

CITIZENS ELECTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
September 22, 2011
Minutes

In Attendance: Shirley Forslof, Whatcom County Auditor
Debbie Adelstein, Chief Deputy Auditor
Pete Griffin, Election Supervisor
Nancy Moore, Auditor Staff
Todd Donovan, City of Bellingham
Robbi Ferron, League of Women Voters
Margit Kingston, Disability Community
Gerrit Kuiken, Republican Party
Bill Verwolf, Small Cities Representative
Guests: Steve Schuck, Judy Mullenix, Larry Helm, Sharon Helm,
Marian Beddill

Shirley Forslof called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and introductions were made around the room.

Whatcom Fair Voting's Forum on Redistricting

Whatcom Fair Voting will hold a forum on redistricting in the basement of the Bellingham Library on October 1, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. The panelists will be Kelli Linville representing the Democratic Party, Robert Thorndike representing the Republican Party, and Debbie Adelstein, representing the Auditor's Office.

Permanent Ballot Drop Boxes

A \$14,000 federal grant (HAVA program) was issued to Whatcom County for the purchase of six permanent drive-up ballot drop boxes (cost includes the graphics on the boxes and installation). The permanent drop boxes will *replace* the ballot drop sites that were previously staffed and open on Election Day only. The six permanent drop boxes (in addition to the courthouse drive-up ballot drop box) will be open beginning at 8:30 a.m. on October 21 (18 days prior to Election Day) and will close at 8:00 p.m. sharp on Election Day.

Locations of the permanent ballot drop boxes are as follows:

- Blaine Library, 610 3rd St.
- Deming Library, 5044 Mt. Baker Highway
- Everson WECU, 106 E. Main St.
- Ferndale City Hall, 2095 Main St.
- Lynden Library (*behind* building), 216 4th St.
- Meridian Middle School, 861 Ten Mile Rd.
- Whatcom County Courthouse south parking lot, 201 Grand Ave.

The Whatcom County Auditor's Office is a ballot drop site and will be open to receive ballots beginning at 8:30 a.m. on October 21 and will close at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. On Election Day *only* Western Washington University will have a drop site at Viking Union, Room 714, from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The permanent drive-up ballot boxes will be emptied of ballots by a team of two different political party members at scheduled times throughout the 18-day election season. Ballots will

be placed in a sealed container with both party members verifying the seal, signing the seal log, and transporting the ballot boxes to the Auditor's Office.

Coming Soon - The Whatcom County Auditor's website will have the locations of and directions to the permanent ballot drop boxes.

November 8 General Election

There are 74 ballot styles, 186 separate ballot types, and approximately 153 candidates in the November 8, 2011 General Election.

UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act) ballots will be mailed on Friday, September 23. Legislation mandates that ballots be mailed to military and overseas voters 45 days prior to Election Day beginning in 2012. Whatcom County made the decision to implement the new legislation beginning with the November 8, 2011 General Election.

New in 2011, military and overseas voters *only* can return their voted ballot by fax or e-mail and have their ballot counted after their signature is verified (on the declaration page). Previously, we were unable to count a faxed or e-mailed ballot until the declaration was signed by the voter on the ballot envelope and the ballot was returned in the mail. A ballot returned by fax or e-mail will have to be duplicated onto a card-stock ballot so it can run through the 400C optical scan readers.

My Ballot

If a voter has not received their ballot or needs a replacement ballot, the voter can go to <http://wei.secstate.wa.gov/whatcom>, click on *My Vote*, and click on *My Ballot* to download a seven-page document that includes the voter's specific ballot, the declaration of signature, instructions, a secrecy coversheet, and even an envelope. The *My Ballot* system eliminates the need for a provisional ballot, a voter's advantage. The *My Ballot* system will be made active on Friday, September 23.

400C Optical Scan Reader Security Test

In the November 8 General Election a security test of the 400C optical scan readers will be performed for the Secretary of State's Office. A security plan must be submitted to the SOS prior to the General Election. The purpose of the test is to demonstrate that processing ballots does not result in the tabulation of ballots. The 400Cs require specific keystrokes to perform tabulation. The test will require passwords that will lockdown the system from tabulating (producing results) before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. With success of the test, in 2012 the SOS may begin allowing for the processing of ballots beginning the day *before* Election Day using the 400C optical scan readers. Presently, approximately 28 Washington State counties that are not using optical scan ballot counting equipment are allowed to begin processing ballots the day they begin to arrive in the mail.

Voting Your Ballot

Based on the number of blank write-in votes cast in the Primary Election, it appears many voters think they have to complete the head and tail of an arrow for every office and every measure on their ballot. A voter does not have to vote for every office and measure. *A voter need only vote for the offices and measures they wish to vote on.*

PCO Elections

The legislators are currently in committee meetings regarding PCO elections.

A proposed WAC (Washington Administrative Code) states that Precinct Committee Officers are a part of the Republican and Democratic parties which are private organizations based on the Supreme Court decision.

Decisions may be made in the 2012 legislative session about the conduct of PCO elections.

Redistricting

Proposed new County Council districts are unofficial at the present time. Once the districts are filed with the Auditor's Office they will become official.

Legislative and County Council lines are based upon population, precinct lines are based on the number of registered voters. Precincts cannot be divided by County Council districts. The City of Bellingham creates wards based upon registered voters. The Whatcom County Auditor's Office creates the precincts; however, the County Council approves the precinct boundaries.

State law mandates that precinct size not exceed 1,500 registered voters; Whatcom County's goal for precinct size is approximately 1,000 registered voters to allow for future expansion.

Look for detailed information about redistricting on the Whatcom County's website at <http://wei.secstate.wa.gov/whatcom>

Shirley Forslof Thanks CEAC

CEAC members thanked Shirley for her years of service as Whatcom County Auditor. They also applauded her for the formation of the CEAC committee that allows for citizen input and transparency of the election process.

Shirley in turn thanked CEAC members for their involvement and consistent participation in CEAC meetings. She expressed her appreciation to members for assisting with voter education.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Next meeting: October and December 2011 meetings are canceled. The next meeting will be announced at a later date.