.2 million dollars in state and federal funds will be available for polling place accessibility. Out of that 4.2 million, available to Riverside County is \$158,820.41. The Registrar of Voters office is looking at ways to use those funds to provide the most accessibility to Vote Centers as possible. Registrar of Voters staff are currently discussing ideas on how to increase accessibility and what equipment to purchase. As the date approaches of requesting and receiving those funds, the VAAC members will be asked for any input and advice on best practices for extending those funds. Information will be shared with the VAAC on how the Registrar anticipates using those funds. Mr. Smith announced that he would email all VAAC members the CCROV that outlines the amount of HAVA funds that County of Riverside will receive and what it can be spent on.

Gabe Taylor shared that it would be helpful to have a checklist of the items that are currently being funded having specifically to do with accessibility. That would give VAAC members a sense of what is currently being funded and may spark some ideas of additional items that can be funded. Mr. Smith agreed to add a checklist of items that are currently purchased for accessibility to the email that will go out to VAAC members, to be sent out as we approach the date of receiving the HAVA funds.

***IV. Schedule for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election Cycle***

***a. Ballot Scanner Video***

Mr. Tinoco shared that the Ballot Scanner had been successfully introduced in the November 7, 2023 City of Perris Special Measure Election. The Ballot Scanner will now be implemented throughout the County of Riverside with the deployment of one Ballot Scanner to each Vote Center in the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election. As a relatively new piece of equipment, Mr. Tinoco is increasing communications with the community on the use of the Ballot Scanner. The Ballot Scanner is an optional device where a voter may come into a Vote Center and be asked to scan their ballot. If the voter

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does not wish to do so, the voter can drop off their ballot in the ballot box in the back of the scanner. Those unscanned ballots will be returning to the Registrar of Voters office and will be scanned at the office. The Ballot Scanner has a SD Card that records the contests selections of all the ballots cast. Election Officers will return the SD Card to the Registrar of Voters office on Election Night, March 5<sup>th</sup>.

In preparation for the implementation of the Ballot Scanners, Registrar of Voters staff created a video on the Ballot Scanner that captures all the scenarios that can happen when a ballot is inserted, each ballot marked differently. This video has been shown to all Leads and Election Officers that will be staffing Vote Centers. (*A "Scanning a Ballot" video was shared on the screen for all meeting guests to view*). Below is the narration for the "Scanning a Ballot" video:

*Up next, let's see the Ballot Scanner in action.*

*The Election officer assigned to the Ballot Scanner will greet the voter and instruct the voter to insert their ballot into the Ballot Scanner. Let the voter know that you can assist them if needed.*

**Language Selection:** *First, let's go over a function of the Ballot Scanner. Upon request from the voter, the Ballot Scanner language can be changed from the default language of English to Spanish. This language change can be done at the beginning or at any time during the scanning session. After the voter has completed their session, the scanner will return to English.*

**Good Paper Ballot:** *Let's see a voter with a good Ballot on Demand paper ballot. Good ballots are ballots with no issues, meaning the voter properly voted for every contest on their ballot. Once the ballot is inserted into the Ballot Scanner, the ballot will cast and drop into the ballot cart. For voters who choose to use a ballot secrecy sleeve, collect it and give them an I voted sticker.*

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**Undervote:** Next, let's see what the review screen of the Ballot Scanner looks like. The voter can navigate the review screen by pressing the up and down arrows. Shown here is an undervoted ballot. When a voter does not vote for every contest allotted to them, that is considered an undervoted ballot. For example, a contest asking for 3 selections, but the voter only selected 2. The voter can press return to get their ballot back to complete at a voting booth or they can press cast, without making any additional selections.

**Overvote:** When the Ballot Scanner detects an overvote, the voter will have the option to request a new ballot from the election officer or cast the ballot as is. Election officers should let the voter know that if they cast their ballot as is, they will forfeit the overvoted contest, and no selection will be tabulated for that contest.

