**MassMATCH Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

**September 21, 2016**

Members in Attendance: Kevin Hatch, Tory Dixon, Robert Dias, Owen Doonan, Peter Gefteas (by phone), Randi Sargent, Jae Spalding, Molly Flueckiger, Ann Shor, Susan LaSante, Jonathan O’Dell

Members Not in Attendance: Linda Landry, Alselio Ayala, Alan Chaulet, Lee Nettles, and Maxine Knight,

Program Staff in Attendance: Kobena Bonney, Tanya Bombard

Representatives from Provider Agencies: Dan Mayo, Eric Oddleifson, Sal Garozzo, Cathy Bly and Leo Tonevski

Guests in Attendance: Chuck Smith and Roxy Rocker (Both from REquipment)

Presenter: Justin at Double Robotics via video

Introduction and Communication Protocol: The meeting was chaired by Jae Spalding and Kevin Hatch. Jae went over Protocol and change in agenda. She also mentioned to use a mic when speaking and state your name.

Discussion and Approval of Minutes: The June minutes were approved with no changes. Kobena also clarified that providers can contribute and give feedback on the meeting minutes as well.

Program and Committee Updates:

***Program Updates*:** Kobena Bonney

MassMATCH mentioned each provider will be speaking its agency. Also that the agenda has recently changed to add the purpose of the council on the top of it.

Kobena sent email to the Advisory Council members asking to them take note of their experience at Abilities Expo, taking photos while there. He asked that they email him any suggestions or comments they might have as well as any photos taken.

Kobena mentioned the new RFR for the REquipment program stating Karen Langley’s new company will be overseeing this program and that there has been several changes to the program and we will be hearing from Chuck Smith to give us the REquipment updates. MassMATCH and its partners agreed to adopt AT for ALL as its new platform to manage its online device inventory. Kobena mentioned the status of the MassMATCH website update. He stated that MRC has decided to have a different provider manage the website and that New England Index would be the company overseeing this and it would not be put out to bid. Also that they would be doing a complete rebuild of the website and that the website committee would need to get together to discuss this.

Randi asked if the website proposal would be put out bid.

Jae mentioned her concern about the new vendor and it not being putting out to bid and the council not being involved in this decision. Although she agreed the website needs an overhauled she expressed concern that the council was involved for reasons of them expressing what they would like to see on the website as well as having an opinion on who will be contracted to do the work and that it will be done to standards.

Owen also agreed with Jae and expressed his concern about the purpose of the council stating that he doesn’t feel that MRC is taking any of the council’s advice into consideration.

Molly mentioned that she believes there needs to be project goals set in place before there is a company selected to do the website overhaul. Kobena responded to this stating that this has been ongoing for quite some time but that the website committee should get together to come up with some new ideas.

Kobena stated that MRC does in fact have the final say whether they agree with the council members or not but that in the council speaking up about their concerns it may cause MRC to rethink its decisions.

Kevin stated he doesn’t feel like there is enough communication happening between council members. He also mentioned that he would like to be cc’d as well as Jae on future emails involving all sub-committee issues.

Kobena mentioned the Reed Foundation Grant and stated that the committee on this had come up with a few ideas. One idea being to have Focus Groups, which three have been set up. He emailed out the dates, times and locations of these focus groups to the members welcoming them to come to any of the group session. Kobena let everyone know that anyone could come to these groups outside of the committee and he had also sent out the invitation to IL Centers as well.

Tori had mentioned that the meeting in Pittsfield would be more accessible if it was changed to 11:00 and Kobena said that was fine and would email out and updated version of the invitation with the time change.

**REquipment Update**: Chuck Smith

Chuck mentioned that Karen Langley is now the Executive Director of REquipment. He is the Program Director and Roxy Rocker is the Program Coordinator. He also mentioned that they had moved and their new location is in Worcester. He stated that they are still in the process of taking REquipment over. Chuck also stated he started at REquipment as a technician and cleaner and as of right now there will be no immediate changes. They do plan on expanding but as of right now they are taking baby steps. He also mentioned that he will be setting up times with the REquipment locations to go out and meet the staff and see what is happening in each center.

Roxy had introduced herself and mentioned she has a background in outreach and marketing from the state of Arizona and is excited to see where REquipment will lead her.

Cathy asked what part of Massachusetts isn’t being served by REquipment and asked Kobena if AT for All reuse program and REquipment would be joining forces.

Chuck stated that any consumer could call REquipment and they would do their best to assist them with getting the items they need.

