

Montana Telecommunications Access Program
Minutes: Full Committee Meeting
August 16, 2018
Wilderness room, Colonial - Helena

Committee Members Present: Drew Arnot, chair, Ron Bibler, vice chair, Nick Domitrovich, Tom Thompson, Cam Tulloch, Jay Preston, Lisa Cannon

Committee Members Absent: Tyler Pert, John Pavao, Tina Shorten

MTAP Staff Present: Mary Taylor, Steve Johnson, Lisa Gault, Richard Ballou

Supporting and Contributing Persons Present: Emilie Banasiak, Connie Phelps and Beth Slough, Hamilton Relay, Trisha Smith and Stella Woodrum, sign language interpreters, Sheri Vukasin, financial manager/budget analyst, Shawn Tulloch, program manager - deaf services for DET

Meeting called to order:

Drew Arnot called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Arnot asked the committee if there is a motion to approve the minutes from the May meeting. Ron Bibler moved, Cam Tulloch seconded. Jay Preston brought up a correction that needed to be made on page 3 in Nick's report – the word should be million not billion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Public Comment: In follow up to MTAP's pursuit of an MTAP Facebook page, Debbie Schmidt and Chad McMellon from the Montana Television Network (MTN) gave a presentation on how MTN could help increase awareness of MTAP through social media management. They do everything from geotargeting, where a certain area is targeted and people with their phones that appear in this targeted area will receive a specific message or advertisement. They also manage Facebook pages that reach out to a wide variety of Montanans. Ninety-six percent (96%) of media actions are all screen based, such as TV, tablet, computer or cell phone. Digital marketing is measurable and trackable by the hits shown (clicks). Any kind of advertising would be accessible with captions if it's in video or audio format. Questions were posed to Debbie and Chad regarding their presentation and discussion ensued.

Diane Devaney from Devaney & Associates did her presentation via speaker phone about what her company would do for social media representation for MTAP. They have experience with working with state relays for over 15 years and for MTAP they would work on a Facebook page using their extensive knowledge of relay services to create engagement. They would populate the page with posts that relate to the time of year, events coming up, stories and advertising. They tend to run ads every month for a relay since it helps grow and generate people following the Facebook page. They will send reports to MTAP such as what ad was run, the dates, the number of clicks and likes generated for each month. Discussion ensued and questions were asked.

A motion was put on the floor to look into contract negotiations with Devaney to have them work on page creation and content management, separately from advertising, by Ron Bibler and seconded by Nick Domitrovich. The motion was passed in favor.

MTAP Director's report: Mary Taylor

Mary Taylor opened her report with searching for replacements for members that have vacated the committee such as Julia Saylor and Marilyn Daumiller and one more that is for business. She also had a discussion with Hamilton Relay (Connie Phelps, Beth Slough and Emilie Banasiak) the day prior to this meeting, learning about the services Hamilton Relay provides. She stated she'll be attending the TEDPA and NASRA conferences in September and hopes to become more knowledgeable about the two organizations as well.

For outreach, Ms. Taylor reported that there is ongoing discussion about advertising for the Jitterbug phone with a client. A vehicle has been purchased for the Missoula office and Richard "Ricky" Ballou has that car for travel purposes. She also reassigned the Bozeman area to Steve Johnson and the Butte area to Ricky Ballou. Ms. Taylor will continue to cover the Helena area clients for the time being. The poverty level administrative rule proposal has been accepted and has been used since February. Ms. Taylor informed the committee that Barb Varnum has suggested opening a Billings office when Steve Johnson retires and focusing on outreach to the Native Americans as well as teenagers and children. Ms. Varnum gave Ms. Taylor some ideas regarding outreach before she retired.

Budget Report: Sheri Vukasin

Sheri Vukasin opened with two reports, one for fiscal year 2018 and fiscal year 2019 since the 2018 fiscal year just ended on June 30th prior to this meeting. For the 2018 fiscal year, projections were at \$951,000 which included \$62,000 for indirect costs and \$889,000 against the House Bill 2 appropriation. Total expenses for 2018 was \$815,000 and budgeted HB2 expenses were \$779,000 and indirect/prior year costs were \$78,000. Indirect costs came in higher than projected. The projection was \$62,000 and it ended up at \$74,000.

