**Governor’s Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay**

**Board Meeting**

**Opening:**

The quarterly meeting of the Governor’s Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay was call to order at 9:14 AM on October 27, 2022 at TAM’s conference room and on the Zoom video conference platform by Chair Alfred Sonnenstrahl. This is the first hybrid board meeting.

**Present:**

Alfred Sonnenstrahl, Chair

Darrin Smith, Vice Chair

Steve Cooper

Allysa Dittmar

Glenn Lockhart

Deirdre Lynch

Lori Markland

Payal Sharmacharya

Alex Simmons

**Absent:**

Shannon Minnick

Michelle Morales

Ken Putkovich

David Drenser

**Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as distributed.

**Director’s Report by David Bahar:**

TAM are still looking for new office location. Other locations did not meet the expectations and requirements by TAM. TAM have an intern from Towson University. Her name is Tara Mason. Audit process have comes to the end for TAM. We have completed and met the expectations by the legislative team. On the other topic, We had a discussion with the University of Maryland, the Center of Excellence in Policy, and looking at training for specialized elected public officials as members of the council for the board, advisors who will then work with us on understanding the process of government and different aspects that we need to engage with. They will be providing training on things -- for instance, regarding open meetings and the requirements there, agendas, and making sure that they're set up and followed correctly during meetings, parliamentarian procedures and things of that nature.

**Finance Manager’s Report by Leslie Hannibal:**

At the start of fiscal 22, we started out the year with $12,410,929 in our fund. The USTF fund has gone down over the last four years. Our expenditures over the last four years has gradually increased. We spent in the fiscal year 22, $4,337,764 in expenditures in operating our different programs at TAM. We have an average revenue of about $2.7 or $2.8 million coming into USTF over the last four years. The revenue is from all Marylanders being charged for the 5 cents on their telephone bills from the State of Maryland. $10,903,824 was our ending balance at the end of fiscal year 22. we're projecting that we will be about the same, 2.8 or $2.7 million will be collected in the USTF fund this year. our expenditures will also exceed what we are actually taking in, so again, we're looking at the USTF fund balance would gradually decrease over the next coming years.

**Maryland Relay’s Report by Travis Dougherty:**

Travis went to Hartford County PSAP for a tour. We learned the importance of text-to-911 awareness and education as many deaf and hard-of-hearing people don’t know about the service. Travis attended M-Enabling Summit Conference few days before this board meeting. He networked and met with many accessibility leaders in different industries. Maryland Relay is ramping up on the efforts for the broadband diligence. That means we need to make sure the phone service providers are responsible for the transition from analogue to digital services, making sure that it's an equivalent experience throughout and doesn't change for people who struggled to use the standard phone. We need to work with them to make sure that they have the education and that they can in turn educate their customer base about this analogue to digital conversion, and what kind of experience the customers are going to have as a result of that, what type of things might be lost, what type of things might be gained. Maryland Relay have discovered a critical issue with the Digital transition. Phone companies sent out a letter to the customers about the transition from analog to digital service. We gathered the letters from different companies and learned that all letters we have found has not mention on the relay program or the people with disabilities. We will work on filing the complaint with FCC shortly. Speaking of FCC, Maryland Relay just filed the state relay recertification application, which grants the state of Maryland to provide the relay services for the next 5 years. Also, Maryland Relay are nearing the completion of RCC Guideline.

**Maryland Accessibility Technology’s Report by Kevin Steffy:**

In the end of the quarter, which is September, we have had 87 new applications and there have been 120 new pieces of telecommunications equipment provided. In the previous quarter, we had 49 and 82 respectively. MAT have been working on three locations. MAT have been working with MDTAP to secure a room in the Arc in Hartford County. MAT will have a space in the Maryland Deaf Community Center in Frederick when they build a new building in 2-3 years from now. MAT is working with DILA to find an office space in Salisbury. MAT want to recognize two of our evaluators, Betsy Hein and Brenda Bush. They have worked beyond their role to support MAT program. Thanks to them that MAT has caught up with the workload. Here is the update on the communication facilitator program. In the first quarter of fiscal year 23, ending September 22nd specifically, we have 63 services that have been provided and that's only within a three-month period. For our previous quarter, we've provided 35 services. We have 86 services scheduled next quarter. As of today, we do have 12 Deafblind individuals that are working with the program. MAT are expecting three more to be joining with the communication facilitator program and they will be from the Eastern Shore area. Within the Eastern Shore area, MAT looking to provide the training for communication facilitators and pro-tactile within the next spring session.

**Outreach’s Report by Donna Broadway:**

The last summer was extremely busy for Maryland Relay and the MAT team. We participated in events, such as MACO, the Maryland association of counties the Maryland Chiefs and Sheriffs Association Professional conference, the Maryland school of the Deaf 50th anniversary sponsorship, Deaf Surf Day, several TV segments and a lot of 9-1-1 and relay partner trainings. Now, the outreach is working with Maryland Relay to plan town halls in the spring of 2023. We still are working close with MDoD on the website improvements. TAM will have new leaderships in 2023, which means we will have to change our promotion materials to include their names and their new branding requirements when they come in. Jenny, the outreach coordinator, is leaving TAM in the end of the October month.

**Business From the Previous Meeting:**

Bylaws committee deferred this to the next board meeting as the committee is not ready to make proposal.

Senior Call Check program did not give any report.

**New Business:**

There is no new business.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM by Chair Sonnenstrahl.

**Minutes submitted by:** Travis Dougherty

**Minutes Draft approved by:** Chair Alfred Sonnenstrahl