

RICAT Minutes

ORS

February 26, 2004

- Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chair Waller at 2:41p.m.
- Members present: Jill Waller, Kathy Samways, Bob Perrillo, Emily Lennon, Jeanne Panarace, Ronald Racine, Blair Baldwin, Flo Adeni-Awosika and Ed Zuromski.
- ATAP Partners: Roberta Greene, Lezlee Shaffer, Beverly Andrade-Johnson, Lisa Labitt.
- Guests: Harry Dunbar, Joe Murphy, Steve Brunero
- Acceptance of Minutes – 12/4/03: Kathy Samways made motion to accept minutes with changes (Emily was in attendance, Kathy was not, at December 4, 2003 meeting. On page 2, Ed Z. had stated he would attend AFP meeting needs to be added); seconded by Emily Lennon with changes Motion was unanimously approved by Council members.
- Chairperson's Report: none.
- Committee Reports
 - Communications – Ron stated they had a meeting at URI. Ying is working on getting information for a links page with some of his students. Kerri will be able to finish up work on website. She now has passwords that she needed. Ron said if members have certain links or information they would like to see on website to let him or Kerri know. It was suggested that since this is an election year, information regarding Braille ballots and accessible election materials could be discussed. Website will be www.atap.ri.gov/ricat.htm.
 - Membership/Outreach – The Chair has asked at this time to postpone this report until the end of the meeting.
 - Legislative – Roberta stated there has been some downtime recently, but it is starting to gear up again. At this time no bill has been proposed regarding the reauthorization of the AT Act. In RI, the committee is looking at two bills introduced into the RI General Assembly. The first is an Act Relating to Traumatic Brain Injury where there would be a surcharge on traffic violations that will go into a fund for TBI victims. Page 9 on Bill specifically mentions AT. The other bill is the Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan program that has to do with the Newsline Provision. Richard G. had called Roberta and told her it would be problematic. Only \$25,000 would go to DHS to implement the program. He is concerned that this is not realistic and wouldn't even pay the federal fee. There is a legislative section on the website so that people will know what bills having to do with AT are being proposed. Roberta also said the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005 budget is out and Title I has \$0 and Title III has \$15 million. On Tuesday there was supposed to be a meeting on the AFP but it has been postponed. Twenty-two other states currently have an AFP in place. Roberta also stated that there is talk that in order to get federal money, states may have to have an AFP. Beverly went to Washington in December and got a link to the Pennsylvania program. The financial institution they use is Sovereign Bank. We have a name of a contact person and are about ready to approach.

Citizens Bank has also expressed some interest. Kathy asked who would be making the decision. Roberta stated the ATAP partners – Regina, OSCIL, TechACCESS, EBEC, and RIDLC. Kathy asked who would be responsible for controlling the money. Roberta stated a 501C corporation would have to be formed. Kathy asked how they would get funds. Roberta stated a group decision would need to be made on how to go about it. Sovereign Bank is also talking to Massachusetts. Bob P. gave everyone a copy of the list of state senators and representative and their email addresses. He asked that everyone write to their senators and representatives and ask them to support these bills. Jeanne stated she chairs the ATEL committee, and thought this was presented as an opportunity. She didn't realize there was concern about the Newsline end of it. Roberta stated Richard was concerned about the dollar amount assigned to the bill. Last year there was a piggyback of \$.01 on the telephone bill. Jeanne stated that through surcharges is how ATEL was funded originally. Most services or agencies earmarked for funds never see that money because it has ended up in the general treasury. Roberta stated if the bill is passed, DHS would have to implement it.