**Ambiguous Mark:** Another scenario is the Ambiguous Mark. This can happen if a voter has not fully filled in their bubble, or if a voter marks their ballot with a x instead of filling in their bubble. The Ballot Scanner will not take ballots with ambiguous marks. The voter will need to remedy their ballot if possible. If not possible, the voter will need a new ballot.

**Write-In:** The review screen will also show if the voter wrote in a candidate's name as their selection for a contest.

**Blank Ballot:** If a voter does not fill in any selection on their ballot, the review screen will show the ballot as Blank. The voter will have the option to go back to a voting booth to fill out their ballot. Some voters might want to cast a blank ballot.

**Red Ink:** If the voter uses red ink on their ballot, the Ballot Scanner cannot detect it. The review screen will show the ballot as blank.

**Good AVU Ballot:** Voters who use the Accessible Voting Unit (AVU) will also cast their ballot into the Ballot Scanner. Let's see a voter with a good

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*AVU ballot. Good ballots are ballots with no issues, meaning the voter properly voted for every contest on their ballot. Once the ballot is inserted into the Ballot Scanner, the ballot will cast and drop into the ballot cart.*

***Undervote AVU Ballot:*** For AVU ballots with an under-vote, the review screen will alert the voter that they can make additional selection for the under-voted contest. If the voter wishes to fill in the under-voted selections, the voter will require a new session on the AVU. The AVU does not allow the voter to overvote on a contest.

*And with that, the voter has cast their ballot. Finish things up by giving the voter an I voted sticker.*

After the “Scanning a Ballot” video finished, Mr. Smith asked if anyone had any questions.

John Kopp asked if Vote Center staff would receive training to inform voters that, if their intention is to vote the contest with an undervote, they can ignore the “Undervote” warning message and press “Cast” to cast their ballot as is. Mr. Smith confirmed that Vote Center staff will receive training on assuring voters that they can cast their ballot with an undervote if that is their intention.

***b. Key Dates***

Mr. Smith shared important dates for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election. Voter Information Guides started to be mailed on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Vote-by-Mail Ballots will start to be mailed out on February 5<sup>th</sup>, the first day that Vote-by-Mail Ballots can be mailed out. About 1.3 million Vote-by-Mail Ballots will be mailed out to voters. All registered voters in Riverside County will be mailed a ballot. Voters can return their ballot via mail or by dropping it off at a ballot drop-off location or Vote Center.

The last day to register to vote or change political party preference and receive a non-provisional ballot used to be February 20<sup>th</sup>. However, there will

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be some changes this election regarding registration at Vote Centers. If voters were already registered, they will be allowed to update their address or change political party preference at Vote Centers live. That is a recent change that will be implemented this election.

The last day to request a Vote-by-Mail Ballot is February 27<sup>th</sup>. The last day to accept Vote-by-Mail Ballots, postmarked on or before Election Day, will be March 12<sup>th</sup>, 7 days after Election Day.

The March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election results must be certified by April 4, 2024.

***c. Vote Centers and VBM Drop-Off Locations***

There will be approximately 106 ballot drop-off locations, including city clerk offices. Ballot drop-off locations will open February 5<sup>th</sup>, the same day Vote-by-Mail Ballots are first mailed out to voters. City Clerk locations will be opened during normal City Clerk business hours. Non-city clerk locations will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Two secure ballot drop-off boxes are also available at the Registrar of Voters office, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

There will be 17 Vote Centers open for 11-days, from February 24<sup>th</sup> through March 5<sup>th</sup>. There will be 148 Vote Centers open for 4-days, from March 2<sup>nd</sup> through March 5<sup>th</sup>. All Vote Centers will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All Vote Centers, including the Registrar of Voters office, will be open on Election Day, March 5<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

***d. ADA Surveys***

Mr. Smith shared that the Registrar of Voters conducted about 205 accessibility surveys for Vote Centers for this March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election. 205 surveys were conducted to select the 148 Vote Centers. Of the selected 148 Vote Center sites, about 120 of them need



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some form of mitigation. The mitigation can vary from a doorstep to a door monitor to ramps, cones, and mats. There will be door monitors to physically open and close doors at 19 Vote Center sites for accessibility. The Registrar of Voters office is requiring the following for various locations: 94 doorstops, 127 cones large and small for protrusions or impediments to accessibility or paths of travel, 2 curb ramps, 6 modification changes to accessible routes, 5 accessible parking signs need to be erected to allow for accessible parking, and 6 threshold ramps that go from the door thresholds into the Vote Centers are needed. 28 Vote Center sites require no mitigation at all.

