

Montana Telecommunications Access Program
Minutes: Full Committee Meeting
November 21, 2019
Helena, Montana

Committee Members Present: Ron Bibler, chair; Drew Arnot, vice chair; Lisa Cannon, Tina Shorten, Chanda Hermanson-Dudley, Jay Preston, Barbara Varnum, Cam Tulloch, Tom Thompson (via video conference)

Committee Members Absent: John Pavao, Sherri Odlin, Jim Streeter

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

Supporting and Contributing Persons Present: Connie Phelps and Emilie Banasiak, Hamilton Relay; Missy Grinnell and Stella Woodrum, sign language interpreters; Joe Weber, financial manager/budget analyst; Shawn Tulloch, program manager for deaf services.

Meeting called to order:

Ron Bibler called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes:

Jay Preston moved to approve the minutes and Tom Thompson seconded. Motion was carried.

Public Comment:

Barbara Varnum commented that she has kept in touch with the MTAP office occasionally and has been impressed with Mary Taylor and she thinks the Facebook page is awesome and that the staff are doing as much outreach as they can. She was at a conference for ghost towns and met a MTAP client and this client loves Mike Bouchard. Ms. Varnum stated that the clients are getting great service from the MTAP staff.

MTAP Director's report: Mary Taylor

Mary Taylor opened her report with the committee make up, that there are several new members and there's only one position left to fill, the nondisabled engaged in business other than in the telecommunication industry. She welcomed Ms. Varnum to the committee. Ms. Taylor then reported on the new applications that have come in and mentioned that the numbers have leveled off a little bit. The staff has been doing a lot of outreach this past quarter and in addition to the new applications, they visit established clients frequently for issues that come up. Jay Preston mentioned an event that takes place at the Salish Kootenai College, Women for Wellness which is a large health conference that usually happens in May. Ms. Taylor will add that to events to look at for future outreach possibilities. She brought up a visit with a lawyer from the Department of Corrections recently in the Helena office and the lawyer was interested in how relay worked. Gallatin County also has called and needed a phone for one of their clients. Connie Phelps added that there are restrictions on using relay in the prisons to prevent fraud. Discussion ensued about the types of fraud. Ms. Phelps added that Tina Collingham from Hamilton Relay is knowledgeable about correctional issues so she will be a good source on getting tips related to relay in the prisons.

Ms. Taylor moved on to plans for the 30^{year} anniversary celebration for February 19th, 2020. The Capitol Rotunda has been reserved for the event. Potential speakers include the Governor or Lt. Governor, Sheila Hogan, DPHHS Director, someone representing the Montana Association of the Deaf, and MTAP Committee Chair, Ron Bibler. A table will be set up with the equipment MTAP uses, both former and present equipment. Save the Date postcards will go out in December and invitations will be sent in January. Plans include a reception with appetizers and cake. There will be special recognition of current and former MTAP Committee members. MTN (Montana Television Network) will promote this event on their website and Facebook.

There are two different Facebook contracts; one for advertising and one for creation and management of the MTAP Facebook page. The Facebook page was started on December 1, 2018. That contract expires the end of November 2019. When Ms. Taylor went to renew the contract, the State Procurement Bureau told her that because the cumulative amount of the contract is going to exceed \$25,000, that she would need to go out and do a request for proposal to continue with this contract. The current contracts will be extended through March 31st of 2020 so that there will be time to do the RFP without a lapse in the Facebook page contract. She will do a contract amendment just through the end of March with Devaney and Associates and will begin on the invitation for bid progress. Ms. Taylor called on the MTAP Outreach Subcommittee for assistance in preparing the RFP. Ms. Taylor believes that both the management and advertising of the Facebook page will be incorporated under one contract in the RFP.

The Teltex contract that is for purchasing equipment, will expire May 26, 2020 and it can be renewed for up to six more years. Ms. Taylor plans to renew the contract for 13 months, so it'll fall within the state's fiscal year, and expire June 30th instead of May 26th. For updating the MTAP website, Ms. Taylor has gotten a proposal from Devaney and Associates for around \$6,000 and she has also gotten another bid from Edge Marketing. She still has not received a third bid as of now. Once she gets a third bid, she will pass the three proposals on to the committee to look over.

