

Montana Telecommunications Access Program
Minutes: Full Committee Meeting
August 15, 2019
Helena, Montana

Committee Members Present: Ron Bibler, chair; Drew Arnot, vice chair; Jim Streeter, Tom Thompson, Lisa Cannon, Tina Shorten, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley, Jay Preston via conference phone.

Committee Members Absent: John Pavao, Cam Tulloch

MTAP Staff Present: Mary Taylor, Lisa Gault, Richard Ballou, Mike Bouchard

Supporting and Contributing Persons Present: Connie Phelps and Emilie Banasiak, Hamilton Relay; Trisha Smith and Stella Woodrum, sign language interpreters; Shawn Tulloch, program manager for deaf services.

Meeting called to order:

Ron Bibler called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

Drew Arnot made a motion to approve the minutes and Tina Shorten seconded. Motion was carried.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

MTAP Director's report: Mary Taylor

Mary Taylor opened with the status of the committee, that she has heard from the Governor's office that everyone whose terms were expiring have been renewed and Jim Streeter is a new member. Three positions are currently open: the non-disabled senior citizen position; the non-disabled person engaged in business other than telecommunications, and the public safety answering point representative.

Ms. Taylor moved on to the number of new applications and Ms. Taylor reported that the number of applications are still decreasing. It's a concern and it's not from lack of effort as the MTAP staff have been doing a lot of outreach events such as the Family Learning Weekend at Montana School for the Deaf and Blind this past June and the cochlear implant conference in July. Ricky Ballou and Mike Bouchard have done outreach events at baseball games in Missoula and Billings, and many additional events are planned for the upcoming months.

For advertising, Ms. Taylor has been working with the advertisers to plan for the upcoming year through television such as doing a new commercial as well as an informational commercial which runs about 2-3 minutes. The informational commercial explains more in depth what MTAP does, not just distributing equipment but the outreach events and committee meetings. Ms. Taylor also mentioned that she attended a meeting with Chanda Hermanson-Dudley to talk with Karen Cantrell, the new DPHHS Indian Health Director,

about the programs offered by our division. Karen is developing a list of all the different programs that are available through DPHHS and available to the tribes. She discovered that they are developing a directory of all the different programs and there is a desire to do a big community fair that shows all the tribes what programs are available. Ms. Taylor also talked to someone through Energy Share who does advertising through Montana Broadcasters Association and she was given some ideas regarding advertising.

A new thing that the MTAP staff will try to do more often is provide a feedback survey that Mary developed, to be given out at outreach events and may in the future be sent to the clients. It will be a way to gather more feedback and help figure out the best way to advertise. Mary provided a copy of the survey to the Committee. Ms. Taylor also added that she will attend the Fort Belknap 4-H fair as she feels this will be a good connection with the tribes.

The upcoming tech fair in May is being discussed as there is a need to plan where the location would be. Browning is first choice and if it doesn't work out, other possibilities would be Sidney or Phillipsburg. Discussion ensued on possible meeting places in Browning. Tina Shorten added that when it gets closer to May and there is more information, maybe Ms. Taylor can share it with the social media sites such as the Public Service Commission and the telecom carriers.

Ms. Taylor moved on to discuss the MTAP Facebook page and mentioned that a representative from Devaney and Associates will be joining the meeting at 1 p.m. She is pleased with how the Facebook posts are going, advertising upcoming outreach events, features on staff members and the like. There are two contracts for the Facebook page (one for creation/management and one for advertising) with Devaney and Associates and the one for creation and management is expiring on November 30th. Ms. Taylor will be working on having that contract extended and the cost is \$10,500 a year for them to manage it. Devaney and Associates believes that our website needs to be updated to be more user-friendly as they feel when people are directed to the MTAP website, it's not easy for them to find what they need. Ms. Taylor has talked to the web administrator for DPHHS and it's a possibility that Devaney can create the content and then supply that content to the website administrator to post. She thinks it's around \$6,000 to make the change.

Ms. Taylor mentioned that MTAP will be celebrating 30 years and discussion ensued about doing an event in honor of the anniversary at the Capitol Rotunda in February.

