

**CITIZENS ELECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**March 24, 2011**  
**Minutes**

In Attendance: Shirley Forslof, Whatcom County Auditor  
Debbie Adelstein, Chief Deputy Auditor  
Pete Griffin, Election Supervisor  
Nancy Moore, Auditor Staff  
Robbi Ferron, League of Women Voters  
Gerrit Kuiken, Republican Party  
Myra Ramos, Whatcom Fair Voting  
Marian Beddill, Guest  
J. Lynne Walker, Guest  
Don Hansey, Guest  
Steve Wolfe, Guest

Shirley Forslof called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. and provided an update on the following bills in the legislative session:

**SB 5171 (companion bill HB 1080)** would provide that ballots be mailed to overseas and military voters 45 days prior to an election (presently ballots are mailed 30 days prior). As a result of passage of the bill, both filing week and the Primary Election would be moved back two weeks. The bill is expected to pass.

**Changes to the substitute bill:**

- The bill would allow that military and overseas voters ballots be counted immediately after signature verification when they return their ballot electronically. The bill would eliminate the wait time to receive the voter's original signature to count the ballot. A change made in the substitute bill would allow for a blank page between the voter's signature and the ballot when the ballot is returned electronically.
- If a vacancy were to occur in an office too late to get on the primary ballot *or* between the primary and general election, a person will be appointed to that office and the position will be up for election in the next election for that office. This would eliminate the potential for more than two candidates appearing on the general ballot for the office, i.e., "horse race".

**SB 5124 (companion bill HB 1079)** would allow for the consolidation of election notices required by law. The bill is expected to pass. Shirley: We are currently consolidating the majority of legal election notices; the cost savings is substantial.

**HB 1860** allows for the modification of PCO elections and is a "moving target". Presently the bill also states there will be no presidential primary in 2012. The bill passed House Rules and will be discussed in Executive Committee in Senate Government Operations today, March 24.

Shirley: Every jurisdiction (i.e., cities, fire, water, school districts, etc.) pays their fair share of election costs with the exception of PCO elections and state and federal government in even year elections.

**HB 1031** is still active. The Chelan County Auditor has proposed the use of a ballot sleeve on the inside of the sealed ballot return envelope to contain the voted ballot. Currently a secrecy envelope contains the voted ballot. HB 1031 is a time and cost saving measure.

**HB 1142/ SB 5153** involving no primary election for less than three candidates is inactive.

**HB 1143/SB 5081** would mandate all county auditors to be nonpartisan. The bill is inactive.

Shirley: Six of 39 Washington State counties are charter counties, the balance are code counties. Five charter counties, Whatcom, San Juan, Snohomish, Pierce, and Clallam have nonpartisan auditors. King County has a nonpartisan election division director.

#### **Whatcom Fair Voting question regarding Auditor's Office budget cuts:**

Shirley: Two Recording positions were frozen and subsequently eliminated. The Internal Auditor position is presently not being funded and is on hold. It is the only position in the Auditor's Office that does not directly serve the public. The Election Division has undergone reorganization; Ethel retired in December 2010, one employee left, and Carolyn Duim is now the Election Technician. One Election position has been filled and another position is presently being advertised in-house.

#### **Spring Elections:**

April 26<sup>th</sup> : Blaine School District 503 Special Election (bond issue)

May 17<sup>th</sup> : Lynden School District 504 Special Election (new bond issue; different bond amount than the February 8<sup>th</sup> election)

Shirley: This is the last year there will be a May Election and the last year that districts can run a failed levy or a new bond measure in May. Spring elections beginning in 2012 will be in February and April only.

Pete: The April 26 Blaine School District Special Election has 10 military voters, 6 military overseas, and 59 overseas voters (includes Canada).

#### **Power Point presentation:**

Pete distributed a hard copy of his Power Point presentation on WinEDS 3.12 to 4.0 Hardware and Software Conversion. The hard copy of the presentation is on file in the CEAC minutes file folder in the Auditor's Office.

Total cost for the upgrade: \$13,057.98.

#### **Barcodes on Ballot:**

Pete: Two barcodes on a ballot; one on the upper left of the ballot and one on the upper right. The upper right barcode contains only the voter's precinct, the upper left barcode contains only what split, or portion of the precinct, the voter lives in. If the voter does not live in a split precinct, there will be no center bar in the upper left barcode. If there is a bar, it indicates the voter does live in a split precinct. The barcode contains no further information.

Shirley: We will consider including an explanation of the ballot barcodes in the Local Voters' Pamphlet.

Gerrit Kuiken: Thanked Shirley for having CEAC meetings and suggested posting the minutes to our website.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: April 28, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. in conference room #514.