Ms. Taylor briefly went through the trainings that the staff has attended, in particular the ICanConnect training as it relates to clients who have low vision and hearing and the handouts that she gave to the committee such as the website traffic report and information on the legislative change that went through the last legislative session regarding the \$3.5 million removed from the MTAP budget as well as the revenue report. Tina Shorten added that her office (the Public Service Commission) will resume sending notices to Ms. Taylor of telecom registrations through her office. She mentioned that she used to send them to Barbara Varnum, when Ms. Varnum was director. Ms. Taylor also touched on attending the NASRA and TEDPA conferences and the information they gathered from those conferences such as Google technology and accessibility, TTY sunsetting and replacement technology. The next NASRA/TEDPA conference will be in Indianapolis.

For the FCC, there is an update relating to expanding the contribution base which Ron Bibler explained more in depth as there is an upcoming meeting the next day. He explained that the FCC is going to subject the interstate funds to the Universal Service Fund and TRS to expand the contribution base. There will be appeals from the people who have interstate funds that don't feel they have to go towards the fund.

The May meeting will be held in Browning with the tech fair the day before. Ms. Taylor will be using MTN for advertising this event. Discussion ensued about other vendors to invite to the tech fair such as the Blind and Low Vision Services, Independent Living Center, the Indian Health Service and people from the 911 services.
DPHHS Report: Chanda Hermanson-Dudley

Chanda Hermanson-Dudley reported that there has not been a lot of action since the last meeting but mentioned that there's currently an act working its way through Congress that would impact a lot of the programs at Disability Transitions and the clients served by MTAP. It's called the Supplemental Security Income Restoration Act, Senate Bill 2753. When people apply for disability benefits, individuals can only have \$2,000 in assets and it's been that way since 1989. For married couples, the limit is \$3,000. The bill will increase the amount to \$10,000 for individuals and \$20,000 for couples. It would be a big impact on helping people plan, if something happens and they acquire a disability, they won't lose everything they've worked hard for in order to access benefits.

For the vocational rehabilitation program, there is going to be a focus on internal controls which is different than policies and procedures. Procedures are typically inward facing instructions to staff, how to complete tasks, etc., and policies are outward facing guidance to stakeholders and constituents. An internal control is the next layer, how one is checking on these things for quality and quantity. DPHHS is initiating work on writing up internal controls.

Ms. Hermanson-Dudley mentioned that a new budget analyst has been hired, Joe Weber and she is also hoping for a second budget analyst. A division-wide program manager has also been hired, and now the central office has only one vacancy left, the chief of field services for Voc-Rehab.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Bibler and Ms. Hermanson-Dudley on questions related to the finances of the department.

Hamilton Relay Report: Emilie Banasiak and Connie Phelps

Connie Phelps opened with the statistical report:

- For the TRS calls, Hamilton Relay met the 85 percent that is required by the FCC within 10 seconds, by averaging around 97 percent.
- For the session minutes there has been a steady decline, with some spikes.
- For the quality scores during the quarter for the centers (Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland and Nebraska) it is at 96 percent.
- For the typing words per minute average it is 78.5 percent for all the centers. Typing accuracy is at 98 percent.
- For the customer care report, none for technical issues, for general information there were four calls and equipment questions, there was one for July, August and September.
- For conference captioning minutes, the average is around 600-800 minutes, in April there were more calls then dropped off in May and June slightly. No calls regarding outreach and no service complaints, no compliments, commendations or malicious calls.

- For CapTel calls, the percentage answered in 10 seconds is normally at 100 percent.
- For CapTel session minutes and conversation minutes, there has been a drop from people migrating from landline only to the IP caption option.
- For CapTel quality scores, the average words per minute is 182.56 and average rate of accuracy is 99.63 percent and average rate of error is .37 percent.
- For CapTel customer care contacts – there were only two, one was a set up question in September and then an information or referral in July.

Ms. Phelps brought up the FCC report released in September that there have been some changes, mostly changing the language and repealing the requirement for equal access and billing options for long distance. A proposal was made to stop the Federal Register publication of the FCC's notices for certification of state. Every five years the state relays are responsible to recertify and now they don't have to put it in the Federal Register anymore.