Ms. Vukasin clarified on how this came to be is because during the legislative session (January-April 2017) the legislature came out with some bills that required payment of certain types of services to be made of restricted appropriations. A restricted appropriation is money one can only spend for a specific purpose. Instead of having each individual division have their own restricted appropriation, they took all the funds, transferred them over to the central services division and then paid them out of there, which then allocated the costs back out to the cash of the supporting programs. When this change was made it affected everyone's cost allocation so cost allocation rates went up. Ms. Vukasin explained that Nick Domitrovich is not directly paid by the division, he is paid through cost allocation which is different from when Jim Marks was in the agency. Mr. Marks did direct charge, Mr. Domitrovich didn't, so the costs went up due to paying Mr. Domitrovich via cost allocation. She anticipates costs being higher again this current state fiscal year but not quite as high as in the last state fiscal year. She projects about the \$68,000-\$70,000 range.

Revenue for the year – projection was \$1.375 million and \$1.368 million was the result. The fund balance is the cash that comes in from the charge on the telephone bills and it is \$550,000. That comes into the State department of revenue and that is what pays the program. At the end of the state fiscal year nearly \$102,000 was spent on outreach. Capital went up a little bit, about \$120,000. Traditional relay came in almost the same as what was spent last year but traditional relay has been decreasing and being replaced with CapTel and text messaging. Equipment purchase costs were significantly lower this year than last year. About \$85,000 was spent on equipment purchases.

For 2019, the total appropriations are \$1.6 million. The \$775,000 appropriation set aside for the FCC is still there. There are not much year-to-date costs to report since it's only been one month since fiscal year 2019 has begun. Ms. Vukasin has not had an opportunity to meet with Mary Taylor yet about projections for the year. She did do some preliminary projections for the committee such as the NFB Newline and increased the projection for the equipment in case storage gets low and there is a need to buy more. Outreach projection is at \$120,000 but that can be increased depending on the committee's decision on what to do with Facebook. Ms. Vukasin does not have projections for the relay services and Mr. Bibler mentioned that the Hamilton Relay contract is up in February of 2019 so there should be word from Hamilton Relay in the next few months for a proposal for an increase for the term of the contract. Ms. Vukasin stated that there probably is language in there that says that one can renew in one-year increments for however many years (she has not read the current contract). If the contract is expiring in February, the contract usually indicates that there is a certain number of days to notify Hamilton Relay if one wants to opt for the one-year renewal to however many years. The contract also will state that there are a greater number of days prior to the end of the contract to notify them if you want to terminate the contract and go back out for bid. That's a decision that needs to be made soon and get going so those deadlines can be met. Ms. Vukasin will work with Mary on this as if the decision is made to go back out for bid, that can take up to six months as there are processes that Ms. Taylor should follow through. Mr. Domitrovich added that he would have to talk to lawyers from Sprint, so he recommends not doing it.

Ms. Vukasin will continue to monitor the fund balance and now is a good time to look at things the program wants to do that might be one-time things or things that are for the better of the program and falls within the rules and the statutes that are longer-term. She says MTAP is being proactive in trying to attain freedom of communication for their clients and being reasonable about managing the budget (this was in relation to ongoing discussion about the fund balance being carried in case the FCC decides to transfer responsibility for relay onto the states).

Hamilton Relay Report: Emilie Banasiak, Connie Phelps and Beth Slough

Connie Phelps opened with the call traffic report as follows:

For traditional relay services -- from July 2017 to June 2018

- 95 to 99% of calls were answered within 10 seconds.
- Intrastate calls (within Montana – that MTAP pays for) – session minutes ranged from 2,500 to 2,000 and conversation minutes ranged from 1,500 to 1,000.
- TRS quality scores – a third independent company assesses the quality as well as Hamilton Relay. It is anywhere from 92% to 100% at the relay centers that Montana calls can hit, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Nebraska.
- Typing words per minute, the requirement is 60 words per minute and the range is anywhere from 71.5 wpm to 81.3 wpm. Typing accuracy is ranging from 98 to 99 percent.

For CapTel – from July 2017 to June 2018

- 98 to 100% of calls were answered within 10 seconds.

- Intrastate calls – session minutes ranged from 6,500 to 4,000 and conversation minutes ranged from 5,500 to 3,500.
- CapTel quality scores - Average words per minute was 162.78, rate of accuracy was 99.7%.

Ms. Phelps mentioned that the customer care department has live chat and it's available on both the Hamilton Relay and Hamilton CapTel websites.

