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

**Quarterly Board Meeting**

**August 13, 2024**

**Opening:**The quarterly meeting of the Governor’s Advisory Board for Telecommunications Relay was called to order at 9:30 AM on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, via Zoom Video Conferencing.

**Present:**GABTR Board Members:

* Alfred Sonnenstrahl
* Darrin Smith
* David Drezner
* Michelle Morales
* Steve Cooper
* Alex Simmons
* Lori Berrong
* Deirdre Cheek Lynch

TAM Staff:

* David Bahar
* Travis Dougherty
* Kevin Steffy
* Donna Broadway-Callaman
* Bob Foster
* Jane Hager

Hamilton Staff:

* Melissa McMahon
* Connor Fitzsimmons
* Jenny Pearson
* Marcus Smith

Interpreters and Captionist:

* Anna Rose
* Anne Leahy
* Gavin Baker
* Erik Olson

**Absent:** Kenneth Putkovich and Shannon Minnick

**Approval of Agenda:**The agenda for the August 2024 GABTR meeting was approved as distributed.

**Approval of Minutes:**Meeting minutes from the previous meeting were approved as distributed.

### **Director’s Report by David Bahar:**

* **Introduction of Bob Foster**: David welcomed Bob Foster, the new Finance Manager for TAM. Bob expressed his excitement to join the team, and he looks forward to contributing to the community and managing TAM's budget process. Bob will deliver his first formal report in October.
* **RFPs Update**: David discussed ongoing Request for Proposals (RFPs) aimed at automating manual processes, improving customer service, and updating software solutions for MAT (Maryland Accessibility Technology). A specific RFP is in place for captioned telephone services, aiming to transition from analog to digital systems. He also mentioned that Maryland, along with six other states, has informed the FCC of their plans to sunset analog captioning.
* **Budget Update**: The FY24 budget closed with significant expenditures, including $1.93 million for TRS and nearly $1 million for MAT equipment distribution. Communication Facilitator (CF) services saw a substantial increase, with $81,000 spent in the past year. Planning for the FY26 budget is underway.
* **White Paper**: The white paper on the transition from analog to IP-based services was officially filed with the FCC on August 12, 2024. Advocacy work will follow, aiming to address current legal restrictions affecting analog services.

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

* **RFP Progress**: Travis provided updates on the RFP for Maryland Relay, which will transition from analog to digital captioned telephone services. The transition has been approved by the FCC, and the RFP contract is set to open on October 1, 2024.
* **NASRA Conference**: Travis shared that the upcoming NASRA conference is on track to have a record number of attendees, vendors, and sponsors. Topics to be discussed include direct-to-video communication services, AI integration into relay services, and the growing international interest in relay solutions.

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

* **MAT Equipment Distribution**: Kevin reported significant growth in MAT applications and equipment distribution, with 178 new applications and 447 pieces of equipment distributed between April and June 2024.
* **Talk, Text, and Train (TTT) Program**: The TTT program, focused on blind and low-vision individuals, continues to provide valuable training and equipment matching. A successful protactile training session was held for Communication Facilitators, with plans to extend the training to DeafBlind individuals.

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

* **Outreach Activities**: Donna reported 52 exhibits, 16 meetings, 12 networking events, and two field visits conducted in the last quarter. Major upcoming events include the Maryland Association of Counties (MACO) and back-to-school events.
* **Spanish Community Outreach**: Outreach efforts to the Spanish-speaking community are ongoing, with participation in the Maryland Festival Latina and Latino Provider Network meetings.

**New Business:**No new business was raised.

**Adjournment:**The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM by Darrin Smith.

Minutes submitted by: Travis Dougherty  
Minutes Draft approved by: Alfred Sonnenstrahl