

**MEMBERS OF THE  
COMMITTEE**

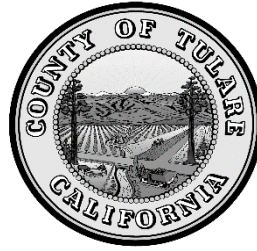
REBECCA A. DONABED  
Chairman

TINA SHILLINGLAW  
Vice Chairman

MICHAEL ESQUIBEL  
Member

RON SHILLINGLAW  
Member

ELLEN WOITALLA  
Member



SUZETTE MACHADO  
Elections Program  
Coordinator

PATRICIA SAMANIEGO  
Clerk

## **VOTING ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

GOVERNMENT PLAZA  
5951 S. Mooney Boulevard  
Visalia, CA 93277  
(559) 624-7300

# **MINUTES**

**Present: Members Weitalla, T. Shillinglaw, and R. Shillinglaw**  
**Staff Present: Suzette Machado and Patricia Samaniego**  
**Absent: Members Donabed and Esquibel**

**July 27, 2023**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Registrar of Voters Office, Conference Room  
5951 South Mooney Boulevard  
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 May 25, 2023 Minutes.

**The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.**  
**R. Shillinglaw- T. Shillinglaw, 3-0 Approved May 25, 2023 Minutes.**  
**Resolution No. 2023-007.**

2. Public Comments.

**Public comment was given by Theresa Speake, a resident of Visalia and member of the Visalia Republican Women's group, stating that having this committee is very important and participation is critical to the democracy of our country and to see what Tulare County is doing to make voter accessibility available to its residents.**

3. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Education.

**Staff explained that Chairman Donabed and Member Esquibel work for Resources for Independence Central Valley. Both Chairman Donabed and Member Esquibel were absent, so staff would like to come back to this item at the next meeting so that they can elaborate on what kind of training they want to do with the poll workers. Vice chairman Shillinglaw**

elaborated that most ADA training deals with people who are in wheelchairs and doesn't focus on people with visual disabilities. She expressed the main reason she joined the committee was to bring awareness to visual issues that she experiences. In San Francisco, where she grew up, the bus stops are marked for the visually impaired, whereas in Tulare County they aren't marked at all unless the stops are nearby highly trafficked public places such as the mall or a supermarket. Suzette mentioned that staff can gather photos of the bus stops to then speak with Chairman Donabed and her supervisor, Sarah, to see what can be done to push visually accessible markings for the bus stops. Member Weitalla asked what organization the Chairman works for, staff said that the Chairman works for Resources for Independence Central Valley, an organization that supports people with disabilities. The Tulare County Office is located within the Visalia Transit Center's building. Suzette said that RICV is currently working on bringing awareness regarding the Voter's Choice Act and pushing for free bus rides to poll sites on Election Day. She added, that in the past, there was an election that had Vote Centers open for four days to check if Tulare County voters would like to transition to the Voters Choice Act model, or if voters wanted to stay with the standard poll sites for one day plus ballot drop boxes around the county for convenience.

4. Poll Sites surveyed and Poll Sites to be surveyed.

A. Prosperity Sports Park

Chairman Donabed was able to join the staff when they conducted their poll site survey at the park. The Chairman was asked by staff which Accessible parking she would use if she were a voter who used that site's accessible parking to which she replied that she would use the left side accessible parking. On the poll site survey pictures, there is a blue path outlined to get to the entrance, which is represented by a circle in the photos. There is an alternate path to get to the entrance as well, which is also outlined in blue. Both paths were smooth, but the alternate route is longer than the first route and the first route has a slight slope which may be rougher on folks' knees. The bathrooms for this poll site are always locked because the site has had issues in the past with homeless people. There is a bathroom inside the facility on the second floor. The bathroom is accessible by stairs or elevator. Member R. Shillinglaw asked if all the buses had wheelchair-accessible ramps. T. Shillinglaw said that depending on the bus, there are some that are on the side and some that do lower down the ramp from the back. Suzette said that this poll site is booked and confirmed to be used for March's Election and for November's Election.

Suzette said she is trying to schedule a survey at the Tulare Office of Education as soon as available. Parkside Chapel is scheduled for August 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 A.M.

5. Bus Stops available near polling places.

Staff arranged all bus stops available near polling sites listed in alphabetical order of the poll site's name plus walking distance. There were polling sites with bus stops not posted directly in front of the buildings, but rather a walking distance nearby. Staff wanted input from the committee to determine whether these poll sites could be considered truly accessible to the voters. Member Weitalla stated that the walking distance of half a mile was concerning, but the quarter-mile walk was usual for people to get their mail. Member T. Shillinglaw said that while looking at the pictures on the document, there wasn't a clear path denoted from the bus stop to the poll site. Staff suggested going through the bus stops that were more readily considered to be accessible first. At the bottom of the document, prior, select poll sites were already considered accessible if the stop was in front of the polling site. Member Weitalla commented the bus stop to Dinuba Christian Church looks more than point one mile. She noted the walk from Dinuba Christian Church may be longer than it appears to be, but it is still a much safer walk than that of Dinuba Memorial from the Dinuba Transit Center. All members raised concern about the status of a crosswalk or lack thereof in the photo of the bus stop

near Earlimart Memorial. Staff said they would look further into the matter. Suzette said First Baptist in Porterville told her the church could not be used as a poll site in March. Instead, she will reach out to Porterville College as they had been used as a poll site in the past. Regarding Larry Itliong Resource Center, there was concern if a crosswalk was nearby because committee members couldn't see one in the photos. Staff said they would investigate the area for a crosswalk. Member Woitalla said that Strathmore is considered available but not accessible for those with higher needs and Member T. Shillinglaw agreed. Staff created a list of bus stops committee members agreed upon as accessible/available.

R. Shillinglaw- Woitalla, 3-0 Approved list of Accessible Bus Stops at polling places  
Resolution No. 2023-008.

Staff created a list of bus stops that committee members agreed upon as not accessible/available.

Woitalla-R. Shillinglaw, 3-0 Approved Non-accessible list of Bus Stops at polling places  
Resolution No. 2023-009.

6. Vacancy and recruitment.

Staff noted that Members Woitalla and R. Shillinglaw are the committee's newest members.

7. Bylaws and suggested amendments.

Staff referred to the email sent to the ROV's County Counsel about the LAAC and VAAC's adherence to the Brown Act and the Bylaws associated with each committee. The Brown Act was only referred to in the "Closed Sessions" and it was advised that the "Closed Sessions" should be removed because as advisory bodies, neither the LAAC nor the VAAC are exposed to litigation threats, meaning that both committees cannot hold closed sessions. County Counsel does not interpret these Bylaws that these committees have to comply with the Brown Act because the Brown Act is only mentioned in an inapplicable section of the Bylaws. Member T. Shillinglaw said that when reading the Bylaws, she wasn't aware of what the Bylaws were. Staff gave a brief overview of the Brown Act. Suzette mentioned that the ROV Office is moving, and it would be an opportune time for the Bylaws to undergo necessary changes to reflect the new address. Thereafter August 21<sup>st</sup> the committee will be meeting at the new location inside the Tulare Akers Professional Center. A proposal to make available online teleconferencing of the meetings within the Bylaws as well. A vote was taken on the suggested amendments to the Bylaws.

T. Shillinglaw -R. Shillinglaw, 2-0 Approved suggested amendments to the Bylaws. Abstain-  
Woitalla 1-0.  
Resolution No. 2023-010.

8. Request items for future agendas.

No additional items were requested by the committee members.

9. Adjournment to September 28, 2023 meeting at the new location.

