

Assistive Technology (AT) Advisory Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 6, 2008
Final Minutes

Members Attending:

Scott Higdon, Chair
Tom Dowling
John Eisenburg
Peggy Fields
Elizabeth Flaherty
Joseph Foresta
Ben Garrett
Linda Harris
Doug James
Doug Owens
Brenda Wickard

Conference Phone Attendee:

Pat Beattie

Absent:

Senator Yvonne Miller
Ricky Palmateer
Sam Simon
Celestine Walker

Guests:

James Rothrock, Commissioner
Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)
Joseph Wallace, Ph.D., New Well Fund

Staff:

Dr. Joseph Ashley, DRS
Ken Knorr, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS)
Bob Krollman, VATS
Jane Lively, VATS
Elin Glass, VATS
Janice Austin, VATS
Dr. Michael Behrmann, VATS North
Joann Ervin, VATS S-E
Dr. Susan Asselin, VATS S-W
Rick Barrow, VATS S-W

Welcome and Introductions:

The Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Scott Higdon, Council Chair. Dr. Joseph Ashley, Deputy Commissioner, DRS, welcomed members and attendees.

Approval of 12/7/07 Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the December 2007 minutes were approved as amended.

Housekeeping

Motion: all Council members will use direct deposit for State travel expense reimbursements unless there is a compelling reason not to use the system.

Motion carried

Public Comment:

No public comment was made.

General Comments

Scott Higdon, Chair, called for greater participation by bringing their ideas forward and brainstorming together.

Orientation Manuals were distributed to all Council members.

Dr. Michael Behrmann, VATS-North Regional Site, received the annual Lifetime Achievement Award from the Council on Exceptional Children.

Update on Future of VATS Meeting:

Commissioner Rothrock stated that the future of VATS is still under discussion. He announced that the State is going into another hiring freeze stage which may affect hiring to replace the two staff members who are retiring.

Commissioner Rothrock presented certificates from the AT Advisory Council to Ken Knorr and Jane Lively, VATS, in appreciation for their years of service to the disability community.

Update on VATS Activities:

Ken Knorr, VATS, reported that VATS will have resources and base level funding.

Bob Krollman, VATS, provided an update on proposed AT Training.

Dr. Joseph Wallace, Director, New Well Fund, joined the Council Meeting to update members on the changes in loan policies that will make it easier for those applying for loans.

Data Report for VATNet - Status of RSA Reporting -Recycling:

Jane Lively, VATS, discussed the VATS medical equipment recycling program and provided a data report on the recycling programs' first year. Ms. Lively also distributed a copy of an article about AT recycling published in the Center on Aging's Winter newsletter, *Age in Action*.

Review of Council By-Laws:

Motion: The Council will continue using its guidelines and will not have formal by-laws.

Motion carried

Motion: Change guidelines to read that all Council meetings will be held in Richmond with the option to move to another location, if needed. Meetings will be held on the third Wednesday, of March, June, September and January.

Motion carried

Member Reports:

Peggy Field, Department of the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), reported on the status of recycling within DBVI. They are embracing the concept of equipment recycling, though there is limited equipment that they can recycle due to specificity and complexity of their technologies.

John Eisenburg, Department of Education, asked the Council and VATS staff to consider how education can play a role in VATS activities.

Brenda Wickard, disAbility Resource Center, reported they are working with the recycling programs in Fredericksburg, Culpeper and Orange. Fredericksburg and Orange locations are in full service. They are also working with the Red Cross on emergency planning.

Doug James, DRS, manager of northern field staff, stated that from the field they are looking at how to get VR Counselors to understand the role that AT plays in a client's ability go to work. Their goal is to have more AT trainers across the northern Virginia region. He noted the increasing need for AT for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. There will be a need to find out what AT devices are most appropriate.

Linda Harris, Tidewater Community College and the New Well Fund reported on the status of the New Well Fund and changes in loan policies and practices. New Well Fund is reaching out to veterans to help insure that they acquire the AT they need.

Ben Garrett, Department of Aging, informed members about the "Age in Action" publication's article on the "No Wrong Door" concept. He distributed "file of life" cards which are designed to provide critical information to emergency workers.

Joe Foresta, Council member, stated that he has been approached by many people, especially since he has been using a cane, inquiring about how they can get a piece of equipment to help with their disability needs.

Dr. Susan Asseline, Virginia Tech, VATS S-W Regional Site, stated that they will be having their 10th year of "College Bound" June 18 – 20, 2008.

Elizabeth Flaherty, Department of Medical Assistance Services, reported that "Money follows the person" is getting close to being operational, hopefully by May. Once this comes into effect, all of the waiver programs will include some funding for AT and home modifications. This is an initiative to get people out of nursing homes.

Joann Ervin, Old Dominion University, VATS S-E Site, informed members that they are busy with "Your Power Your Choice" conference scheduled for March 14. "Say Yes to College" is scheduled for May 30-31, 2008.

Pat Beattie, State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC), stated that SRC and DBVI are pleased to respond to requests for AT training for people who are not necessarily clients of vocational rehabilitation.

Dr. Behrmann noted the passing of Martha Glennan who was an important advocate for people with disabilities.

New Business:

Celestine Walker, former Secretary of the Council, is no longer able to fulfill that duty.

Motion: Peggy Fields serve as the Council Secretary.

Motion carried.

Next Meeting Date:

The next AT Advisory Council Meeting will be held in Richmond on Wednesday, May 21, 2008.