**e. ASL and Interpreter Services**

Mr. Smith shared that there are different programs being offered to voters at Vote Centers for ASL and Interpreter services. The Registrar of Voters office is currently working on finalizing the contract with a company to secure these services. If a voter needs ASL or interpreter services, for a language that is not available onsite, the Vote Center Leads will call a number to secure an ASL or language interpreter that can participate in a group video call between the voter, the Vote Center Lead, and the interpreter. More information will be provided after we finalize the contract for these services.

Mr. Taylor shared that he had conversations with other counties about actively recruiting Vote Center staff that are fluent in ASL. Some counties are approaching different community organizations to work in recruiting ASL interpreters, and recruiting from local organizations may also lower costs.

Mr. Tinoco shared that the ASL interpreting services that the Registrar of Voters office is contracting is a pay-per-use service so there will be no charge if we do not use the service. Rise Interpreting has assisted in the past with ASL interpreting services. There have been improvements in securing language interpretation services, starting this past December 2023 with the Voter Education Workshops as we secured instantaneous interpreting for Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Korean languages.

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Mr. Taylor shared that, in order to make voters more aware of ASL interpreting services available at Vote Centers, it may be helpful if there was signage at the check in table notifying voters that ASL is available. Several advocates in the deaf and hard of hearing community promote the use of creating a sign using hands symbols to signify ASL services. Mr. Taylor said that he would provide samples of signs that his agency or other counties use to assist the Registrar of Voters office in developing their own sign for Vote Centers.

***V. Update on “Train-the-Trainer” Presentation for March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election***

Mr. Smith confirmed that Gabriel Taylor will be hosting the “Train-the-Trainer” presentation before the March 2024 Presidential Primary Election. There will be about 600 employees attending the Lead Academy that will attend the presentation. This presentation informs the Leads on best practices for assisting voters who have a disability.

Mr. Taylor confirmed that he will be presenting on February 6<sup>th</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Taylor invited all VAAC members to join if they are available to discuss any accessibility needs and provide an additional perspective.

***VI. Registrar of Voters Outreach Efforts***

Mr. Smith shared that the Registrar of Voters office has hired a Department Public Information Officer, Elizabeth Florer, who will assist in coordinating outreach events throughout the county.

Mr. Kopp shared that a long time ago, discussions had come up about outreach to people who were incarcerated in a county jail but not yet convicted of any crime. These people are still eligible to vote but do not have the mobility to do so. Mr. Kopp asked if the Registrar of Voters office could provide details on how these voters receive and return their ballot.

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Matthew Ceballos shared that there are outreach efforts with all the Sheriffs and jails that the Sherriff's department operates. These voters who are temporarily incarcerated and are still eligible to vote as they have not yet been convicted of a crime or felony, they can complete registration forms and request a ballot. The voter's ballot type is based on their address that is on their voter registration file, not on the county jail's address. After the request for a ballot is made, the Registrar of Voters office coordinates with the Sheriff's office to make sure the voter receives a ballot.

Mr. Tinoco shared that, to make voting more accessible to those still eligible to vote in county jails, he is willing to consider scheduling outreach events, if allowed by the Sherriff's office, to provide or leave resources for voting.

Mr. Tinoco shared that he welcomes the VAAC members to bring forward any outreach events that they would like the Registrar of Voters office to participate in.

***VII. Additional Discussion and/or Announcements from Committee Members and or Public***

Pilar Cole asked if the names of the ballot drop-off locations for the March 5, 2024 Election would be sent out. Mr. Smith shared that all locations of the ballot drop-off locations and Vote Centers will be posted on the Registrar of Voters website by end of day.

No additional discussion, announcements, or comments were made from committee members or the public.

***VIII. Adjournment***

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 25, 2024.