

**Virginia Assistive Technology Advisory Council  
Meeting Minutes for June 6, 2007**

**Attending Members**

Chet Avery, Chair  
Pat Beattie  
Tom Dowling  
John Eisenburg  
Elizabeth Flaherty  
Peggy Fields  
Joe Forester  
Ben Garrett  
Linda Harris  
Doug James  
Celestine Walker - by conference phone  
Brenda Wickard - by conference phone

**Absent Members:**

George Scott Higdon  
Roberto Majorca  
Senator Yvonne Miller  
Doug Owens  
Ricky Palmateer

**Guests:**

David Nelson, Richmond Central Goodwill  
Matt Myrich, Channel Manager, AT&T

**Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Staff:**

Ken Knorr  
Bob Krollman  
Jane Lively  
Elin Glass  
Janice Austin

The Virginia Assistive Technology System's (VATS's) Advisory Council held its quarterly meeting June 6, 2007, at the Department of Rehabilitative Services, 2nd Floor, Ratcliffe Building Conference Room, 1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Richmond, Virginia.

Chet Avery, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Chet Avery welcomed members and guests to the meeting and called for round-table introductions. Mr. Avery brought to the attention of the Council, a new member, Senator Yvonne Miller from Norfolk. Senator Miller was not able to attend the meeting. Ken Knorr provided background information about Senator Miller and stated that he and Jane Lively had met with Senator Miller recently to inform her about of the VATS program and the VATS Council.

### **Housekeeping:**

Chet Avery asked if any of the Council members were using self-deposit for travel reimbursement. Jane Lively informed him that members had been notified and no one responded.

Janice Austin was introduced to the Council as a new part-time VATS staff member. Ms Austin's responsibilities are to assist Eleanor Williams, Fiscal, and Elin Glass, Administrative, in the VATS's office.

### **Approval of the March 23, 2007, Meeting Minutes:**

Minutes of the March 23, 2007 Council Meeting were approved as written

### **Public Comment:**

No public comment was made.

### **Update on VATS Activities:**

Ken Knorr, Director of VATS, updated the Council on the Virginia Assistive Technology Reutilization Network (VATNet). A web-based communication system for the VATNet partners is being developed by new part-time staff, Andre Foxx. Mr. Knorr stated that Council members could help identify existing recycling programs in their communities, so VATNet partners can invite them to participate in the network. Community recycling programs may call themselves "loan closets" and may be very informal operations located in various community organizations.

Ken Knorr informed the Council about the Lynchburg Recycling Program's Open House he attended April 26, 2007, and the success of the Lynchburg recycling program.

Jane Lively reported on the progress of the VATNet. There are seven full-service programs at this time: Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE) in Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Martinsville; disAbility Resource Center in Fredericksburg; Central Virginia Goodwill in Richmond, Clinch Independent Living Center in Grundy; and a Fishersville/Staunton area collaborative. Three additional sites are expected to open September 30, 2007.

VATS is developing a web-based vendor data base that will provide broad categories of assistive technology with examples of types within each category with a link to the vendors who supply them. The consumer can then choose a vendor and be connected to the vendor's website. VATS will follow-up with vendors periodically to update their information. The vendors may eventually add their own data under the observation of VATS. Ben Garrett suggested contacting libraries to inform consumers about used equipment and Doug James suggested Craig's List. Mr. Knorr said that these were areas VATS could explore as VATS will need to track the sale of equipment.

Ken Knorr reported on the Assistive Technology Act Program's Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado. Mr. Knorr and Ms. Lively attended the Conference. Virginia is considered a national model and may receive additional funding due to their success.

Bob Krollman reported on the Assistive Technology Summit, scheduled for June 12-13, 2007, at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC). The first day includes a presentation on universal design, a tour of WWRC, and a panel discussion of universal design and housing, featuring an accessible town house project in Northern Virginia, Centex homes in NOVA, activity by the Housing Development Authority and workplace accommodations.

