

 *Keith Maes*

*Chairperson*

 **NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

 **ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, August 19, 2019

San Juan Center for Independence

1204 San Juan Blvd., Farmington, NM 87401

ATTENDANCE:

**Members Present:** Keith Maes (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/DVR - Chair); German Benitez (New Mexico Commission for Blind/CFB); and by phone - Larry Melendez (Gadsden Schools Transition); Albert Deimer (Independent Living Resource Center/ILRC); Katharine Gutierrez (Vice Chair - Consumer of AT); Andrea Vallez - Proxy (Disability Rights New Mexico/DRNM); Nat Dean (Consumer of AT); Bill Newroe (Consumer of AT); Ricardo Ortega (Consumer of AT); Chris Zafra (Workforce Solutions)  **Absent:** Michael Acorta (Consumer of AT).

**NMTAP Staff**: Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Program Manager); Anthony Alarid (GCD Deputy Director)

 **NMTAP Partners present:** Anthony Montoya (Adelante); April Esplain (San Juan Center for Independence/SJCI)

**Guests:** Stephanie Dawson (Adelante), Lily Martinez (DRNM); and by phone – Sue Haugen (AT Community Fund committee member).

**CALL TO ORDER:**

NMTAP Council Chair, Keith M, called the meeting to order at 1:24 pm. The chair called the roll and established that a quorum was present. Keith M asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Keith M asked for approval of the agenda. It was noted that public comment may occur before the scheduled ABLE Accounts presentation if all other business is complete, so the public who have comments do not have to wait. The council members approved the agenda unanimously with that notation.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. The council members approved the minutes from April 15, 2019 unanimously.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A reported that, per request of Council members, the ABLE Accounts are scheduled to present information for their knowledge. The presentation was scheduled for 4:00pm today to allow for public attendance. If there is time between council business and the start of that presentation, SJCI has offered to provide a tour of their facility. Regarding progress on the separate grant for AgrAbility, Tracy A. noted that they just hired the staff for that project. Deborah Wieclaw is the AgrAbility Specialist to provide farm worksite assessments and trainings around the state. Some year to date statistics were provided in NMTAP service areas and it was noted that 160 individuals attended ATC19. Planning for ATC20 has begun with May 4 & 5, 2020 as the tentative dates reserved at the Uptown Sheraton again. Tracy A noted that the federal fiscal year ends in September and reminded contract partners that data, stories and pictures will again be requested soon after that. She provided a brief history of the AT Act and some possible changes with the reauthorization activities in Congress. Notice of this meeting, the ABLE Account presentation and the Hands-On Workshop of Assistive Technology (HOW-AT) to be held here tomorrow was placed in the Farmington Daily Times three times and in the San Juan Sun once to hopefully attract increased public attendance. Tracy A closed with a tribute to Tim Carver, the previous SJCI Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who passed away in April 2019, and welcomed the new CFO, April Esplain, to the team.

There was some discussion from council members regarding utilizing AT with home modifications, DVR counselors awareness of AT and the understanding of the value in a device demonstration for their participants and if partnering with other programs could allow for mentoring in the use of AT beyond the NMTAP services of device demonstration and device loans for individuals with disabilities. Tracy A and Keith M will continue a discussion regarding these challenges.

Anthony A, Interim Director, noted that the NMTAP funds for federal fiscal year 2019 were reduced by $1391. With the building rent increase and required staff raises, the budget for the program is very tight. He also noted that GCD used approximately $12,000 of the $50,000 legislative appropriation for home modifications. The remainder is available for the purchase of new AT equipment. The $50,000 onetime appropriation was for AT and home modifications.

**FINANCIAL LOANS (NM SEED Loans, Access Loan NM & Community Fund) UPDATE:**

April E, SJCI CFO, reported that the invested funds are stable and growing. She noted that there were two new Self Employment for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities (SEED) loans and twenty-one new Access Loans in this current fiscal year. Larry McCabe, who has managed the Access Loan program with SJCI, will now have oversight of all the financial loan programs.

Keith M opened the discussion whether the Community Fund (the last resort fund in our federal plan) is viable and should be included in the next NMTAP state plan. The Community Fund has approximately $3.00 at this time. Sue H noted that the committee for the Community Fund met several times to research historical data and new ideas to replenish the fund. Nat D offered to write a grant request, if that is allowed, and Tracy A will follow up with her. Council members made a unanimous vote to table any decision until further research is done on how money can be added appropriately.

**REUSE (Back In Use and DiverseIT - Adelante) UPDATE:**

Anthony M, program manager for Adelante Back in Use program, reviewed the data report regarding both durable medical equipment at Back in Use and computers in DiverseIT. In this last quarter, they provided 719 pieces of equipment in both areas to 351 individuals with disabilities. Most equipment is obtained due to it not being available through insurance or affordable by the consumer and is utilized for life in the community .There a few individuals that did not call back regarding their satisfaction of services.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Revised By-Laws: The final draft was provided to all members in advance for review. It was noted that the word “hear” was replaced by the word “understood” in regard to telephone or other communication technology for participation in the meeting. Keith M asked for approval of the By-laws and the council members approved them unanimously.

Open Meetings Act (OMA) Resolution: The draft was provided to all members in advance for review. Tracy A thanked the designated committee who met several times to create the resolution. The council members unanimously approved the resolution.

NM ABLE Accounts presentation: Heather Benavidez and Denise Balderas provided an updated and thorough presentation of these accounts available statewide to individuals with disabilities. These accounts allow for financial savings without losing federal based benefits. For further information, you are welcome to access the information on the website (<https://ablenewmexico.com/>).

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Lily M, from DRNM, reviewed their general priorities for 2019 and encouraged input from everyone to help guide their advocacy for individuals with disabilities in this next year. This can be done by attending a public forum or submitting your request by calling 505-456-3100 or through the website ([http://www.drnm.org](http://www.drnm.org/)).

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for December 9, 2019 in Albuquerque at 1pm, possibly at the NMTAP offices. Keith M adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.

***Minutes Approved by Council members 12.9.2019.***