

Governor's Advisory Board
On Telecommunications Relay

Meeting Minutes

June 18th, 2005

College of Southern Maryland

La Plata, MD

ATTENDANCE:

GABTR Members: Mitch Travers, Louis Schwarz, Paula Holbrook, James Stevenson, Annette Reichman, and Betty Dodds, Joy Larson

TAM: Brenda Kelly-Frey, Michael Hollywood, Pam Stewart, Nancy Seidman, and Patty Bird.

AT&T: Patty Ferran

Interpreters: Tona Swagart, Jana Beckford-Owens, and Janice Nishimura.

CART Transcriber: Sherry Knox, CCP

Public: Ken Putkovich, Samuel Jones, and Kara Yochem

Call to Order: Mitch Travers called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m., June 18th, 2005 at the Conference Center, College of Southern Maryland at La Plata Campus.

TAM Reports:

Michael Hollywood, GABTR Liaison:

- Noted the changes of mileage reimbursement in July 2005.
 - Mileage will be reimbursed at \$.40 per mile
 - Meal reimbursement stays the same as before
- Announced the site of October 2005 meeting will be located in Salisbury at Deaf Independent Living Association, Inc.
- Welcomed Betty Dodds as newest GABTR member, representing Senior Citizen Relay Users.

Nancy Seidman, Public Relations Coordinator:

- Informed attendees that we sent surveys to people who receive our newsletters. The survey will allow us to make necessary changes to assure the newsletter is productive and cost efficient.
- Encouraged board members to take extra surveys and give it out to public.
- Replied to questions regarding the survey.

Pam Stewart, Contract Administrator:

- Gave update on status of text messaging trial. We need 15 participants to proceed with the trial.
- Answered a question from Louis on number participants in the trial at this time.

Patty Bird, MAT Coordinator:

- Shared the information on 3-month MAT report from March to June 2005.
- Explained reason for an increase in the number of Voice Dialers being distributed.

Brenda Kelly-Frey, T.A.M. Director:

- Informed attendees that she had been reappointed to Federal Communications Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee as a representative of NASRA.
- Gave details on Internet Relay and Video Relay Service, emphasizing that the state's are not responsible for the provision of these services.
- Replied to questions from Paula Holbrook regarding identification and quantity of fraudulent Internet Relay calls.
- Explained that she was invited to assist people setting up conference about Homeland Security in Delaware.
- Discussed the growth of Video Relay Service.
 - Concerns on the use of the interpreters by VRS Centers leaving few qualified interpreters for "community interpreting".
 - Numbers of call centers for VRS providers located in the MD/DC area.
- Informed attendees that AT&T expressed an interest in getting out of the relay business and that the State has chosen to opt for the first of two renewal options with AT&T.

AT&T Report:

Patty, Ferran, AT&T Account Manager:

- Gave details on her experience as a participant in emergency disaster drill in Carroll County.
- Gave update on MD Relay Center.
 - Approximately 100 operators are employed by the center at this time.
 - Continued the performance activities to ensure the performance standards are improving.
- Explained her recent public relation activities.
- Answered question regarding AT&T's desire to get out of relay business.

GABTR Members' Reports:

James Stevenson, Government member:

- Gave details on one-way text message alert device.
 - Alert device was intended to inform school faculties and school drivers on the status of school if it closes early due to snow.
 - Suggested that TAM investigates this for emergency preparedness improvements.

Joy Larson, Deaf/Blind member:

- Expressed her observation on the difference between traditional relay and high-speed options such as Internet Relay and Video Relay Service.

Betty Dodds, Senior Citizen member:

- Introduced herself and gave her biography.
- Replied to questions on her preference for the type of relay service she uses.

Annette Reichman, Deaf Member:

- Expressed an interest to participate in RFP process.

Paula Holbrook, Deaf member:

- Gave commendation on TAM's hard work in the community.
- Thanked Mr. Stevenson for sharing information on new technology.
- Spoke about CapTel as being slow and ineffective.

Louis Schwarz, Deaf member:

- Announced that he joined National Emergency Number Association.
 - Gave his report on his experience with the board since last February.
- Discussed the language in State Finance and Procurement Article §§ 3-801-807.
 - Would like to submit a proposal to make changes to this law to MD General Assembly by next year.
 - Requested for TAM's input to determine whether the law needs to be changed or not.

Rebecca Ladew, Speech Disabled member (absent but she submitted written report):

- Announced that she was re-elected to serve on the FCC's Consumer Advisory Committee.
- Informed attendees that she participated in Emergency Preparedness and Response program at Department of Homeland Security and Maryland Department of Disabilities.
 - Attended an Emergency Preparedness and Response conference in Baltimore City last April.
 - Gave several suggestions to improve services during emergency situations for people with speech disabilities.

Mitch Travers, GABTR Chairman:

- Reminded the members about the next meeting which will be in Salisbury on October 15th at Deaf Independent Living Association.
- Stated that Two-line VCO is a great service except on one occasion, the operator kept typing "Unknown, Unknown, Unknown."
- Discussed Video Relay Service with VCO capabilities.
- Suggested dropping Two-line VCO as a relay feature since there were only 3 calls since January 2005.

New Business:

- Discussed the possibility of adding surcharge on the cell phones.
 - Due to a steady increase in the use of cell phones in lieu of landlines, the number of consumers with landlines is decreasing.
 - The idea of adding a surcharge on the cell phones would ensure the "continuous funding for TAM program."
 - Reminded the members that this would have to go through MD General Assembly first. This process would take 3 years to come out with a favorable vote.
 - Ms. Kelly-Frey reported that 9-1-1 has had a surcharge on cellular phones for several years now. There is no USF charge on cellular bills.
- Recommended to set up a (Ad-hoc exploration committee) strategic planning committee, which would explore the plans for next 5 years on TAM's future.
 - Annette Reichman, Louis Schwarz, Paula Holbrook, and James Stevenson will serve on the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.