**MassMATCH Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**June 16, 2016**

Members in Attendance: Kevin Hatch, Tory Dixon, Les Cory, Robert Dias, Owen Doonan, Peter Gefteas (by phone), Lisa Chiango (phone), Joy Mosenfelder, Karen Janowski, Randi Sargent, Jae Spalding, and Karen Langley (phone), Molly Flueckiger, Paul Remy, Ann Shor, Jonathan O’Dell, Tom Mercier

Members Not in Attendance: Jae Spalding, Linda Landry, Alselio Ayala, Susan LaSante, Alan Chaulet, Lee Nettles, and Maxine Knight,

Program Staff in Attendance: Kobena Bonney, Tanya Bombard

Representatives from Provider Agencies: Cindy Aiken, Dan Mayo, Josh Mendelsohn, Eric Oddleifson, and Leo Tonevski

Presenter: Bridget Simmons Murphy from MA Secretary of States Office

Introduction and Communication Protocol: The meeting was chaired by Kevin Hatch. He asked folks to remember to state their name when they spoke. There were two new members at the meeting, Joy Mosenfelder and Molly Flueckiger.

Discussion and Approval of Minutes: The March minutes were approved with one word change, joying to joining on the first page third paragraph down.

Program and Committee Updates:

***Program Updates*:** Kobena Bonney

Mentioned the Consumer Conference being held on June 23, 2016 and the 2016 Abilities Expo will be Sept 16th-18th at the Boston Convention Center.

MassMATCH recently presented a grant proposal to the Federal Government for additional funding for the AT Loan Program. The grant will be used to enhance the program and to do targeted outreach in the community where the program has not been successful. This particular grant is for AT financial loan programs. The limit is approximately $700,000. The bulk of the award would go towards replenishing the AT Loan Program’s reserves. A small amount will be used to enhance outreach and also the Financial Literacy Program.

Kobena also announced that it is likely there will be another opportunity to submit a proposal for a grant in July/September from the Christopher Reeves Foundation. Last year there were five awards for up to $75,000.00 each.

Kobena asked that members get together to come up with ideas on the kinds of new/innovative projects to implement in this state and start planning to put the grant together prior to the official announcement, which should be sometime in July.

Kobena asked that if folks have specific ideas about new activities that should be carried out, ones that are not doing well, or something that could be done better or in a different way with the infusion of additional resources from this grant please contact him.

**REquipment Update**: Randi Sargent, Tom Mercier, Ann Shor

Randi: REquipment hit its million dollar mark in May. It has re-assigned over a million dollars’ worth of equipment in this fiscal year. About 60% of it was for mobility equipment and 40% for ADL. REquipment is also in the process of onboarding with its new partners. They have added two new re-use partners, UCP Berkshire County and Stavros and one drop-off site at Boston Home. REquipment also held its first staff meeting. The training was to update and upgrade the cleaning and sanitation process. REquipment is currently fully staffed.

Tom: With the generosity of DDS, hiring the Adaptive Equipment Tech I, it allows REquipment to do more and be more efficient with deliveries and cleaning. Allowing the Tech II to do more postings and higher end repairs. Another thing is the addition of an intern to the equipment center through a collaboration with the Department of Youth Services.

Randi: Every site now has a Site Coordinator, a driver and a reuse tech who is a cleaner. All are part-time positions. And they have student interns through BCIL, DDS Center, and CLW.

There has also been some overdue website enhancements, to make the ordering process faster. The website is being updated to reflect the new partners. There has been new purchases made with branding materials. The vans all have REquipment magnets on them, T-shirts and proper name badges for employees.

The committee to review the applications submitted to administer the DME Reuse program will meet in mid-July with the goal of transitioning the administration sometime before August 1st.

Ann added that the RFR closes on July 9th. It is on COMMBUYS website. There is expected to be some good competition about that RFR.

**ATRC-Boston**: Eric Oddleifson

ATRC Boston has been focusing on developing more community access points to do demonstrations. The result has been establishing a couple of memorandums of understanding with IA and MetroWest ILC. The end goal will be to have something on a monthly to every couple of month basis. There has also been communication between BCIL and Boston Multi-Cultural Center about establishing some connections there. ATRC-Boston then plans on turning some attention to the North Shore. This allows there to be more outreach and bolster participation in those programs.

ATRC-Boston also has a summer intern that is studying healthcare who was located through a local university. He is helping to refine and organize the inventory, using AT for All, which uses QR codes. So you can take a picture of the QR code and it brings up a website with the information and description of that item.