- Project Director's Report – none. Regina was absent due to an injury.
- ATAP Partners Report
 - Lisa – EBEC is doing a lot of teacher Professional Developments Trainings including 3 trainings on screen reader software. Most are after school trainings. The biggest problem of AT training piece is a lot of districts don't have Professional Development Training days and not enough substitute teachers to cover when teachers attend. They have started going into schools and having teachers go around and rotate into the different trainings. EBEC held an Open House at which they had quite a few legislative people in attendance. Lisa spoke to Patrick Kennedy about the Tech Act for a little bit.
 - Beverly – TechACCESS - Citizens Bank has a program called the Community Champions. It is a competitive bank process where the winner gets \$25,000 in grant monies. TechACCESS was named as the winner. Volunteers came in to help with painting, fundraising, and there were spots on Channel 10. TechAccess is planning a fundraising auction on June 10 at the Radisson in Warwick. They have also started planning for the AT Conference. Judy has had contact with Cyberkinetics, a company that has developed brain research. They are looking for volunteers who have a C5-C7 injury for research using an implant on the surface of brain.
 - Lezlee – OSCIL is in the process of accepting applications for their Annual Scholarship. They are targeting high school students preparing to go off to vocational or technical schools. They are awarding 2 scholarships of \$1000. An essay is part of process, as well as the goals of students and financial needs component. The application is available on OSCIL's website – www.oscil.org. The deadline is March 24, 2004. The \$1,000 can be used to purchase AT devices used to further education. Kathy stated that Kerri Rossi at URI is specifically recruiting students with 504 plans and IEP, and this information would be wonderful for her to know about. Lezlee stated they send it to every guidance office. Flo teaches special ed, and she is telling them that they will qualify. Ron stated he will send it out to counselors at ORS. Lezlee stated they are also having

trouble getting applications for the RI Youth Leadership Forum, and have extended the application period to March 12. Students participate in a 4-day 3-night all-expenses paid forum at Camp Conanicus in Exeter to help them develop leadership skills that ends with a wonderful luncheon. They are hoping to get 8-10 students to participate in this forum held on August 9 –12th. Steve stated he would let Regina, who also chairs Transition, know so she can let transition counselors know about this. Flo and Kathy both took applications.

- Roundtable
 - Bob gave the numbers on the list of Senators and Representatives that are on the bills that Roberta reported on. Relating to Traumatic Brain Injury: Representatives Ginaitt – 22; Lewiss – 37; Giannini – 7; McNamara 19; Dennigan – 62. ATEL: Lima – 14; Naughton – 21; Benson – 32; Cerra – 42; and Handy - 18.
 - Kathy asked if we wanted them to pass an act that is under funded. Bob stated any bill is better than no bill because it can be modified.
 - Jill thanked Roberta for all the help she has done on RICAT, and stated we will definitely miss her. Roberta stated a part of her will always be here. Her daughter's memorial fund is through TechACCESS and is part of the AFP Program.
- Membership – The Committee did 6 interviews, and they still have 5 applicants to interview on March 9th. A lot of members have for terms ending this fall. They include Ed, Jeanne, Blair, Flo, Kathy, Richard, Margaret and Charles. They will need to be re-nominated. Ed, Flo and Blair all stated they would like to continue to be on the Council.

Summaries were distributed of 4 applicants they want to vote on and read another: William Robinson, John Benevides, Joe Murphy, Brian Chace and Harry Dunbar. They need to check to make sure there is no issue with Joe Murphy being on the Council because they already have an ORS person on it. Ron said that he would be willing to step down and have Joe have his spot if it not possible for 2 people from ORS. There was discussion on the number of openings, the number of applicants interviewed and the number of applicants still waiting to be interviewed. There also was discussion regarding Mike Battles. Due to his previous work schedule, and current deployment to Iraq, he has not attended any RICAT meetings. Emily made motion to send Mike a letter thanking him and when he gets back if he wants to participate on the Council he would be welcome. Jeanne P. seconded. Motion was unanimously passed. They now have 6 slots. Kathy S. moved to accept all 5 people onto Council, seconded by Ed Z. Motion was unanimously approved. Jeanne asked how did they find out about this opportunity. Emily stated most heard about it from Providence Journal.

Harry and Joe were brought back into meeting where Jill congratulated both and said that both were accepted as members of the RICAT. Their names have been recommended, and they will be forwarded to Regina.

- Next Meeting Date: April 22,2004.
- Adjournment: Motion was made by Jeanne P., and seconded by Flo A., that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.