

Ranked Choice Voting Blue Ribbon Review Panel

Meeting Minutes May 23, 2007

The fourth meeting of the Blue Ribbon Review Panel to discuss the Implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in Pierce County was held May 23, 2007 at the Election Center, located at 3009 South 36th Street in Tacoma.

Pat McCarthy, The Pierce County Auditor, began the meeting at 6:00 pm with a welcome and introductions. Present were:

Panel Members

Katie Blinn	Office of the Secretary of State
Nathe Lawver	Pierce County Democratic Party
Deryl McCarty	Pierce County Republican Party
Ruth Bennett	Libertarian Party of Washington State
Kevin Phelps	Chamber of Commerce
Dennis Jones	Pierce County Veterans Advisory Council
Nancy Pearson	League of Women Voters of Washington

Election Staff

Pat McCarthy	Pierce County Auditor
Keri Rooney	Chief Deputy Auditor
Lori Augino	Elections Manager
Michael Rooney	Elections Supervisor
Rebecca Brauhn	Election Specialist
Gina Eckhart	Elections Clerk
Michelle Ackers	Election Specialist
Geri Powers	Poll Worker Coordinator
Joanne Inglett	Election Center Floor Manager

Others present were:

Ronald Klein	Director of Communications, Pierce County
Scott Konopasek	ForeFront Election Solutions, Managing Partner

Also present were 10 persons representing the general public and David Seago from The News Tribune of Tacoma.

Pat re-introduced the discussion topic for this meeting. The topic was:

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)-Voting Options

Three scenarios were presented by Pat McCarthy as a conversation starter:

- Scenario No. 1 Keep current level of service
- Scenario No. 2 Create something new (vote centers)
- Scenario No. 3 Conduct all elections by mail

The panel members were asked to consider three things during the discussion time:

- Minimize complexity/confusion of Polls Workers, Voters, Election Staff
and the public
- Avoid barriers to voters
- Maintain voter confidence

Scenario No. 1: Input and Feedback

- Pros-- Familiar to voters
- Less confusion for voters
- Poll workers can answer RCV questions
- Traditional system
- Voters know the poll workers and get a community
feeling when voting in person
- Poll machines will help reduce voter error
- Voter education at the polls is easier

- Cons-- Labor intensive for the Poll Workers
- Multiple ballot chain of custody confusion
- Like having two elections at the same time
- Expensive (to have polls open) doesn't make fiscal sense
- Too complex
- New process on DAU's for poll workers to learn
- Adding to our already complex system
- Provisional ballots will increase during the Presidential Election

Scenario No. 2: Input and Feedback

- Pros-- Wait until 2010
- Also serve as a drop off center for absentees
- Start on a smaller election (spring)

- Cons-- Too many changes at one time
- Voter confusion
- Discourages voter participation

Inconvenient
Too far for some people to go
Extra work for staff
Investment in electronic poll book mandatory/costly

Scenario No. 3: Input and Feedback

Pros-- Have VBM in the spring of 2008 first
Pierce County has done this before (VBM only)
Environmentally friendly
Eliminate confusion for voters between counties
It's better all the way around
Consistent with Washington States trends (36/39 counties VBM)
Consistent with what voters want in Washington State
Streamlines the process
Provides greater security
Increases participation, especially in the spring
Voters will be less likely to forget to vote
Express Booths simulate a poll experience
Postage Paid – Voters love it
Unmanned drop boxes could mitigate postage issue
Reconciliation/Audit will be more efficient
Set up centers for disability access in addition

Cons—Postage increase because of multiple ballots
Need to educate 25% of the voters
Prepare for lots of calls from the 25%
Many more callers asking about RCV
Cannot correct voter mistakes
Voter fraud opportunity
Voter education will not be in person
Limits disability access

Scenario No. 4: Input and Feedback

Pros-- Have additional workers explaining RCV everywhere
Wait until 90% of voters request VBM and then close the polls
Cons—none

All the Blue Ribbon Review Panel members contributed input to the discussion. The discussion time continued for approximately 1 ½ hours

Ruth Bennett, Libertarian Party of Washington, proposed her suggested replacement for the Charter:

“ The County Executive Committee, or, if there is none, the State Executive Committee of each minor party who files with the State Public Disclosure

Commission may determine which candidates may use their party label for each county level office.”

Some discussion followed.

Keri Rooney, Pierce County Chief Deputy Auditor, gave overview of our current voter education programs.

Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Auditor, introduced the discussion topic for the next meeting to be held on May 30, 2007:

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) – Voter Education

Three scenarios were presented with an explanation given by Ron Klein, Pierce County Director of Communications.

Panel members were reminded to consider these items when they deliberate the ‘Voter Education’ scenarios:

- To inform and educate all Pierce County voters
- To support and enhance voter’s comprehension
- To promote ballot marking effectiveness and accuracy
- Promote confidence in the process and minimize voter error

Homework assignment is to review all scenarios, brainstorm other scenarios, provide Input and feedback, come to the next meeting on May 30th prepared to discuss.

Pat concluded the meeting with a thank you to all the Blue Ribbon Review Panel members and special guests.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 pm..

