

Governor's Advisory Board
On Telecommunications Relay

Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2005
Montgomery County
9-1-1 Center
Gaithersburg, MD

ATTENDANCE:

GABTR Members: Mitch Travers, Louis Schwarz, Paula Holbrook, Rebecca Ladew, Cynthia Foss, James Stevenson, Susan Miller, Annette Reichman, Joy Larson.

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

AT&T: Earla Hardy

Public: Glenn Lockhart, Jennie Ladew, Erika Verdeck, Yvonne Dunkle, Gordon Pickering, Fred Waldorf, Mary Barovan, Al Sonnenstrahl, John Crabill, Montgomery County 9-1-1 Coordinator.

Call To Order: Mitch Travers called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m., March 12th, 2005 at the Montgomery County 9-1-1 Center.

TAM Report:

Pam Stewart, Contract Administrator:

- Presented on Text-Messaging Trial.
 - Will need 15 trialists with various types of pagers.
 - Limitations of this service.
 - Monday through Friday only.
 - No out-of-state calls.
 - Non-ASA compliance.
 - Text messaging shouldn't be used for an emergency situation.
- Provided demonstration on text messaging with Michael J. Hollywood, a pager user.
- Responded to a question from Louis Schwarz on the difference between text messaging and "My IP-Relay".
- Answered questions from Cynthia Foss on the availability for this trial.
- Replied to a question from Paula Holbrook on specific trained operators for the trial.

- Responded to a question from Mitch Travers on the numbers of pager users in Virginia, which is currently conducting their own trial on text messaging.
- Answered a question from Annette Reichman and other GABTR members on the requirements such as calling from MD, not out of state.

Patty Bird, MAT Coordinator:

- Reported on of MAT equipment that had been distributed from October 2004 to March 2005.
- Gave details on new statistics (distribution, application received by each county).
- Discussed on Ez-Voice dialer program by Verizon, which was used by low-vision and blind individuals. Verizon was discontinuing the program. MAT can provide a device if customers are unable to afford to purchase their own.
- Answered question from Mitch Travers on the name of the device (Vocally Freedom which is a voice recognition dialer).

Nancy Seidman, Public Relations Coordinator:

- Give details about Trix Bruce's "Whose ASL is it Anyway?" show in 4 different areas of the state.
- Outlined the many outreach events held in Maryland since the last GABTR meeting. Included information regarding trainings, presentations, and meetings attended.
- Answered questions from Louis Schwarz on how significant the support was from the community regarding Trix Bruce's performances and gave some feedback from audience.
- Replied to questions from Paula Holbrook regarding whether we should continue with our current type of events or if we should have a forum with deaf community or if we should develop the survey on relay products.

Michael J. Hollywood, GABTR Liaison:

- Explained why the GABTR date was changed from March 19th to March 12th.
- Thanked John Crabill, the person is the 9-1-1 Coordinator for Montgomery County.
- Announced the new locations for next 2 GABTR meetings.
 - June 18th, 2005 – College of Southern Maryland, LaPlata.
 - October 15th, 2005 – Deaf Independent Living Agency, Salisbury.

Brenda Kelly-Frey, TAM Director:

- Shared the information on House Bill 1383 regarding the proposal to transfer to Department of Disabilities from Department of Budget and Management.

- Announced that Maryland will be the first state in the nation to have Telephone Service Priority for the wires, circuits to the Maryland Relay Center.
- Answered several questions from GABTR members on the issues of HB 1383.

AT&T Report:

Earla Hardy,

- Discussed the status of MD Relay operations at the center.
- Explained about AT&T conducting performance improvement activities for operators in order to increase level of productivity and performance of operators.
- Gave details about Patty Ferran is (AT&T Account Manager) in outreach events.
- Discussed on Text-messaging trial issues.

GABTR Members' Report:

Rebecca Ladew, Mobility Disabled Member:

- Announced that she has been reelected to serve another two-year term on Consumer Advisory Committee at F.C.C.
- Explained the changes in administration at F.C.C
- Discussed on regarding people with speech disabilities on telecommunication equipment distribution programs in U.S.

Susan Stevens Miller, Government Member:

- Shared her disappointment in HB 1383.
 - Expressed that GABTR members didn't find out about this bill earlier.
 - Would like to have opportunity to ask what people are hoping to achieve on this bill if GABTR had found out about this earlier.

James Stevenson, Government Member:

- Commended Ms. Bird for her MAT report.
- Explained that Alleghany County received funds from Department of Education for emergency and crisis management for school system.

Paula Holbrook, Deaf Member:

- Expressed an interest that TAM put together a list of questions to be distributed to people in the deaf community, hard-of-hearing community

to get their feedback on what type of products they are using with the relay.

Joy Larson, Deaf/Blind Member:

- Shared her experience in Switzerland about evaluating assistive telephone equipment and relay.
- Answered question about what type of pagers were ideal for people with low vision.

Annette Reichman, Deaf Member:

- Would like to bring up HB 1383 discussion in new business.

Louis Schwarz, Deaf Member:

- Commended Mike Hollywood for good job on summarizing the minutes from the October 2004 GABTR meeting.
- Discussed his desire to see improvements to 9-1-1 services for individuals who do not use land-line phones.
- Expressed his concerns on the future such as declining numbers of calls. Wanted to focus on future rather than past.

Public Input:

Al Sonnenstrahl, MDAD Vice President:

- Shared his concerns about HB 1383.

New Business:

- First Topic: The discussion of House Bill 1383 (Transfer of TAM to D.O.D.)
- Second Topic: The discussion on the law of MAT program.
 - Louis Schwarz volunteered to assume the responsibility as chairman of a newly formed subcommittee. This subcommittee will review and suggest possible changes to the law which established the MAT program

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.