

**MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMITTEE**

DIANA L. MENDEZ  
Chairman

MARIA V. PAREDEZ  
Vice Chairman

REYNA RODRIGUEZ  
Member

ELLEN WOITALLA  
Member

AGNES CALOGNE  
Member



SUZETTE MACHADO  
Elections Program Coordinator

PATRICIA SAMANIEGO  
Clerk

**LANGUAGE  
ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE**

TULARE/AKERS  
PROFESSIONAL CENTER  
5300 W Tulare Ave, Ste 105  
Visalia, CA 93277  
(559) 839-2100

**MINUTES**

**Present: Members Voitalla, Mendez, and Paredez**  
**Staff Present: Suzette Machado and Patricia Samaniego**  
**Absent: Members Calogne and Rodriguez**

**September 14, 2023**

**10:00 a.m.**  
**Registrar of Voters Office, Conference Room**  
**5300 W Tulare Ave, Ste 105**  
**Visalia, CA 93277**

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC  
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

At this time, members of the public may comment on any item not appearing on the agenda. Under state law, matters presented under this item cannot be discussed or acted upon by the Committee at this time. For items appearing on the agenda, the public is invited to make comments at the time the item comes up for Committee consideration. Any person addressing the Committee will be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes so that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak with a total of fifteen (15) minutes allotted for the Public Comment Period. At all times, state your name and address for the record.

1. Approve January 12, 2023 Minutes.

**The meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m.**  
**Voitalla-Paredez, 3-0 Approved January 12, 2023 Minutes.**  
**Resolution No. 2023-004**

2. Public Comments.

**None.**

3. New Office Tour.

**Staff showed the committee the new building and the new space the building has provided.**

4. Approve the following dates:

- a. November 9, 2023
- b. January 11, 2024
- c. May 9, 2024
- d. July 11, 2024
- e. September 12, 2024

Staff explained that the meetings for next year must be in accordance with the LAAC Bylaws, next year is an even-numbered year and there are certain months when the committee cannot meet: February, March, April, October, November, and December. January 11, 2024, is when nominations for Chair and Vice Chair will take place.

Woitalla-Paredes, 3-0 Approved the 2023 and 2024 meeting dates.

Resolution No. 2023-005.

## 5. Introduction of New Members.

Since the last meeting, new members have joined the committee. Vice Chairman Paredes went ahead and introduced herself first as a former county employee, recently retired. Member Ellen Woitalla introduced herself as a thirty-one-year retired teacher. As of 2021, she has been retired for four years and joined Elections as a poll worker, having worked as an Assistant Inspector for two different elections since then. Chairman Mendez introduced herself as the Deputy Chief for the Justice Employment and Health Team for County Counsel and has been a part of the committee for five years. ROV staff introduced themselves last. Suzette Machado introduced herself as the Elections Program Coordinator who helped the formation of the Language Accessible Advisory Committee and the Voting Accessible Advisory Committee to what a VCA county may mean for Tulare. Now, the county is not looking at becoming a vote-center county, however, through the input of the committees, we are looking to better ourselves. Election Clerk, Patricia Samaniego, took over the role of Clerk of the Committee from now-retired, Department Secretary, Denise Ybarra.

## 6. Discuss Voter Outreach Activities.

May's Senior Day at Mooney Grove Park was the largest turnout of poll worker applications. The event had brought fifteen applicants. In March, ROV staff and Member Calogne attended an event held at one of the poll sites for the last election, the Larry Itliong Resource Center. The center was hosting a Voter Outreach Event with the Philippine General Consulate of San Francisco. Staff noted that Member Calogne's efforts in recruiting poll workers were helpful in recruiting bilingual poll workers, notably applicants who speak Tagalog and Ilocano. Eight poll worker applications were received from that event. Member Calogne worked as a poll worker last election and that is how she got involved with this committee. Chairman Mendez asked staff about Exeter's National Night Out-turn out. At events, staff have been keeping track of applications handed out and applications returned. In Exeter, staff handed out eight applications and received five applications back. Staff called and emailed Downtown Visalians, who are hosting, "Hometown Heroes" on November 4<sup>th</sup>. No word has been received from them and it doesn't seem likely that the ROV office will be able to attend this event. Events that have been confirmed to attend are the Friday Pop-Up Event at Earlimart, the Springville Apple Festival, the Tulare County Health Fair, and Pioneer Days. Member Woitalla does voter registration independently with a group of volunteers to sign up new voters. She also offered a foot in the door for Hometown Heroes, if possible. Staff tried to contact the South Valley Industrial Summit about attending the event with an informational booth, but no word from their end has been made. The event is slated to be at the College of the Sequoias. Chairman Mendez inquired if anyone had other Voter Outreach ideas. Vice Chair Paredes asked if the Tulare Fairgrounds was a possibility. Staff noted that earlier in the year, it was investigated how much an information booth would cost and the price was out of budget. The cost of having a booth has increased

over the years and it has been reflected in the number of vendors that were seen present by staff. Vice Chair Paredez thought the amount of Outreach Events was nice and she would like to attend an Outreach Event as an extra set of hands to help recruit more poll workers. Member Weitalla asked how the office is reaching out to the high schools. Suzette replied that visiting high schools is something that the office is going to work on with the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State's office has a team to focus on reaching out to schools. Prior to the new move, there was a teacher from one of the local schools who started listing names of other teachers from so-and-so civics class and the move has put a hold on it. Vice Chair Paredez said that these kids are going to be of voting age, and we need opinions on them. Suzette said there was a time before when there were organizations that would go to the high schools to recruit kids to register to vote, but it had stopped just before COVID. Member Weitalla said she would like to be included as a former educator in whatever is going on within the schools. She said, that before groups could come on campus, but now it must be from within the school to have voter registration tables. Outside third-party groups can't enter without permission from the school or the board or if an invitation is provided and the presenting material must be approved beforehand to be used in a classroom. It used to be that these third-party groups could come to the school without any oversight at all. Member Weitalla expressed that it was unfair as a teacher because all curriculums must be approved but these random groups could come into the school with unvetted materials. She is happy to hear that these materials will be going through the ROV Office working with the SOS because we will have stricter standards based on fact instead of opinion. Suzette said there is no set date yet with SOS because there is much unpacking to do.

#### 7. Election Website Updates and Google Translate.

Staff recalled from one of the first meetings of the year that there had been talk from members of the committee about translating documents from the ROV webpage from English into other languages. Since then, the ROV I.T. team has been working on that using Google Translate. The main screen of the webpage has been successfully translated using Google, a few examples of the web page's translations have been from English to Spanish, English to Portuguese, and English to Tagalog/Ilocano. The language-translation capability using Google has many other languages that can be translated, but staff reminded the committee that not all documents have ready translations in all languages. Suzette said that this is a start and that this is a project that the IT team will continue to work on. Chairman Mendez noted that someone who speaks Portuguese will have to click on the word for another language to select their native language. She suggested having the word, "translate" as a default. Vice Chair Paredez asked staff if they had visited other counties' websites for translations. Staff said they have only visited the Kings County webpage and they also use Google Translate. Members of the committee said that although people can speak the same language, there are regional differences in speech, so no two words have the same meaning, and a person may be ridiculed as a result.

#### 8. Request items for the next meeting.

**None.**

#### 9. Adjournment to November 9, 2023 meeting.

**Adjourned at 11:15 a.m.**