Day Two will address ADA guidelines, and emergency shelters. Ben Blumenthal, Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), will report on DRS assessments of facilities throughout the State that can, in an emergency, serve as accessible shelters. Jane Lively stated that the medical equipment recycling program is cooperating with the Department of Emergency Management to discuss how recycling programs can assist in providing needed medical equipment.

Bob Krollman is working on Council notebooks and business cards for Council members. Each attending Council member had their pictures taken to use as identification badges when they are performing State business.

### **Recycling Activities of Goodwill of Central Virginia**

David Nelson, Central Virginia Goodwill reported on their assistive technology recycling program. Goodwill Central Virginia is the largest provider of used medical equipment in Virginia. One-hundred people per month are served. Central Virginia Goodwill receives donations and stores them at their facility located at 6301 Midlothian Turnpike, Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Nelson said they were soliciting donations of gently used devices and funds through their web site, Senior Navigator, cold calls and flyers to organizations and contacts with in the physical therapy community.

Mr. Nelson also noted that they get many requests for ramps. He has contacted Elder Homes, which makes ramps for distribution to those who need access to their homes. Linda Harris, Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA) offered that the ATLFA is a resource for loans to build ramps. In addition, they manage the Consumer Services Fund which is a last resort grant that also could be used.

### **Demonstration of the Vision Phone**

Matt Myrich, Channel Manager, AT&T, provided a demonstration of the new phone for the deaf and hard of hearing. The telephones have a visual capability that allows 2 deaf individuals to sign to each other by phone, enabling direct contact.

### **Annual Meeting of the Leadership Councils of the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)**

Chet Avery announced the upcoming annual meeting of DRS Councils and Boards to be held June 19, 2007 at the DRS Central Office. In the past these councils and boards have not functioned in a way that they can have impact on the State's legislative budget cycle. The June meeting will allow them to do so this year. The Council wants to ask for an additional \$850,000 of State funds, \$200,000 for the VATS Regional Sites and \$650,000 to sustain assistive technology recycling programs. Mr. Avery requested that VATS staff draft a proposal to support this action in time for the upcoming Leadership meeting.

### **Members Activities**

Council members reported on their individual activities related to assistive technology and recycling.

Peggy Fields, Department for Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), reported that she had met with the decision-makers at DBVI to discuss the recycling of visual aids. They decided that recycling would not work because the devices are so prescriptive.

John Eisenburg, Department of Education, reported that the project to produce accessible texts was ended and that the Department would continue their existing method of scanning text to produce each text book. This is a long and cumbersome process.

Elizabeth Flaherty, Department of Medical Assistance Services, is still investigating a possible relationship between the recycling programs and Medicaid. Ms. Flaherty will work with Ms. Lively to contact the Assistive Technology Program in Kansas. Kansas has a successful relationship with their Medicaid agency to recycle Medicaid-purchased equipment.

Joe Forrester is available to the Central Virginia Goodwill to help them in their efforts to establish a recycling program in the Petersburg area.

Linda Harris, ATLFA, reported that the agency is going through a branding process to come up with a new name, logo, etc. with the intent to become more known and increase use of the loan fund.

Doug James informed council about the new staffing process they are using in Northern Virginia, employing the technology of video conferencing. With success, this approach will be used in other regions the State.

Celestine Walker provided the council an update on the recycling program in Lynchburg.

Brenda Wickard reminded Council members of the upcoming open house at the Equipment Connection in Fredericksburg, July 20, 2007.

### **New Business**

Chet Avery, Council Chair, will be leaving the Council since he will no longer be representing the State Rehabilitation Council. This means that the VATS Advisory Council will need a new Chair. It is time for other Council officers to change as well. Chet requested the appointment of a nominating committee to produce a new slate of officers for the next year. Members were asked to send nominations to Linda Harris prior to the next meeting, so new officers can be installed.

### **Next Meeting**

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 19, 2007, in Richmond. It was suggested the meeting take place at Central Virginia Goodwill, in Richmond, and a tour of Goodwill's recycling facility be included on the agenda.