

Approved Minutes
Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting
January 12, 2012

Members Present: Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair; Margaret Fields, Ph.D, Secretary; Melanie Brunson, Esq.; Christy Crowther; Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L; William Massey; Mary Mathena; Melissa Oliver, MS, OTR/L; Betti Thompson; Joann Willis

Members Absent: Matthew Deans, Vice Chair; Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.; Clayton Bowen; John Eisenberg; George Scott Higdon; Kelly Lum, OTR/L

Guests:

Patricia Banks, representing Clayton Bowen on Council
Mary Wilds, representing John Eisenberg on Council
Barbara Seymour, Department of Medical Assistance Services

Staff Present:

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Field Rehabilitative Services, DRS
Robert Krollman, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Central Office
Barclay Shepard, VATS Central Office
Elin Glass, VATS Central Office
Alisa Louthier -VATS Northern Regional Site - George Mason University (GMU)
Joann Ervin, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University (ODU)
David Netherton, ODU
Robert Barrow, VATS Southwest Regional Site – VA Tech
Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE Foundation)

Staff Present by Telephone Conference:

Susan Asselin, Ph.D., VATS Southwest Regional Site – Virginia Tech

Call to Order:

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All members of the Advisory Council, VATS staff and guests introduced themselves.

Introduction of New Members:

Robert Krollman introduced and welcomed the new ATAC Council members. New Council members are:
Christy Crowther, NewWell Fund
Mary Mathena, State Independent Living Council
Melissa Oliver, MS, OTR/L, McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Betti Thompson, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Center, Inc., Roanoke, Va.

Approval of 9/15/11 Minutes:

Elizabeth Flaherty asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes of the last meeting. It was indicated that a date change was needed in the body of the draft minutes in the section "Approval of Minutes". The 9/15/11 ATAC Meeting Minutes, with date change, stand approved.

Public Comment: No public comments were offered.

Old Business: No old Business

New Business: No new Business

Assistive Technology (AT) Director's Report:

Kathy Hayfield welcomed the new Council members and expressed appreciation for the service of past Council members who were Tom Dowling, Shawn Utt, Brenda Wickard and Joey Wallace, Ph.D., who has been a wonderful supporter of VATS for many years.

In 2011 VATS expanded collaborations. VATS has been more involved with T/TAC and the Department of Education (DOE). At this time, John Eisenberg, DOE, ATAC member, is with the Disability Commission promoting legislation on "Assistive Technology (AT) Follows the Student"; the focus of this legislation is on customized AT purchased for students with disabilities transferring from one school division to another. VATS has also expanded working with the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH) and has Clayton Bowen, from DDHH as an ATAC member. VATS has added a new Council member from McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Melissa Oliver, MS, OTR/L. VATS staff member, Barclay Shepard, has been working on Emergency Preparedness with William Massey, Council member, and the Area Agencies on Aging. VATS has been working with Employment Services Organizations on AT used in employment, particularly hand-held technology, and with Project SEARCH.

The Governor has a bill to form a new agency which would merge DRS with DDHH, the Department of Aging, and the adult section of Social Services. This bill will be addressed in the General Assembly.

Ms. Hayfield welcomed Ms. Tammy Koger, Director, North Carolina AT Program, as a guest speaker for the meeting. Ms. Koger provided a presentation on "What is the Law (AT Act) and the Role of the Advisory Council".

Presentation: AT Act by Tammy Koger:

Ms. Koger developed and presented a program that provided an overview of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act, programmatic structure, mandates and performance measures. The AT Act is structured to allow each state to use AT to meet the needs of their individual area which gives the states flexibility.

Annual Report to RSA: Data Overview:

Barclay Shepard, VATS, provided an overview of the VATS Annual Data Report which was submitted to the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in December 2011. VATS prepares an Annual Report to RSA using a web-based reporting system. Data is submitted that demonstrates VATS' impact on increasing awareness, accessibility and acquisition of assistive technology. In 2011, VATS served more than 6,500 Virginians through the following assistive technology (AT) services: Demonstrations; Short-Term Loans; Reuse; Training; and Information & Assistance. Discussion ensued regarding VATS' program impact as well as opportunities for state planning purposes.

Presentation: Role of Advisory Council by Tammy Koger:

Ms. Koger presented on the role of the Advisory Council and that in the AT Act it is stated that all states must have an Advisory Council. Ms. Koger reviewed what is required of the Advisory Council in guiding an AT Act program and how it must be structured so that the Council can be effective in supporting the mission of an AT program.

Reports by VATS Regional Sites:

All three of VATS Regional sites reported on regional site activities that took place in the preceding quarter.

Report by FREE Foundation:

Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, FREE Foundation, reported on the progress of the chapters throughout the state which include corporate FREE of Roanoke, chapters in Lynchburg, Winchester, Richmond and South Hampton Roads.

The FREE Foundation has a Budget Amendment which will be submitted to the General Assembly.

Ms. Schaible and Barclay Shepard, VATS, will be presenting at the annual Assistive Technology Industry Association's (ATIA) Conference in Orlando, Florida, January 25-28, 2012.

Planning for Future Advisory Council Meetings:

Elizabeth Flaherty asked for volunteers to help plan for the next Council meeting. The volunteer group (including Elizabeth Flaherty, Peggy Fields, Mary Mathena, Christy Crowther and Joann Willis) will meet and send out a survey to Council members to find out what members want to work on to be productive at the next quarterly ATAC meeting.

Next ATAC Meeting:

The next ATAC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 8, 2012, at the DRS Central Office in Richmond, VA.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Ms. Flaherty to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Christy Crowther and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:25pm