

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

Members Present

Bea Shapiro, Chair
Bob Kresmer
Mark Nelson
Karla Rivas-Parker
Nathan Pullen

Members Absent

Dr. Carlos Grandela
Sue LeHew

Staff Present

Lindsey Powers

Guests Present

Steven Freeman

Call to Order and Introductions

Bea Shapiro, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm, Phoenix, AZ. Introductions were made, and a quorum was present.

Approval of February 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Bob Kresmer motioned to approve the February 17, 2022 meeting minutes. Nathan Pullen seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was passed by unanimous voice vote.

AT Committee Presentation Discussion

Bea Shapiro stated the committee offered the two recorded presentations in partnership with the Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP) and AT AZ. Bea Shapiro noted that 73 individuals attended Part 1 and 62 attended Part 2 of the AzTAP presentations. She added that 47 individuals attended Part 1 and 44 attended Part 2 of the AT AZ presentations. Ms. Shapiro stated the committee was able to offer CRC credits to individuals attending the AT AZ presentation, and participants should have received those credits. Bea Shapiro stated that Services for the Blind Visually Impaired and Deaf (SBVID) staff, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, and individuals

from other agencies attended the presentations. Bea Shapiro stated the presentations were well attended, although she would have liked to see more participation from the attendees and inquired whether the presentations were too technical. Bob Kresmer inquired whether anyone knew the percentage of SBVID staff that attended the presentations. Bea Shapiro stated she did not have the exact numbers, although many Rehabilitations Services Administration (RSA) staff attended the presentations.

Bea Shapiro stated she had not received an update regarding the upcoming Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo (VRATE), although her understanding was that Dr. Carlos Grandela and Karla Rivas-Parker would be attending. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that Dr. Grandela had indicated that he would be available, and she would be attending as well. Bea Shapiro stated that VRATE would be on April 22nd and would be a virtual event. She noted that would be the 3rd time providing the presentations, and the committee would receive feedback from the VRATE attendees. Mark Nelson stated that he had not seen any advertisements for the upcoming VRATE or been contacted regarding attending as a vendor. Bea Shapiro stated that VRATE had decided not to invite vendors to attend virtually, as the virtual vendor hall was not well received at the previous event. Bea Shapiro stated the committee could gauge the interest from attendees at the upcoming VRATE and decide on the presentation topic for the next years' event.

AT Outreach Update

Bea Shapiro stated the committee's first podcast was aired on Saturday, February 26th and inquired whether any committee members were able to listen to it. Bob Kresmer stated he was not able to listen to the podcast and was not able to find the scheduled date for the next podcast. Bea Shapiro stated the second podcast would be aired on March 26th. Ms. Shapiro stated that she and Bob Kresmer would record the third podcast about Newsline and inquired whether committee members had ideas for the next podcasts. Bea Shapiro noted her understanding that AzTAP provided interviews on Sun Sounds, and that could be an interesting topic for a podcast. Karla Rivas-Parker stated that she would be able to participate on a podcast about AzTAP services. Bea Shapiro stated that she would schedule the 4th podcast with Sun Sounds and Karla Rivas-Parker could discuss the services available through AzTAP.

AT Trends

Mark Nelson stated the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) made a ruling that autonomous vehicles were not required to have a driver or a

steering wheel. Mr. Nelson stated that each state would need to determine their policies regarding autonomous vehicles, which could have a great impact on UPS, Fed Ex, Uber and Amazon deliveries. Bob Kresmer stated that if it was a Federal mandate, each state would follow the policies. Bea Shapiro stated that Europe had developed human guides, which were robots to assist individuals with mobility.

Bea Shapiro stated that each iOS update caused problems with Braille displays. Mark Nelson noted that individuals experienced difficulties pairing the air pods. He noted that he recently learned that he could double, or triple tap his phone to answer it. Karla Rivas-Parker stated there were many versions of Talk Back on Android phones and each version was quite different, which caused difficulties. Bea Shapiro stated that Android phones had improved for individuals with visual impairments, although Apple devices were still easier to use despite being more expensive. Bob Kresmer inquired whether AzTAP provided demonstrations for seniors or individuals wanting less complicated phones. Karla Rivas-Parker stated AzTAP did have less complicated phones, such as the Blind Shell Classic 2, which could still download blindness related apps. Ms. Rivas-Parker stated she tried to help individuals identify the devices or features that work best for them. She noted that she sometimes referred individuals to the Talking Book Library to obtain the Hadley School for the Blind device trainings on a thumb drive that could be played in a cartridge or a computer. Bob Kresmer inquired whether Karla Rivas-Parker received referral calls from the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program. Karla Rivas-Parker stated she did receive some referral calls from VR clients.

Agenda and Date for Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Assistive Technology Committee was scheduled for April 21st. 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. Nathan Pullen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.