Emilie Banasiak discussed outreach events that they have done such as the Last Chance Community Pow Wow, the Montana Speech and Hearing Conference and the Montana Youth Transitions Conference. Ms. Banasiak also discussed the Relay Friendly Business program that Hamilton Relay does which is a free training at different businesses and organizations to increase awareness in identifying legitimate calls via relay and how to improve customer interaction. Mr. Bibler added that this would be good to advertise about this program such as doing a PSA. Mr. Arnot also said this would be a good opportunity to relate to voice providers in the state as well. Ms. Cannon also added that the speech practices would benefit from this information too.

Ms. Banasiak reminded the committee that Hamilton Relay is offering a \$500 scholarship for a high school senior who has a speech disability or is deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or has a speech disability who plans to go to college or trade school. She wants to get the word out about this.

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

Ricky Ballou began with his experience attending the TEDPA conference and how much he enjoyed the different workshops and hearing what other states face in terms of challenges and being able to network with others. He mentioned that he went to a workshop about text to 911 and nationwide, about 20 percent of PSAPs have text to 911 accessibility and Montana is about 50 percent. The speaker talked about why certain PSAPs don't have this capability such as national parks where there aren't cell towers and some counties just not knowing that there is a need to have this so advocacy is needed. For RTT, when PSAPs upgrade to a next generation system, they'll be able to handle RTT calls and that will include both text and voice. With the trainings MTAP does at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy, slides will be added about RTT into that presentation as it will be something dispatchers will have to deal with in the future so it'll be good to have this information so the transition will be smoother. Mr. Ballou joined a subcommittee for marketing, social media and outreach as MTAP has a contract with Facebook. He learned that advertising varies in different states with some having zero funding for advertising. He gave a demonstration on RTT for the committee.

Mike Bouchard reported that he enjoyed the TEDPA conference as well and related a story about the conference he attended with Emilie Banasiak. Mary Taylor had asked them to hand out surveys to get some feedback. He decided based on some of this feedback to make future outreach more hands-on rather than just talking about the equipment. Ms. Taylor added that MTAP got nominated for an organizational award and the award was presented at this specific conference Mr. Bouchard and Ms. Banasiak were attending. Mr. Bouchard demonstrated a device that does voice dialing that plugs into the phone line and he demonstrated how to add names and enable the phone to dial a person's name that the user requests. This will be on a trial basis and a potential device for clients with visual impairments.

Budget Report – Joe Weber

Prior to the budget update, Committee member, Jay Preston, had to leave the meeting to tend to other business and was unable to participate in discussions beyond this point, including the budget report.

Joe Weber reported that the state is now currently in fiscal year 2020 which started July 1, 2019.

For this fiscal year, personal services - \$249,000
operations - \$657,000

Expenses for the first quarter through October 31, 2019, 33 percent of the budget has been completed.

House Bill 2 expenditures through October 31, 2019

- Personal Services, \$24,000 – 9.6% of \$249,000
- Operating Expenses, \$95,000 – 14.5% of \$657,000
- Total Expenses, 13.19% of \$906,000

State fiscal year 2020 expenditures - \$46,000 for services

- Operating expenses through 10/31/2019
- Some of the notable expenses in the total amount of \$73,564 include:
 - \$17,224 for relay services (8%)
 - Hamilton contract – about \$5,000 a month or \$60,000 annual for 2020 outreach services
 - Equipment purchases - \$6,803
 - Outreach services \$21,428
- Indirect and prior year projected costs for 2020
 - Indirect costs \$72,000
 - Projected costs for prior year costs \$19,500

As of 10/31/2019, \$631,234 in revenue has been collected.

There is \$25,000 set aside in the budget for purchasing a new car for the MTAP Billings technician.

Barbara Varnum made a motion to approve the budget as presented. Cam Tulloch seconded it. All were in favor of the motion.

Unfinished business

MTAP subcommittees –

Outreach subcommittee consists of Tina Shorten (chair), John Pavao and Barbara Varnum
Legislative subcommittee – Tom Thompson
Equipment technology subcommittee – Lisa Cannon (chair), Jim Streeter, Cam Tulloch

New business

No new business

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm