

Draft Minutes
Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting
March 8, 2012

Members Present: Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair; Margaret Fields, Ph.D., Secretary; Michael M. Behrmann, Ed.D.; Clayton Bowen; Christy Crowther; Mary Mathena; Betti Thompson; Joann Willis

Conference Phone: Melanie Brunson, Esq.; Kelly Lum, OTR/L; William Massey

Members Absent: Matthew Deans, Vice Chair; John Eisenberg; Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L; George Scott Higdon; Melissa Oliver, MS, OTR/L

Guests:

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)
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

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.

Approval of 1/12/2012 Minutes:

Elizabeth Flaherty asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes of the last meeting. The 1/12/12 ATAC Meeting Minutes, as is, 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 provided an update on legislation; the creation of a new Agency, Agency budget and how VATS hopes to plan for the coming year. The Governor has a bill to form a new agency which would merge the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), the Department of Aging, and the adult section of Social Services. This bill is being addressed in the General Assembly.

Legislation is now in the General Assembly on “Assistive Technology (AT) Follows the Student” and is with the Governor for his signature. VATS submitted their State Plan to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on February 23, 2012. The Advisory Council provided input in the State Plan. This is a three-year plan for years 2012 through 2014.

ATAC Composition:

Robert Krollman, VATS, provided an outline showing categories that make up the Advisory Council. Guidelines were discussed as to what makes up the current Council and how it is structured and what is mandated by the Assistive Technology (AT) Act.

Staff Reports:

Barclay Shepard reported that on March 13, 2012, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) will host a hands-on Technology training and demonstration room at the 2012 Virginia Transition Forum in Roanoke. Assistive technology professionals from Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Hamilton Relay/ Va Captel, Virginia Relay, the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, Virginia Department of Education’s Training and Technical Assistance Centers, the NewWell Fund, the Department of Rehabilitative Service’s Rehab Engineers & AT Specialists, the FREE Foundation as well as VATS regional sites at George Mason University, Old Dominion University and Virginia Tech, will provide hands-on demonstrations and training on a wide range of low-tech to high-tech devices. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Education is planning on having students in the “I’m Determined” program to assist AT professionals demonstrate AT in the training room.

Mr. Shepard reported that the VATS Annual Data Report, which was submitted to RSA in December 2011, will be discussed at another Council meeting to identify areas which may need more attention in the coming year. VATS prepares an Annual Report to RSA using a web-based reporting system.

Barclay Shepard reported that he recently participated in the Health and Human Resources (HHR) Interagency Workgroup as well as the inaugural State Managed Shelter Functional Needs Task Force meeting. Mr. Shepard explained that in September 2011, VATS coordinated a delegation from Virginia to participate in the FEMA Region III Summit on Assistive Technology (AT) Reuse and Emergency Management in Philadelphia, Pa. VATS will continue to participate in the HHR workgroup in order to develop a sustainable network for addressing the DME needs of Virginians with disabilities in disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

Robert Krollman and Barclay Shepard are mentoring students from the Occupational Therapy Department at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The students will be researching AT reutilization activities and solutions for helping people with disabilities “swap” AT devices in Virginia. At the end of the semester, the students will present VATS with a plan for enhancing the VATS’ exchange activities. As a deliverable, the students are working on a developing a brochure for the Virginia Reuse Network.

Robert Krollman reported that he and Barclay Shepard will be presenting at a conference entitled “Innovation in Aging”, for older individuals, caregivers and professionals who serve the aging population. They will offer two sessions on “A.T. – Aging in Place” –a session for professionals and one for caregivers. The conference is sponsored by the Departments of Aging for DC, Maryland and Virginia and will be held at the Gaylord Conference Center.

Advisory Council Member Updates:

Clayton Bowen, VDDHH, reported that their department is applying for a grant (\$250,000) for deaf/blind that would become effective July 1, 2012.

Christy Crowther, NewWell Fund, reported that their Board is in the process of restructuring the organization and looking for ways to streamline the NewWell Fund. The NewWell Fund now has a fifty percent approval rate for loan applications and many of the loans are for accessible vehicles, hearing aids, and home modifications.

Margaret Fields, Ph.D., reported that Rehabilitation Technology Services is working on a Technology Resource Center/Low-Vision Lab at DBVI Headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. The resource center will have equipment displayed for demonstrations and hands on use that will encompass assistive technology used for activities of daily living through vocational rehabilitation accommodations. Completion of the room is hopefully set for Fall 2012.

Upcoming Activities:

Kathy Hayfield reported on the status of VATS’ Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Trust Fund grant. Mrs. Hayfield reported that the grant is greatly subsidizing VATS’ reuse activities. This grant ends June 30, 2012 and VATS will be looking at ways to fund its reuse partners, primarily the FREE Foundation.

A sub-committee was formed to collaborate with the Department of Education on developing guidelines for “AT Follows the Student”. The sub-committee is composed of Margaret Fields, Ph.D., Michael Behrmann, Ed.D., Clayton Bowen, Christy Crowther, and Mary Mathena.

The Council discussed issues that need to be addressed during the coming year and a dateline was decided to include certain topics at future quarterly ATAC meetings.

Next ATAC Meeting:

The next ATAC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 14, 2012 in Richmond, VA.

Adjournment: *A motion was made by Dr. Behrmann to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Joann Willis and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:50pm*