

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION

Rural Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

LOCATION
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference

Meeting Date
April 12, 2010

Attendees:

Jackie Hill, Chair
Anna Attla, Co-Chair
Belinda Burns
Pam Curns
Tom Cyrus
Mark Doughty
Banarsi Lal
Chris Saddler
Holli Yancey

Community Members/Guests:

Lisa Balivet
Kris Johnston
Amanda Lofgren
Stacey Messerschmidt
Eric Gebhart

Staff:

Duane Mayes
Teresa Holt

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo
Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order – 1:30 p.m.
Roll Call

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Kris Johnston made a **MOTION** to approve the agenda. Holli Yancey **SECONDED**. The agenda was **APPROVED** as written.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Kris Johnston made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2009, November 16, 2009 and March 8, 2010 meetings. Tom Cyrus **SECONDED**. The minutes were **APPROVED** as written.

CORRESPONDENCE

Second Letter of Support for TCC

Duane Mayes stated that TCC asked the Council for a letter of support to obtain some Rural Utility Service funding through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. Anna Attla suggested teleconferencing with Jim Williams from TCC. Duane agreed it would be a good idea to talk to Jim to find out what TCC has been doing so far and see if the Council can do anything else to provide support. Duane Mayes stated that he will send everyone a copy of the second letter of support to TCC.

SUMMARY OF SECOND OUTREACH TRIP TO DELTA JUNCTION

Lisa Balivet stated that the purpose of the trip was to meet with them to see what their current needs were. She stated that there is a lot of support for doing more telehealth in that region.

Duane Mayes stated that the Deltana Community Services Coalition has come a long way since the Rural Ad Hoc Committee's last outreach trip. The Coalition is now renting out space in Delta Junction, and the Committee members met with the Coalition's subcommittee on youth and infants while they were there. He stated that the subcommittee had a lot of enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to making a difference for all seniors and people with

disabilities living in Delta Junction. Duane stated that the Rural Ad Hoc Committee can work with them to further define what the project in Delta Junction might look like.

Duane stated that the highlight of their trip was meeting with David and Barbara Flynn and their children. The Flynn's are the leaders of the coalition and have the participation of many other community members as well.

Lisa Balivet stated that the biggest obstacle to doing telehealth in the Delta Junction area is Internet connectivity. They only have partial connectivity and it is not high speed. They would be fairly limited for the things that require more broadband width like telehealth communications.

Lisa stated that while they were there, they met with the library staff and public health nurses who were all very supportive of having more capacity there.

Lisa stated that they have a project idea that has been tested in Fairbanks, and they also tested it while they were in Delta Junction. She stated that the State has contracted with the company YouSendIt to use their server. This would allow a family to take a short film of their child, send it to YouSendIt, and that server would send an e-mail to the ILP provider saying they have some information in the server. The ILP provider would click on the link and it would take them to where they can upload the video. The therapist can then send information back through YouSendIt, which is confidential and HIPAA compliant.

Lisa stated that there is a team of people in Fairbanks who are OTs, PTs, speech and language therapists, and educators who are doing a case conference group. If an ILP provider needs suggestions or assistance, they can take the video to the case conference group and the team can give feedback to the provider.

Lisa stated that it was working well when they tested it, and the State allows parents who are enrolled in ILP and the ILP providers to participate in this.

Duane stated that the director of the library in Delta Junction was very willing to work in any capacity to potentially use the library for telecommunications and telehealth.

Duane also stated that the Coalition is an enthusiastic group, but they don't have access to all the different possible resources. Duane has sent some e-mails to the folks in Delta Junction about possible resources through the Trust, and he connected them with the listserv that Agnew Beck puts out to rural communities on how they can access some of the funds through organizations such as the Denali Commission, Rasmuson Foundation, and the Trust.

Duane noted that the Coalition doesn't have a very strong connection with their representatives and their senator, and the Committee members educated them on the importance of knowing and advocating to their representatives.

Duane stated that what the team members discussed doing was going back to Delta Junction and helping them define their project through a strategic process.

Lisa Balivet thanked Duane, because the visit and focus on Delta Junction has helped her office move forward in improving the services that are out in that region. This has given them the opportunity to test some projects and get things started.

UPDATE ON ARRA FUNDS

Holli Yancey stated that there was public input for the Alaska State Library Association around some TARP funds they applied for. Holli stated that she listened in on the public input, and she stated that they were told that TCC was not invited back for a second round of the TARP funds, but the Alaska State Library Association was invited back for the second round of the grant applications. Holli stated that several million associations had put in for this and only a few thousand were invited back for the second round.

Holli stated that the Alaska State Library Association has asked the Council for a letter of support. She stated that the Association has a lead man named Rich Greenfield who is very familiar with issues

stateside when it comes to the difficulties of Internet connectivity in rural Alaska. He is also somewhat familiar with the AFHCAN network.

Holli stated that the plan is to examine the 106 libraries statewide and see which ones have the slowest or no connectivity and to bring them up to par with those that have even minimal amounts of connectivity and then to move them along so they can support some of the same projects that the Rural Ad Hoc Committee has been talking about.

Holli stated that one of the exciting things about this is that the libraries themselves will be getting the high-speed Internet and the libraries serve the entire community. Holli talked to the Library Association about some of the issues regarding speech and IL providers and they were really excited about the concept of being able to include some of these really necessary community projects in an environment like the library.

