Governor’s Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI)
Assistive Technology (AT) Committee Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2022

Members Present
Bea Shapiro, Chair
Bob Kresmer
Sue LeHew
Mark Nelson
Karla Rivas-Parker
Nathan Pullen

Members Absent
Dr. Carlos Grandela

Staff Present
Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Call to Order and Introductions
Bea Shapiro, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of January 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes
Bob Kresmer motioned to approve the January 26, 2022 meeting minutes. Karla Rivas-Parker seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed by unanimous voice vote.

AT Committee Presentation Discussion
Bea Shapiro stated the first round of presentations went well and received good participation. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that 123 individuals registered for the first presentation and 73 attended; and 112 individuals registered for the second presentation and 62 attended. Bea Shapiro stated that she would submit any information regarding the registered individuals to the Department of Economic Security (DES) to show that they were successful presentations. Bea Shapiro stated the second round of presentations would be on February 28th, in which the first presentation would be in the morning and the second presentation would be in the afternoon. Ms. Shapiro stated
her hope that Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors and blindness professionals would be able to attend the presentations to obtain more information regarding low vision evaluations and Assistive Technology (AT). Bea Shapiro stated the committee had not received CRC credits yet, although she anticipated the committee would be able to offer credits to attendees. Sue LeHew stated the presentation had been accepted and was in the process for CRC credits also. Ms. LeHew noted the presentation registration was through Zoom and required a visual captcha, which was not accessible to all users. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that Zoom should offer an audio version as an alternative option. Sue LeHew stated that she had requested an alternate method for individuals to be able to register for the presentations.

Ms. Rivas-Parker stated she distributed information regarding the presentation through her AER listserv, which reached a lot of individuals. Sue LeHew stated the committee could share the presentation information with eye doctors also to reach as many individuals as possible. Bob Kresmer inquired whether the committee had a distribution list of individuals that would be interested in attending the presentations. Bea Shapiro stated the committee did not have an official distribution list, but committee members could distribute the information to their contacts. Bob Kresmer suggested the committee share the presentation information with organizations such as SAAVI Services for the Blind and the Foundation for Blind Children also.

Bea Shapiro stated the Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE) had been rescheduled for April 22nd and the VRATE Board contacted Karla Rivas-Parker and Dr. Carlos Grandela regarding their interest in presenting. Karla Rivas-Parker stated her understanding that everyone that was previously approved to provide a presentation, had been contacted. Bea Shapiro stated that if individuals were unable to attend the presentations in February, they might be able to attend the VRATE presentations in April. Ms. Shapiro stated her hope that even seasoned VR Counselors attended the presentations and noted there had been advancements in low vision services and AT. Bob Kresmer stated the AT Committee could encourage individuals to attend the presentations at the upcoming Full Council meeting. Bea Shapiro stated that she was unsure whether VRATE would be scheduled for November also and noted the committee would need to decide on a presentation if that were the case. Bea Shapiro inquired whether the Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP) conference would be virtual again this year. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that AzTAP would have in person and virtual options for attendees.
AT Outreach Update

Bea Shapiro stated the committee’s first podcast would be aired on Saturday, February 26th and the second podcast would air on March 26th. Ms. Shapiro stated the committee would need to identify topics for the next podcasts as well.

AT Trends

Mark Nelson stated there was progress towards self-driving cars, although there was still a lot to do. Bob Kresmer stated that self-driving cars had difficulty driving in sleet or snow. Karla Rivas-Parker stated AzTAP had a Riedel keyboard, which was about the size of a credit card and allowed an individual to use it with an Apple or Android device. Ms. Rivas-Parker stated the keyboard connected to a phone via Bluetooth. Bea Shapiro inquired whether the keyboard would be easier for older individuals to use. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that it would likely be easy because it was similar to a keyboard. She added that it was $320.00, and clients could borrow the device from AzTAP and try it for a couple of weeks. Bob Kresmer inquired whether AzTAP had a surplus of devices. Karla Rivas-Parker stated AzTAP did not have a surplus, although individuals could borrow older equipment for long term use if they needed them.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Assistive Technology Committee was scheduled for March 17th. Agenda items are as follows:

- AT Committee Presentation Update
- AT Outreach Update
- AT Trends

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Public Comment

A call to the public was made with no response’s forthcoming.

Adjournment of Meeting

Bob Kresmer motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sue LeHew seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.