She has submitted the FCC report and there has been training for the staff such as taking sign language courses, a deaf culture training with John Fechter of Hamilton Relay and a training on iOS devices with Shannon Smith of Teltex.

Ms. Taylor mentioned that the Ditto, which is a vibrating wrist band that was distributed to clients who wanted to be alerted regarding their phone, is being discontinued. Shannon with Teltex mentioned that an option would be an Apple Watch which is still pricey at \$648. The clients would still have to have an iOS phone to use the watch. Mr. Bibler moved this topic to new business.

Also, there is a need to start a process for purchasing a new vehicle as the one used for eastern Montana has over 100,000 miles on it. Ms. Taylor will wait until a budget analyst is hired and look at the budget to see if it's feasible for this year or wait until the next fiscal year. Mr. Arnot moved to begin the process of looking into getting a vehicle and both Mr. Thompson and Jay Preston seconded. No vote was needed as a motion wasn't necessary, but the committee agreed to it by consensus.

Ms. Taylor added that she will be attending the NASRA conference as will Tina Shorten, Lisa Cannon and Ron Bibler. Mike Bouchard and Ricky Ballou will be attending the TEDPA conference.

Budget Report: Chanda Hermanson-Dudley/Mary Taylor

Chanda Hermanson-Dudley reported that Sheri Vukasin who was the budget analyst for the department is no longer with DPHHS, but Karie Whitlock is temporarily doing the job part-time, as the agency works to fill the vacancy. Karie is working on the Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements sheet and will get that out to the committee as soon as possible. According to what Karie has told Mary, there was approximately \$27,000 left in the budget for the end of the 2019 state fiscal year and some bills are still coming in. Personnel services was a little over because of having a full staff for the whole year, some working a little bit of overtime and two people retiring and double-filling for a couple weeks with the new hires. Ms. Hermanson-Dudley added that if one pulls up the last meeting's report that was provided and compares it to these numbers, there is an extra \$50,000 showing in the SFY2019 Operations budget that seems to be a keying error.

Hamilton Relay Report: Emilie Banasiak and Connie Phelps

Connie Phelps opened with the statistical report:

- For the TRS calls, Hamilton Relay fell well within the 85 percent that is required by the FCC within 10 seconds.
- For the session minutes, it has bounced around but there is a slow decline.
- For the quality scores during the quarter for the centers (Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland and Nebraska) it is at 94 percent.
- For the typing words per minute average it is 79% for all the centers. Typing accuracy is at 98%.
- For the customer care report in April, one call was for technical issues, one was for equipment and one was a wrong number hang-up. In May, one was for general information and some wrong number hang-ups. In June, there was one call for equipment and some wrong numbers.
- For conference captioning minutes, the average is around 600-800 minutes. In April there were more calls, then the minutes dropped off slightly in May and June.
- For CapTel calls, the percentage answered in 10 seconds is normally at 100%.
- For CapTel session minutes and conversation minutes, in July of 2017, it was about 6,500 and has bounced around and now it's below 3,000.
- For CapTel quality scores, the average words per minute is 176 and average rate of accuracy is 99.77 percent. The average rate of error is .23 percent.
- For CapTel customer care contacts – calls made in April, May and June were all about setups.

Emilie Banasiak discussed outreach events that Hamilton Relay participated in recently such as the Family Learning Weekend at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind and the Montana Association of the Deaf state conference. Upcoming events that are planned are the Last Chance Community Pow Wow in Helena, the Montana Speech and Hearing conference in Billings and the Montana Youth Transition conference in Helena.

Connie Phelps spoke about the Hamilton Relay annual report for 2018-2019 which was distributed to the committee and reports on what has gone on with the relay service in Montana for the year. She encouraged the committee to look through it.

Facebook Update – Devaney & Associates

Renee Landis, who is an account executive for Devaney & Associates (MTAP Facebook contractor), reported on what's been happening with the MTAP Facebook page.