As a result of some extra money, ATRC has updated its augmentative communication equipment. It will also be having an open house that will be publicized more come end of summer. It will be a combination of ATRC staff and AAC specialist, who are speech and language pathologists.

ATRC-Boston recently had a very successful low vision fair that Kathy Bly put on. There was a great turn out with many different vendors.

The ATRC is also running a gaming group. Funding came from Comcast, from our national association, and it is an adaptive gaming group. They worked with a group called Able Gamers, to get some adaptive equipment to access things like XBOX consoles and Wii consoles. ATRC Boston is bringing in young folks to learn more about the adaptive gaming systems and will be trying to tie this in with transition issues by having conversations about issues surrounding Independent Living, self‑determination, and tying that into a social new you group.

**ATRC Berkshire/ Reuse:** Dan Mayo

The big thing for UCP Berkshire overall is their upcoming golf tournament on July 18th at the Lacona Country Club in Pittsfield.

They recently held their first MassMATCH informational session on AT devices. Some vendors came out. Springfield has been doing well because they have had more people there. They had their first one in Pittsfield, it was well‑attended, about a dozen people. They are hoping to have a few more and to reach more people.

The Reuse program has had a few things up on the website and they have been snatched up quickly, and it has been really great. The coordination between all of the agencies has been really good so far and partnerships are working really well. They opted for a vehicle where a lot of the other agencies opted for a hub scrub that cleans and disinfects the wheelchairs. Because everything is so spread out in that area the vehicle will be more helpful to be able to do pick-ups and deliveries. MRC made a change that made getting the van possible. Now Western Mass. will be able to be served very well.

**ATLP- Easter Seals:** Leo Tonevski

The ATLP has been focusing on outreach and financial literacy training. There has been interest in financial literacy training. These trainings were held at various locations across the state and partnership with the access sites and Santander Bank. There has been a noticeable decline over the past few fiscal years in the number of loan applications received and loan approvals. The data shows it is in vehicle loan apps being received and approved. The hearing aid applications and other device loan applications have increased. The approvals for those loans are around 80%. They are receiving less vehicle loan applications because of the economy, the quality of loan apps have declined. Santander Bank has tightened up the guidelines. The vehicle dealerships that cater to the Disability Community have also changed their financial guidelines and offer competitive interest rates and loan terms.

ATLP received 1,368 applications, 250‑plus applications are from each region. The break down by city or town shows some communities not being served. They are reaching out to partnering organizations called access sites made up primarily of ILC’s and elder organizations. They help spread the word about the program. They’ve also reached out to other organizations such as D.E.A.F. Inc. This has shown an increase in loan apps from access sites. The Long-term device loan program has increased since Fiscal Year '09. It has had over 701 loan applications. Last year there were 108 orders, which is the most of any year. It’s received over 138 loan applications for the long‑term device loan this year. The access sites had almost 80% of applications received. Loan approvals are at $381,000. They are steady with vehicle mods and hearing aids at 12 apiece. There are also a few mobility and one vision approval.

Owen asked if the ATLP is planning to reach out to all the school systems that have AT needs?

Leo responded that school systems primarily request long‑term loan devices such as Live Scribe pens and things like that are under the $500.

Randi asked if they have flexibility in that loan to expand to other high ticket items like home mods. “I know there is a Home Modification Loan Program, but for people who want to kit out some assistive technology for their home, can you do that?”

Leo said they can do non‑permanent structures, things that can be taken out of the home (ex. a stair lift or portable ramp). But it can't be a permanent structure.

**Presentation:** Bridget Murphy from the Secretary of State’s office

Bridget Murphy is the Project Manager for the Elections Division and her job is to ensure that voting is fully accessible in all (1800) polling locations in Massachusetts. This includes making sure there is at least one accessible marking device at each location called the Auto Mark Voter Assist Terminal. This device can be used by anyone at the voting locations. Everyone is allowed to go into a voting booth by themselves, bring someone in with them, request to bring two poll workers in with you or vote independently and in private. That’s what the auto mark is for. It reads the ballot using JAWS over a headset, it displays the ballot on the screen in a larger font, it also has a touch screen to assist with going through the ballot and making selections. It takes the ballot that you are handed at the check‑in table. You feed it into the auto mark, make the selections on a touch screen, and it will then confirm the choices and print the ballot. You would take the ballot from the auto mark, go to the check-out table and the ballot goes into the ballot box like everybody else's. So it allows someone who might not have had the opportunity to vote privately and independently to do so. These are available to use at every State and Federal election in Massachusetts.

Eric asked how it is that the information on this machine is protected or secured.

Bridget responded that the equipment is nothing more than a 40 pound pen. It merely marks the ballot. It does not store your vote. It just knows that one other user used it.

