

RICAT Minutes
Office of Rehabilitation Services
40 Fountain Street - Providence, RI 02903
April 20, 2006
2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Welcome

- Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Panarace at 2:35 p.m.
- Members present: Margaret Dunning, Kathleen Samways, Margaret Hoye, Emily Lennon, Jill Waller, Joe Murphy, Ron Racine, Ed Zuromski
- ATAP Partners: Lezlee Shaffer, James Litvack,
- Guests: Elizabeth Hubbard, Allen Parent-Wetmore
- ATAP Program Director: Regina Connor
- Acceptance of Minutes: J. Waller moved to accept minutes of 12/01/05, seconded by M. Hoye. Motion was unanimously approved.
- Chairperson's Report:
 - Future Meeting Dates – June 15, August 17, October 19, November 30
 - K. Samways commented that RICAT met the same date as the Consumer Advisory Committee met this past year. J. Panarace added that it also usually conflicts with the GDC meetings.
 - Chair Panarace stated she didn't have much to report, however, she did receive a request from Regina regarding AT funding. She also stated that she had a question come to her about reasons for canceling a RICAT meeting. She explained to that council member that the initial reason the February meeting was cancelled was because the court reporter had a death in her family. Regina and Dianne had to participate in a conference call the day of the second meeting. Chair Panarace asked that the Executive Committee attend this conference call. In the future she might ask that if a person is not able to attend, they should submit a written report.
- Committee Reports:
 - Executive Committee: Met twice prior to this meeting. In January they discussed the importance of a support committee, and on March 2nd they sat in on the federal conference call.
 - Partner Support (proposed): The Council had discussed several times in the past having a partner support ad hoc committee so they could become familiar with the work plans of the partner agencies, make site visits, and suggest resources that would help partners accomplish goals, monitoring objectives in work plan. Chair

Panarace stated this could be committee of 4-5 people that chose an agency to work with. Chair Panarace opened it up for discussion. E. Lennon commented that in the past they've said that that is a missing piece of RICAT meetings, adding that she thinks it's a good idea. K. Samways asked how the Chair sees the partner support liaison coming back to the council. R. Racine commented that in the past RICAT used to have a person (B. Perrello) go to the ATAP partners meeting and report back. Chair Panarace added that having 5-6 people ascending on one agency would be too much. Partners' reports have been an update of activities, events planned, new publications, but they are not specific to a work plan, and she would like to bring that to the forefront. Regina added that to underscore that under activities of advisory council, they indicate that the Council needs to be involved in establishing the goals of the program, implementation and progress of the program and meeting the goals. In order to be aware of the programs, council needs to have a closer relationship with partners. Updates have been informative but more global and not focused on activities that relate to the partners' work plans. Having one of the council members come to the partners meeting and report back to the Executive Committee sounded like a good idea to the members. Lezlee added that for OSCIL, site visits wouldn't really work because most of what they do is out in community. She added that the quarterly reports each partner submits could be shared with council as well. Chair Panarace stated she would like the concept in general to be settled on. R. Racine asked if the work plans could be emailed to everyone. Chair Panarace stated she would send them to everyone. K. Samways asked if this is something they need to do to be doing. R. Connor answered that the law describes it as an activity of a council, yet how it is done is determined by the Council. Chair Panarace stated the first step might be to share work plans with everyone, and then have a small committee review the work plans and report to the full council. E. Lennon asked if there is a mechanism that they have for how they go through their work plans. R. Connor responded she meets monthly with the partners, and they discuss issues that are of interest to all of the partners, and she updates them on what is happening. In terms of quarterly reports, the reports basically come to her. R. Connor stated she feels that by starting out sharing work plans and sharing quarterly reports would be the best way to give a better understanding of what is happening. K. Samways commented that it might be an advantage to the partners to have a consumer actively looking at their reports and activities. It was questioned if the work plans could that be part of the ATAP website. R. Connor responded that the ATAP State Plan is on the website. Chair Panarace asked if there were any objections to going ahead with this plan. There were none.

- Alternative Finance (update/expand membership): A request was made that this be placed on the agenda. They need to solicit additional participation to the original committee members which include Chair Panarace, Anne Mulready/Liz Hubbard (RIDLC), Judi Carlson, and John Benevides. Liz stated she is not sure what her part is in this. Chair Panarace stated they want input from agencies that have expertise in these areas. She asked that all committee members think about someone from any agency who might be a valuable addition. Duties of this committee are to discuss possible ways of developing financing for AT because some pieces of AT are extremely expensive. K. Samways asked if we have anything in writing regarding the job duties. Regina stated they are in the midst of doing a feasibility study. D. Newman is focused on developing a survey that will be distributed among numerous agencies and consumers with disabilities to determine a level of interest in AFP as well as reaching out to other states to see what types of loan programs they have developed. They will need input from the council as the process is developing. Chair Panarace stated she did correspond with

D. Newman a bit about agencies. As results come back, council will receive a report, and will then be able to offer suggestions and support. Chair Panarace stated they can look at the description from the previous AFP committee, and possibly modify. J. Benevides is the chair. R. Connor will let D. Newman know that there are some council members who would like to look at survey prior to it going out.