Devaney and Associates is responsible for monitoring page activity and comments, creating new content to engage viewers, sharing content provided by MTAP, sharing upcoming events and engaging with similar Facebook pages such as the Montana Association of the Deaf. The page has over 500 likes so far. Most posts reach between 50 and 200 people (the reach is the number of people who have any given post from the MTAP page on their screen). In August, the average number of interactions on a post was ten (the interaction includes likes, comments, reactions and shares). The average monthly impressions, monthly clicks and monthly page likes is about 99 which is the number of times the post is displayed. The monthly budget of dollars put towards advertising is \$982 and three ads are usually run per month.

Ms. Landis moved on to what website update goals they have for MTAP. They want to make it more effective and easier to navigate by: 1) make the homepage more introductory and explain about the services MTAP provides and link to the Governor's committee content, 2) Make the no cost equipment section more detailed for how Montanans can qualify to receive it and list types of equipment they can receive, and 3) expand a newsroom section with departmental news and showcase ways Montana Relay is building awareness in the community in the community outreach section. Discussion ensued over other ideas related to the website updates.

MTAP Equipment Report – Mike Bouchard and Richard “Ricky” Ballou

Ricky Ballou began with discussing the text to 911 availability in Montana and presented a map of which counties have text to 911 available that he has worked on with the program manager of 911, Rhonda Sullivan in the state of Montana. This information will be distributed at the outreach events. Ricky mentioned he has gone to the 911 advisory committee meeting and he learned that it's a budget issue related to why some counties like Cascade and Gallatin don't have text to 911 availability. The PSAPs depend on grants so they really don't have room in their budget for equipment or expanding their operation. Mr. Ballou also expanded on the outreach events he's been to such as the baseball game in Missoula and MonTECH's assistive technology conference. Mike Bouchard also added that he did some outreach at the baseball game in Billings and will be attending the annual committee meeting with Triangle Communications. Mr. Bouchard demonstrated the Xlink which is a Bluetooth gateway and it allows someone to use a cell phone as a gateway to an analog device. He added that it depends on how good the cell service is in the area.

DPHHS Report: Chanda Hermanson-Dudley

Chanda Hermanson-Dudley reported that there's a new Indian Health director, Karen Cantrell, who will work with the tribal community and she just started in October and has met with all the divisions. She will be identifying health care needs within the community and one of her goals is to get a written directory of services

throughout the DPHHS department. Ms. Hermanson-Dudley feels that MTAP will be getting attention with the new director in terms of providing assistive technology and adaptive equipment to the tribal community.

Ms. Hermanson-Dudley also added that since the last MTAP committee meeting, when the funding of the NFB Newslite was voted down, there have been questions from advocacy groups about this decision and the MTAP budget. She wanted the committee to be aware of this. She wrote up a brief summary for the Governor's office as to why the decision was made.

Unfinished business

No unfinished business

New business

Ron Bibler brought up the MTAP subcommittees as they have not been active lately. There was an equipment subcommittee, outreach subcommittee and a budget/relay subcommittee. Mr. Bibler thinks there's a good need for a social media/outreach subcommittee. Tina Shorten could chair the social media/outreach one and Lisa Cannon could chair the equipment/technology one. Mr. Bibler would like to have Chanda Hermanson-Dudley on the social media one as well. The equipment subcommittee can discuss whether to use the Apple watch for the program or another product that Teltex offers, or a Fitbit.

Discussion ensued relating clarification on the honorarium and who qualifies to receive it. Ms. Taylor cited Montana Code Annotated, 53-19-304, which spells out the compensation allowances.

Action item – Mary Taylor had a request from Lisa Gault to attend the National Leadership Training Conference in Little Rock, October 17-19. The cost would be about \$1,600. Discussion ensued on this topic about where the funding would come from to cover this trip. Mr. Arnot moved that the committee give Chanda Hermanson-Dudley the authority to go to whoever is needed to take the money out of appropriations to send Lisa Gault to the conference and appended the motion to take money out of Hamilton if it's denied. Lisa Cannon seconded this motion. All voted in favor of this motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:43 pm