Alexander asked that if one of the workers has a problem with the machine at the election site, what is the protocol for handling the issue? Do they handle it right then and there? Is there someone specifically that should be contacted?

Bridget said that if there are questions or issues people should speak to the warden at the polling site. The warden is in charge. They train all of the wardens to ensure that they are fully aware of the equipment and know how to troubleshoot. If there is an issue and they need more help, they can call her. They also have at least ten technicians in the state on Election Day, so if there is anything truly problematic, they can pull a unit out and put a new unit in.

Kevin inquired if there are any switches or anything.

Bridget said ports on the machine that allow for sip and puff, there are also two headphones ports, and a port for a switch or paddle.

**REVUP** Molly Flueckiger

REVUp initiative is a project of the Disability Law Center. REV stands for register, educate, and vote. There has been a project in Texas over the years that has built a disability voting blog. They have done that through different aspects of education, etc. Massachusetts is one of many states that have looked at the Texas model and are doing something unique to the state. The real focus of the campaign now is to educate organizations, such as the ILC’s and other disability advocacy organizations on how to run voter registration drives. There is a website called REVUPMA.org. People can go on and register for the newsletter. There is a conference call on Wednesday, June 29th, from 1 to 3 about how to run a voter registration drive. The organization AAPD, American Association of Persons with Disabilities, AAPD.com/REVUp will have information about national disability voter registration week. From July 11th-15th there will be things across the country to help individuals with disabilities. After the registration deadline has passed, REVUp will focus on getting folks to the polls to vote.

Karen L asked what can the people in the room can do to assist in this education process? Is there a Facebook link they can go on and share information? Are there other things that they can do on the website to sign up?

Molly said to go to the website AAPD.com to register for the newsletter and to find out about the specific activities of the REVUP program. On their website there is a lot of links just about voting and registration, about absentee voting in Massachusetts and about early voting. There is a link on website for questions. For a specific question depending upon the type of work you do, you can ask it, and then somebody will help you to find an answer.

***Working Group Subcommittees Updates***:

**Membership Committee:** Kobena Bonney

Current issues with adhering to membership guidelines and policies especially council memberships lasting longer than the terms. Recruiting new members while looking at the diversity of the group. Also, need a council member from DESE and Elder Affairs.

**DESE Committee:**

Current issue being discussed has been DESE policies around IEPs and using AT for taking standardized tests.

Paul Remy said he is on the Sharon Massachusetts Council on Aging Advisory Committee. The committee would like to know more about information concerning how assistive technology is benefitting senior citizens. He asks if MassMATCH has a program that specifically focused on seniors? If so, the organization, might consider having regional conferences for this population.

Kobena responded that in terms of an existing program, the answer is "no." Not one that is specific to the elderly. The ATRC’s aim to serve the general public, including the elderly. . The elderly population is one that could be focused on.

Jonathan announced that he is the contact person for elder issues at MCDHH. They have been working with Mass. council on aging and with the EOEA. While MassMATCH definitely has a role to play in terms of a loaner program, they tend to reach out to specific agencies with specific expertise related to the issue. MCDHH also work with MCB. Many people also have vision loss that goes along with their hearing loss. There is plenty of attention to Elder Affairs. It is just coming from the individual agencies rather than from a committee such as this.

Karen L. added that a few years ago there was outreach to the council on aging and they were looking to put some AT for people with low vision. They were in the two locations. They were doing that to get loaner equipment to the senior centers so that people could try out. It might be worthwhile following up to see what they actually did.

Peter mentioned that he took an online course this past semester and entered his ePortfolio in a contest. Part of the project focused on MRC’s former Commissioner Charles Carr and the topic of the ePortfolio was the Independent Living Movement. He offered to email a link to the ePortfolio to Kobena so he can send it to members.

Kobena delivered an announcement from Ann Shor to members reminding them that the annual SILC is on Sept. 13th and 14th. This conference is put on by the statewide IL Council and the ILC’s. There is only one workshop proposal on AT. So, those interested in presenting a workshop can still submit a proposal.

Cindy Aiken announced that she would be retiring from Easter Seals and that this would be her last meeting. Many members in attendance expressed their thanks and appreciation for her many years of service to the disability community.

Jonathan O’Dell shared the rather sad news that somebody who was very powerful force in the Independent Living movement, Leo Canuel who used to be a co‑worker of his and a friend has passed away very unexpectedly in his sleep. He leaves behind a wife and two children. The Disability Community has just suffered a great loss. Karen Langley and Ann Shor were personal friends of his. The entire gathering held a Moment of Silence in memory of Leo.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 PM.