**MassMATCH Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**March 16, 2016**

**Members in Attendance:** Kevin Hatch, Tory Dixon, Les Cory(phone), Robert Dias, Owen Doonan, Peter Gefteas(by phone),Lisa Chiango(phone), Joy Mosenfelder (phone), Karen Janowski, Susan LaSante, Randi Sargent, Jae Spalding, Maxine Knight, and Karen Langley

**Members Not in Attendance:** Linda Landry, Tom Mercier, Jonathan O’Dell, Alexander Pooler, Lee Nettles, and Ann Shor

Molly Flueckiger, who is considering joining the council participated by phone as an observer

**Program Staff in Attendance**: Kobena Bonney, Kim Shaw

**Representatives from Provider Agencies:** Cindy Aiken, Flemings Beaubrun, Dan Mayo, Cathy Bly, and Eric Oddleifson

Introduction and Communication Protocol: The meeting was chaired by Jae Spalding who asked folks to remember to state their name when they spoke. Jae also reviewed the mission and purpose of the council.

Discussion and Approval of Minutes: The December minutes were approved with no changes.

Program and Committee Updates:

***Program Updates*:** Kobena Bonney

A slight change has been made regarding program updates on the agenda. Starting at the June meeting, one provider per meeting will have the opportunity to give an in-depth update on their program.

MassMATCH 2015 annual report- marketing version will undergo some changes before distribution to the council, providers and the public.

***Requipment Update****:* Randi Sargent

Requipment got an increase of $250,000 from the legislature for 2016 and as part of that, 2 RFR’s have been issued. The first one went out at the beginning of February calling for additional reuse partners and drop-off sites. Three candidates applied UCP, Stavros and the Boston Home. They have all been accepted and there will be site visits to determine additional support needed. The Boston Home will not be a reuse partner but will be a Boston area drop-off site. The second RFR is for taking over the current role of the Boston Home, as fiscal agent of Requipment. This RFR is seeking a new 501C3 organization already involved in reuse activities to take over the new admin, marketing of the program.

Additionally, the program did hit the million dollar mark in February. In terms of legislative advocacy, Requipment partnering with Easter Seals is trying to get an increase of $250,000 to support some of the administrative functions of the MA AT Loan Program. Requipment is not looking for additional funding from the legislature but is seeking an earmark in the budget for $250,000 for Reuse.

The goal for the program going forward, given the increased demand is to sustain an ongoing stream of donations.

**ATRC-Boston**: Cathy Bly

There was an Open House February 25th with approximately 40+ attendees. It went well. Randi Sargent attended and did a Requipment presentation.

RS: How do you decide how and when to acquire new technology?

Kobena responded that after some discussion with Ann, the hopeful plan going forward will be to set an AT budget for providers ahead of time based on wish lists, so that there will be less guess work involved and the providers will be able to plan and know in advance of what they will have to work with.

Cindy responded that there is a high demand for the more expensive communication devices, as well as computer and vision devices which have a very high utilization rate.

Tory added that a large part of Stavros’ budget has been used to purchase batteries to keep wheelchairs going.

Randi asked whether there are ever deals to be made with vendors to acquire AT. Cathy responded that they are always working with vendors to acquire AT whether at a discount, demo models or even new for free when available.

Eric added that some of the information that they get to decide what kind of AT to acquire is collected through the 25 OT/PT therapists working statewide in the field. Because they are continuously making AT recommendations on the newer types of technology, this has proven to be a useful resource for what AT is most needed. Additionally, recently 15 copies of Kurzweil software was given to the ATRC’s and in exchange, the ATRC’s provide Kurzweil with the sales data that correlates with the software demos, loans and recommendations from field therapists.

In follow-up, email all AT wish lists to Kobena to be shared with all.

Joy M. a member, and AT user asked about resource fairs where one can go to see what’s out there and to see demos and try out specific devices.

Kobena responded yes but because the fairs may not have what any individual specifically wants/needs, it might be more helpful to contact the ATRC’s to inquire about specific AT that they might have in inventory to see a demo and perhaps borrow.

Peter brought up the importance of useful customer satisfaction reviews on AT from the ATRC’s. Most agreed that currently the review section on the MassMATCH website is not an effective means of collecting such data. Cathy added that this was likely because once people find what they are looking for in the inventory through the website, they don’t revisit.

Kobena responded that it is hopeful that once the new website is up and running, the process of posting product satisfaction will be easier and more helpful.

***ATRC-Boston PowerPoint Tour/Product Demo***- Cathy Bly & Flemings Beaubrun

Cathy and Flemings, through a slideshow presentation, guided the group through a virtual tour of the ATRC-Boston introducing the various stations of AT where one can explore, touch learn, play, teach, listen, understand, create and question. Various AT devices were demonstrated which included Echo Smart Pen, the Adroit Switch Blade for Adapted Gaming Controller and the Amazon Echo which is Amazon’s flagship multi-media device with various apps built-in.

***Working Group Subcommittees Updates***:

***Subcommittee- AT in Education Update:*** *Peter Gefteas & Maxine Knight*

Current issue being discussed has been DESE policies around IEPs and their role in decisions, on school owned AT being taken home by students.

Maxine contacted the adult education at Boston public schools about the need for AT in education. She and Owen will be meeting on this issue soon.

Robert Dias asked whether there is a tool or could there be a plan much like AT School Share, a model that works for managing inventory that could be used to manage and track state owned AT equipment that is no longer being used by state employees. Kobena responded that he would be very interested in discussing this possibility further.

***Membership Committee Update***: Jae Spalding and Kobena Bonney

Committee members include Kobena, Jae, Karen Langley, and Kevin. The group meets when applications come in from new members. There are currently 6 interested applicants. The group is really pushing for applicants, west of Worcester, people of color, family of people with disabilities, people with more complex disabilities and generally people who want to get involved. Decisions on membership will be made primarily with the group’s diversity fulfillment in mind.

***Website Committee Update:***  Kobena Bonney

Some changes to the website have been made in response to the survey. There are other changes that require higher level assistance which is awaiting feedback from AgoraNet, the web development company that MassMATCH uses. The question going forward is how we should proceed with this vendor.

***Other Matters and Announcements:***

Kobena requested that any feedback on the MassMATCH Annual Report, marketing version be provided by no later than Monday, March 21, 2016.  
  
The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 PM.