Beth Slough shared with the committee that Hamilton Relay has been working with the FCC's IPCTS working group on setting metrics for Internet protocol captioned telephone service. She suggested that if anyone has an opinion on what would work within the state at the federal level, they can file comments online with the FCC and those comments are due by September 17th. Ron Bibler added that providers are filing comments about IPCTS and to his knowledge, two other organizations that he's involved with will file comments also. He is also involved with an organization that will review all the comments and reply to the comments.

Emilie Banasiak attended the annual Family Learning Weekend at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind as part of ongoing outreach done by Hamilton Relay in June and will have some upcoming events coming up for the fall. Plans are to go to the Montana Health Care Association convention in Billings in September as well as the Veterans Stand Down in Libby and the Montana Association of Public Safety Communication Officials in Bozeman.

MTAP Equipment Report – Steve Johnson and Richard Ballou

Richard Ballou opened with reporting on his time in the RCDHHA program in Oregon that he attended at Western Oregon University from June 25th to July 19th. He attended an ASL class and the program had different presenters on different topics such as an audiologist speaking on hearing loss, a technology specialist showing new technology and a presenter on PT ASL which is a language for the deaf-blind (pro-tactile). There were also presenters on deaf culture, and language deprivation, among others. Mr. Ballou feels he really benefited from the four-week program and feels it helps him do his job better and thanked the committee for approving him to go to this program.

Steve Johnson added that in the interest of time, he will hold off on introducing some new apps and equipment until the next meeting.

DPHHS report: Nick Domitrovich

Nick Domitrovich began by stating that he is leaving the role he's been in for the last 14 months as of the next day (after this meeting) and, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley, the vocational rehabilitation chief of field services, is taking his place in an acting capacity. A little over a year ago, the Governor's office requested that Mr. Domitrovich write a bill to look at and have the legislature consider transferring vocational rehabilitation to the Department of Labor as sort of a further enactment of the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) that was passed in 2014 by the U.S. Congress. Until more is known if this bill will pass, the administrator's job was not advertised because if the reorganization happens, the program staff and field staff usually remain the same but the upper management gets rearranged sometimes. If the bill passes, it won't be active any earlier than July of 2019. Mr. Domitrovich will be moving back to legal as acting deputy chief. He

will keep Disability Employment Transitions (DET) as a client so he will continue his association with MTAP. Mr. Domitrovich also added that in the bill to transfer vocational rehabilitation, he added in the bill to change the language of the largest service provider to that of a wireless carrier. He will get that introduced somehow, whether privately or within the reorganization bill. The reason why he added this in the reorganization bill is that he has to look at the entire division. Mr. Bibler asked if the entire bill has to be passed as a package or whether things can be taken out of it. The legislature could pull it apart in committee and amend it. The change that pertains to MTAP, he feels the legislative committee would not be too concerned about. He doubts that Verizon will show up and oppose it. Mr. Domitrovich mentioned that depending on what happens, he might work with somebody in private and introduce it separately but he just added it in to have it in front of leadership and have them review it ahead of time. Mr. Bibler asked about housekeeping bills and Mr. Domitrovich clarified that they are limited to how many bills they can introduce and an agency-sponsored bill goes through a different process than a bill that comes from a legislator.

Mr. Domitrovich moved on to other state business, regarding a request of a \$2.2 million supplemental for the division. The legislature never acted on this request so the division made it through the fiscal year on existing funds. For the first time in 3-4 years, the division will have the amount of money appropriated to them and will not try to pay past expenses. He feels that 2019 will be a much more stable year for the division and agency in general. He also mentioned that on the federal side, in the next month a separate spending bill for HHS, Labor and Department of Education will be introduced and that's a consensus bill that came out of a committee. There hasn't been a budget bill passed since 2007 that's been a stand-alone bill. It is about 80 million more for vocational rehabilitation nationwide. He feels it might not get very far in terms of passage.

Mr. Domitrovich stated that he can still come to meetings in the future as a member of the audience and help answer questions as he will not be representing the department anymore.

Unfinished business

No unfinished business except the unfilled positions and the committee will wait until the bill passes to find a wireless provider. A quorum would be needed for a vote to conduct any business.

New business

The new business are the zoom video conferences for future meetings and a provider for Facebook. The providers for Facebook has already been discussed earlier in the meeting and the cost of using zoom video would need to be researched but the committee is agreeable to using it for meetings that people cannot attend in person.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 pm