Kobena had answered the question by saying he doesn’t see that happening anytime soon, stating there are a lot of little components with AT for ALL and the reuse program that are different from REquipment and that the conversation is combining them hasn’t come up just yet.

**ATLP- Easter Seals:** Leo Tonevski

Leo spoke about the AT Loan Program. There has been an increase in app received, loan approvals and total loan amount approved for FY 16. There is a projection of the end of FFY16 that 115 applications with have been received, there will be approximately 50 loan approvals at about $700,000 in total.

The Long Term Device Loan Program in FFY16 has received 164 applications and fulfilled 121 orders which is the most for any fiscal year so far.

For the Financial Education Leo has been conducting workshops for TAP and TIP youth programs at CLW and will be scheduling more workshops at various ILC’s. For access site information they have added Adlib as a new access site in Pittsfield which has increased in referrals and financial applications from various sites this FFY. Access sites account for 80% of applications for LTDLP.

**ATRC-Boston**: Eric Oddleifson, Leo Tonevski, Cathy Bly

Cathy described the graph workbook that was handed out that was just Boston ATRC data. It shows the trends from FY12-FY16. The graph shows that just over 900 devices has been loan out. The second graph shows a breakdown on what kind of device have been loaned out. Computers and related devices have gone up while most others have decreased but the reason for this being that most tablets and laptops are being used for other areas such as speech or learning devices so the breakdown needs to be more detailed. The third graph shows the users by GEO Region and 51% are from the North Shore while the rest of the 49% is broken down throughout the rest of Massachusetts.

Cathy talked about out-reach that the ATRC of Boston has done this past year. The ATRC has put a lot of time into their outreach this year and has established a couple of memorandums of understanding with IA and MetroWest ILC. Over the summer and continuing through the end of the year they have set up to regularly do demonstrations. The ATRC will also be putting some of their devices at these locations. There has also been communication between Salem, Lowell, Lawrence and Cape Ann areas to set up demonstrations as well.

Cathy had shown some photos of the center. One of the photo was of the play area at the center. Cathy stated the play area is very popular with the after school program run by the ATRC. She explained how they hosted a gathering in there play area for a young boy named Zack. The family who had the gathering held there brought in able gamers and paid extra money to put in some video gaming devices into this area and donated video gaming devices to the ATRC.

The ATRC hosted a low vision and blindness fair in June which was successful. The fair was held in one of the non-profit organizational conference rooms. The also held an augmentative and communication open house right before the start of school which grew a lot of attention. Attendees got to view some of the latest dedicated speech communication devices.

Other outreach that the ATRC was involved in included conferences at 12 different communities and several different colleges visiting the ATRC. They also had the disability rights museum come out the center and take several different photographs. Some of which are now at the Smithsonian. Comcast, IBM disability group, and Microsoft as well as international students for Japan, Australia, and Africa come out to the center.

Kobena asked Cathy to explain what AT for All is used for and how it is used for inventory.

Cathy explained how it is a much easier system to use to track inventory compared to the old Easter Seals system they used to use. One someone gets a device from the center all of that consumers information is put into a system to track the device. The system sends out and automatic reminder to the consumer which the center had to manual do before. The system also helps to refine and organize the inventory. AT for All uses QR codes. So you can take a picture of the QR code and it brings up a website with the information and description of that item.

**Update on Ongoing Request for Responses (RFR)s:** Ann Shor

Ann explained how the state is very clear and procure on how we pay for and provide services to the community. This requires us to do new RFRs every so many years. An RFR is a public request anyone who is interested can respond and submit an application. Once the application is received it is reviewed and then based on this information given a decision is made on who to award the contract to.

The RFR for the ATRC’s was done ten years ago and that is the limit the state will allow for a contract to be in operations under a RFR. There is an approval for an extension of the existing contract until the end of March. The RFR that is in place now was the first one that was written. It was when the program was first starting to be developed so it was new, what other states where doing was looked at to develop it. Now that it’s been ten year since the first RFR was developed we can take another look and reevaluate and fine tune it. MRC will be seeking to get good input from stake holders, providers and from users on what to put into how to move the program forward. Over the next two months is when MRC will be looking for input to draft up the new RFR. There is federal guidelines that need to be followed and MRC has to stay in requirements of the Federal AT Act in terms of what we do.

The RFR has to be posted by the week of Thanksgiving up on Commbuys in order to give MRC the time needed to complete the process of receiving responses to the RFR and issuing the contract. It usually takes about 6 months for RFRs that total amount of the procurement is over $500,000 which is the case for the ATRC.

