**STATE OF HAWAII
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
STATEWIDE ELECTIONS ACCESSIBILITY
NEEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

APRIL 2, 2024 @ 1:30 PM

Pursuant to Section 92-3.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee will be meeting remotely using interactive conference technology. Members of the public may have participated in the meeting via Zoom.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Patricia Morrissey, Chair
James Gashel, Vice Chair
Kathryn Keim
Sheryl Nelson

PROCEEDINGS

I.   Call to Order [1:35 p.m.]

The regular meeting of the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Morrissey at 1:35 p.m.

II.   Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum [1:35 p.m.]

All members of the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee were present at the meeting with the exception of Committee Members Anand and Nelson.

III.   Approval of minutes for the March 12, 2024 meeting [1:38 p.m.]

Chair Morrissey made a motion to approve the minutes for the meeting of March 12, 2024, which was seconded by Vice Chair Gashel, and approved by

the Committee.

IV.     Update from the Office of Elections on the status of the Committee's previous recommendations relating to voter education, outreach, and accessible voting [1:39 p.m.]

Anthony Akamine, Election Information Specialist, Office of Elections (OE), provided an update on the accessible electronic ballot.  He shared that OE is currently drafting language that will be included in the email sent to voters that request an accessible electronic ballot.  He shared that the draft was sent to the Committee to share their feedback.

V.      Actions we should take action on before the fall election [1:51 p.m.]

Chair Morrissey outlined the following goals:

**Train voter service center (VSC) volunteers** – Chair Morrissey explained that she would like to provide training to volunteers at VSCs regarding how to help voters with accessibility needs.  She stated that she would take the lead and conduct in-person training.

**Establish a voter hotline** – Chair Morrissey explained that the hotline would be for both the general public and for people with accessibility needs.

**Provide voters transportation to VSCs** – Chair Morrissey stated that assuming the Committee becomes funded, they should use funds to provide voters transportation to the voter service centers.  She described working with The Cab or Uber to accomplish this.

Vice Chair Gashel acknowledged that the Committee will need to work directly with the County Elections Divisions regarding training VSC volunteers because VSCs are a responsibility of the counties.  He commented that the counties already provide training, however, he agreed that training specifically for accessibility is important.  He further agreed with Chair Morrissey, that there should be a way to offset the cost of transportation to a VSC.

Mr. Akamine confirmed for the Committee that VSCs are established by the County Elections Divisions, and the Committee would need to work directly with their offices regarding training volunteers.  Chair Morrissey said she would invite the County Clerks to the next meeting for this reason.  The Committee agreed that they could help the county offices prepare a resource such as a tip sheet or booklet for volunteers.

Donald Sakamoto, Chair for the City & County of Honolulu Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee, shared that the nonprofit organization, Catholic Charities, has alternative vehicles for wheelchairs and walkers, and suggests that they could be contracted to help transport voters. He added that private companies often do not have vehicles with wheelchair lifts.

Mr. Akamine and Nedielyn Bueno, Voter Services Section Head, OE, shared that OE has an established phone number for voters year-round. They explained that the office line is open Monday through Friday to answer general voter questions as well as questions about accessible voting options. Ms. Bueno shared that there is an increase of calls when ballots are sent out, and that staff continues to be available throughout the year responding to emails and phone calls.

Chair Morrissey suggested that OE release public service announcements specifically promoting accessibility services including information about free transportation to the VSCs.

Ms. Bueno explained that language informing voters of accessibility services is already incorporated into OE's main voter education materials and will be included in upcoming media campaigns.

Chair Morrissey left the meeting at 2:15 pm.

VI.     Status of HB 1976 [1:40 p.m.]

Vice Chair Gashel provided an update on HB 1976. He shared that the bill requires OE to annually request funds to support the needs of the Committee. He shared that the bill is pending in the Ways and Means Committee. He added that the Judiciary Committee added an amendment to the bill that put $10,000 into the bill. Vice Chair Gashel mentioned that he has requested a hearing.

Chair Morrissey asked Vice Chair Gashel for further explanation on how the Legislature operates. Vice Chair Gashel directed her to look into resources prepared by the Public Access Room for more information and provided further explanation to the Committee about the steps for a bill to pass.

Mr. Sakamoto recommended if a bill is on the agenda, that a description or link be included for the public to learn more about the bill.

VII.    General discussion on issues for voters with disabilities

The agenda item was not addressed.

VIII.   Adjournment [2:15 p.m.]

The meeting was adjourned once Chair Morrissey left the meeting as there was no longer quorum.