- Communications: J. Murphy stated there was not a lot to discuss. They had scheduled a meeting but Dr. Sun couldn't make it. They didn't get very many responses regarding the website. He will get everyone's email address and will send out the link to website. Question was brought up about putting survey on ATAP's website. R. Connor stated yes it should be on that. D. Newman had talked to R. Connor about using Survey Monkey. Dr. Sun also emailed that K. Samways and he had done a couple of AT talks at South Bay Manor and St. Elizabeth Home. They also want to open up any talks in the future to all members of the council. Chair Panarace and M. Hoyer also volunteered to help out. J. Murphy stated one of the suggestions was that partners should be on the website. K. Samways added that it would clarify who the partners are. M. Hoyer reminded everyone that not everyone has a computer. K. Samways added she had received another request for a speaker. This one was from the Senior Services in Woonsocket. J. Blaney asked if they use an outline. K. Samways responded they used previous talking points and show all of the AT they bring with them. J. Blaney asked about how many people attend. K. Samways stated there have been as few as 12, and then there was a packed house at St. Elizabeth's House. Chair Panarace asked about the mobile kit that they take with them. K. Samways stated there are two tubs of stuff in plastic bags that state what they deal with. E. Lennon asked if they did the presentations at a certain time. K. Samways responded they negotiate the time and most groups are pretty flexible.
- Legislative: B. Perrello was not present however; Chair Panarace stated she had 2 issues to raise. R. Connor sent her an email hoping that the council could contact Representative Jim Langevin's office regarding funding for the AT program. Apparently the President reduced the funding. R. Connor added that the council can educate our representatives on the importance of the AT program and benefits of AT. The President's proposal for FFY 2007 which would affect us in FFY 2008 for \$21.3 million does not include any funding for AFP or for Protection & Advocacy. This would have a significant impact and different organizations would be fighting over funding. Chair Panarace read the letter R. Connor received regarding funding, and will forward a copy of the letter to RICAT members so anyone wanting to can send out letter. Another issue that was brought to her attention is that there is a public comment period that ends April 21 that relates to accessible air travel for people who are Deaf, Blind, or severely visually impaired. With regards to caption videos for safety run through, display board for gate changes, times of departure and arrival, and ttys. Also big educational component for airline staff. Jeanne will be glad to compose a letter about certain features that will make air travel more accessible.
- Membership/Outreach: J. Blaney commented that she was happy to say that they have a full council now that Margaret Dunning has joined us. She had contacted James Bowden to see if he wanted to be on one of the committees, but she hasn't heard back. She will forward a copy of the list of members showing which committee each are on and the chairs. Her only concern is that they have 2 members who are on the council but haven't been able to attend. Emily added that she should probably make a phone call which is more personal to H. Dunbar and W. Robinson. K. Samways stated H. Dunbar had been at the communication

committee meetings. Y. Sun had sent Chair Panarace an email saying that K. Cronin was ill and is in a rehab center. J. Blaney will send a card from RICAT members. K. Samways asked that with the Council being full right now if anyone comes due in January. J. Blaney responded that the terms are staggered, and no one's term expires until winter of 2006.

- Program Director's Report: R. Connor stated they had received correspondence from RSA stating they have a fully approved state plan for AT. They had originally been granted a provisional approval because they did not have full council membership. They are fully approved for 3 years. There will be a national conference on device utilization in May which A Parent-Wetmore will be attending.
- ATAP Partners Report:
 - PARI (Special Report) – Allen Parent-Wetmore: Allen showed a video they had made up about PARI and explained even more about the PAAT program and how J. Litvack inspects the equipment and the guideline as far as how they assign dollar amounts. He stated that about 5,000 items were received this past 6 months and they spoke to 547 people. ATAP has allowed him to go from 20 to 30 hours per week. They donate a lot of equipment to relief agencies and also loan equipment, such as wheelchairs both electric and manual. They sold 190 pieces of equipment. A projected savings of \$114,000 to consumers by using recovery and reutilization of equipment. Chair Panarace questioned how many calls they received regarding equipment related to communications. A. Parent-Wetmore responded there is not much because they mainly have big button phones. Chair Panarace stated there is a study going on to determine the effects of AT. J. Litvack commented that communication devices that although a lot of times they get routed to him, most people usually have a tendency to hang on until they are beyond repair and that is why there usually are not referrals for FM systems and TTY devices. K. Samways questioned how they know about PAAT. J. Litvack responded that the Salvation Army, Big Brother & Sisters, Hospice centers, and Senior centers let people know about PARI and how they work with the equipment. Word of mouth is how most people hear about PARI. E. Lennon added that they at Meeting Street refer a lot of people to PARI.
- Roundtable:
 - Forwarded by Richard Gaffney –The Automark voting equipment was purchased for voters of RI. It was suggested that if they can get a demonstration to try it out, it would be more meaningful.
 - R. Connor – commented that most people at the meeting today did not know that they have the Deputy Administrator of SBVI in their midst. She added that Ron Racine was just promoted to that position.
 - K. Samways stated that she has a new job working with the National Inclusion Project with UMASS Boston which is a program from Cooperation of National Service which provides training and technical assistance. Chair Panarace questioned when decisions are made for grant awards are they made at State level or Federal level. K. Samways stated she starts Monday and will find out more.
- Next Meeting Date: June 15, 2006
- Adjournment: Motion was made by K. Samway and seconded by J. Murphy that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.