MRC has also issued two new RFR’s. One for Listserv, which currently MetroWest holds. Only one response came back for this RFR. The other new RFR that was up on Commbuys was for a tech writer which Eliza Anderson currently holds. There were two responses to that.

**Aging and Disability Resource Consortia (ADRC)s**: Ann Shor

ADRC’s are collaborations or virtual organizations that are partnerships between an ILC and one or more aging service access points in the same area. They are basically “The no wrong door” connections for consumers, family members, or providers looking for information. Anyone can reach out to either the ILC or the aging service and should get the same answer and be able to get connected to the services that are best suited to them.

MRC works closely at the state level with Elder Affairs on developing and supporting the ADRC. Three years ago MRC received a grant from the administration on community living which is the same entity that funds the AT Act program. This grant was to develop and enhance the ADRC’s. Recently MRC put in another grant application and was award the grant in mid-September the funds. It is a two year extension. This particular grant focuses on training the staff who work at the ADRC’s and other community organizations. It is to train them on assistive technology.

What has been proposed in this plan is to provide two different levels of training over the next two years. One series of training would be for basic assistive technology. What it is, how it is used, how it can be accessed, what are some of the funding sources, and what are the resource to find out information about it. MRC will be reaching out to the ATRC’s to assist in providing these trainings. The second level of training would be more of a higher level of training. In particular the trainings would be on the Transition Assistance to Community Living (TACL) tool. The staff at the ADRC’s are working with people to get them out of nursing facilities and into the community. So if the staff used the TACL tool, they could identify what assistive technology would be helpful to these consumers to assist them in living a more independent life and also know the resources on where the consumers could get the AT needed. Over the course of two years there will be 37 trainings held across the state for these two different levels.

Ann also mentioned that the Administration Community Living had a grant back in May/June with additional funds between the amounts of $600,000- $700,000 in additional funding. MRC along with Easter Seals came up with an idea on how to use the funds and applied for the grant. Unfortunately it was denied but MRC and Easter Seals are discussing how to still work on this idea with the funds they currently have on a much smaller scale.

**Presentation:** Justin at Double Robotics

Justin at Double Robotics gave a brief description of the device his company has developed. It essentially is a machine that you can connect to an iPad and control from anywhere else in the world via another computer with video feed to give you a mobile presence in the workplace or classroom when you cannot be there. The Robot in about 4’ tall and weighs about 15 pounds and is controlled with arrows keys on any computer once you log in to the Robot with your user name and password. The robot does have a microphone and speakers on it for audio and can connect to an iPad or iPhone for the person to have video to control the device from another location. You can also take still pictures with this device if you need to. The device typically runs 6-8 hours in between charges and usually takes about 2.5 hours to fully charge.

Justin had one of his devices on the screen in his office located in California while Tanya controlled this device from another computer while in the Natick public library. The system cost $3000.00 and you would supply your own iPad. They do not send out trail devices but do have a money back guarantee. There is a one year warrantee included with purchase and for an additional $500.00 you can add a two year full warrantee which covers basically everything including a loaner device to use while yours is being repaired.

***Working Group Subcommittees Updates***:

**Membership Committee:** Kobena Bonney

Kobena mentioned that there are two members that they had accepted and have not responded to any emails or phone calls. The committee will meet again to decide what to do with these two members. Kobena also mentioned that there is other people interested in joining the committee.

Pete mentioned that one of the members Kobena had tried reaching out to is from Mass Hospital school and it may be a good idea to reach out to them.

Kobena let the council know that he would like to have more members join. He would like more diversity in the group as well.

**AT School Share Committee:** Kobena Bonney

Kobena talked about a pervious discussion about how to adaptthe AT School Share platform for other services and that Randi had suggested to partner with other councils on aging and having them use the platform to manage their loan process.

Kobena asked Owen if Maxine or Owen had meet or discussed anything about this committee.

**Website Committee**: Kobena Bonney

Kobena asked everyone to feel free to participate in the website committee and if you have interest in joining this committee reach out to him.

**DESE Committee:** Kobena Bonney

Current issue being discussed has been DESE policies around IEPs and using AT for taking standardized tests. Also having students be able to bring AT devices from one school to the next when they transition. Kobena also said he would reach to these committee members to see if there is still reason to meet or if they have completed what was asked.

Ann mentioned that it may be important for MassMATCH and the council to stay involved in the transition process with students making sure they continue to have access to the AT devices that they need. She also mention that the VR funds an adaptive assistance program that both UCP and Easter Seals are both providers in that. Ann thinks it may be a good idea to reach out to the schools and inform them of the ATLP and other programs available in Massachusetts for students to be able to use once they transition out of schools.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45 PM.