Holli stated that she and Duane have a future meeting set up to get more information and to start to look at what they need to do as they're doing site visits to build some of those relationships. Duane added that the libraries don't have those same restrictions that some other community organizations have, such as the school system, and each library has its own board and can dictate how they want to move forward. Duane stated that the director of the library in Delta Junction stated that she wants to make sure the library is reaching out to the community and is doing what it can to plug all of the weaknesses that exist within the community.

Duane stated that next week they will be meeting for lunch with Sue Sherif and Rich Greenfield and they will report on that meeting at the next Rural Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

FASD IN RURAL ALASKA

Duane Mayes stated that the Council has been receiving many calls relating to FASD, and it is a major priority with the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) and the Alaska Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (ABADA). Duane stated that there has been discussion within the Council to form an FASD Ad Hoc Committee.

Duane also stated that Tena Walker, who is a FASD advocate from Delta Junction, is planning on coming to the Council meeting in May.

Duane stated that an additional \$600,000 was put into the legislative budget to address services and diagnosis for FASD. On day three of the Council meeting, they plan to discuss all of the public testimony they have received around FASD. Terri Tibbett, the advocacy coordinator for AMHB/ABADA, will join the Council in Fairbanks for that third day as well.

Duane stated that Commissioner Hogan has spoken about FASD as one of the Department's priorities. Duane stated that there is a very high percentage of people with FASD, particularly in rural Alaska.

Tom Cyrus commented that in his area there is no diagnostic team. Teachers report that there is a high rate of FASD, but without the infrastructure to diagnose these children, there are no numbers available. Tom also noted that even with a diagnosis, trying to find services in their region is difficult.

Tom also stated that working as the program supervisor for the TVR program, he gets a lot of referrals for adults who have a lot of classic behaviors of individuals with FASD, but do not have a diagnosis.

Lisa Balivet suggested that the Council could do a survey to those regions that had FASD diagnostic clinics early on to see if they were sustainable and if they are still running. She stated that if they are not still running, they could determine through the survey what happened that they weren't able to sustain it.

Belinda Burns stated that she is a member of the FASD diagnostic team for the Southeast region. She stated that the team is very busy, non-profit and they all volunteer their services. The issue that is difficult for them is that they are diagnosing, but there is not a lot of monies available for services to follow up. She is really excited that this is something that the Council will be looking at.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR

Duane reviewed the work plan with the Committee members to decide on which goals and priorities they would like to propose to the full Council during the May meeting for their work plan for next year.

Under goal 1(b), Duane stated that there doesn't appear to be a standardized needs assessment tool the Committee can use for rural communities. He stated that the Council staff can design the tool with the input of this committee.

Duane commented that when they do outreach trips to communities in the future, they will need to be sure that they clearly define a point person in each community to continue to do follow up.

Jackie Hill suggested that the work they have done in Delta Junction is very encouraging. She stated that they may want to start thinking about the remaining three communities and maybe start to focus on one of those communities like they did with Delta Junction.

Mark Doughty stated that in terms of the connectivity assessment, GCI has done some assessments of rural areas as far as Internet connectivity and the broadband that's available in the community. Mark suggested working off that as a template to develop a tool to use in other communities that haven't been mapped out yet.

Duane Mayes suggested getting a recommendation from the Rural Ad Hoc Committee to the full Council regarding advocating for FASD services in rural communities.

Duane also suggested recommending advocating for transition services for youth with disabilities in rural Alaska.

Duane stated that staff will send out an e-mail asking for Committee members' input regarding the work plan priorities that were discussed during this meeting.

REPORT FROM CONFERENCES

Tom Cyrus provided a written report to the Committee regarding his attendance at the ACRES Conference. Tom highlighted his report by stating that the conference was very small and seemed to be localized. He stated that there was nothing on transition. They talked a lot about the rural areas of Mississippi and the lack of funding in the state. Tom also noted that the conference was very researched based.

Tom attended sessions relating to differentiated instruction and accommodations. There were topics that dealt with regular ed and special ed teachers working together in the classroom. He also attended a workshop about post-secondary students with learning disabilities and their use of technology. The general feeling with this workshop was that students in high school are not using the technology that could be available to them.

Tom commented that another workshop he attended showed that a number of rural high school students with an IEP were not being impacted by No Child Left Behind requirements.

Teresa Holt agreed that the conference was very researched based and that it's really geared toward university teacher prep folks. Teresa stated that she learned that there are some successful teacher prep programs and some grants to do these programs through distance education.

Teresa also stated that OSEP is going to make some trainings available that will help with teacher preparation and ongoing training for special ed teachers.

Teresa and Anna Attla agreed that this conference is not necessarily appropriate for self-advocates because they speak at a university level. Tom Cyrus agreed and noted that some of it was over his head as well.

IMPORTANT FUTURE MEETINGS/CONFERENCES/TRAININGS

- Alaska Rural Health Conference, April 28 – 30 in Anchorage

- 15th Annual International Meeting of the American Telemedicine Association, May 16 – 18 in San Antonio, TX.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled teleconference is June 14, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.

After the Committee members find out when the State Board of Education is meeting in September, they will be able to decide what dates they would like to have their September face-to-face meeting in Cordova.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.