Telecommunication Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board Meeting  
April 13, 2017  
Transportation Cabinet Building

Members Present:  
Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Mr. Jim Timon, Mr. Jeremiah Ziehr, Mr. Johnny Lawson, Mr. Tyler Campbell and Mr. Jim Stevens

Members Absent:  
Ms. Mindy McGirt, Mr. Lewis Fowler, Ms. Amy Hatzel and Ms. Marilyn Fenwick

Staff Present:  
Mr. Cole Zulauf, Ms. Jessica Endler Smith, and Ms. Rowena Holloway

Guests:  
Ms. Shirley Lawson and Ms. Christa Cervantes

Communication Facilitators:  
Ms. Shannon Grider, Ms. Hunter Bryant, and Ms. Tracy Lundergan

The Chair, Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m. Ms. Smith then called roll and, as there was a quorum, the meeting continued. Minutes from the October 13, 2016 meeting were reviewed and Mr. Lawson (Mr. Campbell) moved to accept the minutes as presented. The motion passed.

Mr. Zulauf provided members with a statistical report of the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) activities since the last meeting. TAP has ordered 112 wireless devices, 142 landline phones, and 97 signalers. Some applications are still pending some kind of verification and a few were denied for a variety of reasons.

Ms. Holloway explained that Apple has confirmed that the iPhone4 and 4S are no longer supported and cannot be updated with iOS10. Approximately 400 applicants who received the iPhone4 and 4s are eligible to apply again because the phones are obsolete. There have been some complaints in the last year about the small amount of memory on these models and how the sign language apps consume a lot of memory. The applicants will be eligible to reapply for an updated device. We currently offer the iPhone6 and 6s. The 6s Plus is also available for consumers with vision loss and verification of the vision loss is required.

Ms. Endler updated the group on outreach efforts completed since the last meeting, which included Bowling Green/Owensboro Outreach, Spelling Bee for children with a hearing loss, Heuser Hearing Institute health fair for two days, and several one-on-one phone installation/trainings with consumers. Ms. Endler explained about the regional outreach projects that KCDHH has recently implemented from Pikeville to Bowling Green and Owensboro to meet with hospital representatives, senior citizen centers, audiologists, and hearing instrument specialists. Ms. Endler also went to Northern Kentucky where the phone cabinet is located in Fort Mitchell to retrain all volunteers on how to use the equipment we distribute.

Ms. Holloway informed the board that there has been an increase in new applications with the outreach efforts and some reapplications. She also advised that a woman who is
speech-impaired that came into our office to apply for a phone, seemed motivated and wanted to apply for the TAP Advisory Board, but did not show up for today’s meeting. (Shortly after the meeting we were informed that she suddenly passed away).

Ms. Christa Cervantes, the Hamilton Relay representative, reported that their Outreach representative has also been doing outreach efforts. He went to a conference for Interpreter Training in Lexington and thought it would be a great connection with people who serve the deaf community. He also went to Kentucky Speech Hearing Association Conference in Lexington, and the Traumatic Brain Injury conference in Erlanger. He also is working with Northern Kentucky agency on aging to set up outreach events.

Ms. Holloway reported that Hamilton has been helping constituents who ordered CapTels from our program with set up and training. Some of the problems we are encountering with CapTel are that the phone lines are being changed to digital from analog without the constituents’ knowledge. If the phone lines are digital, they also have to have internet for the CapTel to work efficiently. There seems to be no solution for the situation with analog lines being switched to digital and constituents do not want to purchase internet. Although the CapTel plus is supposed to resolve this issue they are not working effectively. Consumers complain of dropped calls and slow captions when their service is digital and the CapTel is supposed to work on those lines. Ms. Cervantes confirmed that it’s happening everywhere not just in Kentucky.

Mr. Ziehr informed the group that he has radio wave internet in his area since it is rural and he has better internet connection because of a tower that’s close to his home. There is a big push for universal wireless connections from providers and it’s supposed to be happening a few years from now. However, that will not resolve the issue of older consumers that do not want high speed internet and still want to have a telephone.

For new business, Mr. Zulauf made a suggestion to the group that the three members of the board whose terms are about to expire, continue to serve. All three agreed to serve another term. The members also discussed the potential of switching a vacant position to another speech-impaired consumer and removing the deaf-blind consumer position. Mr. Lawson (Mr. Timon) made the motion to remove the deaf-blind position off the board and convert it to another speech-impaired position, since we seem to be serving more speech impaired consumers and are not seeing any deaf-blind applications. Mr. Campbell moved (Ms. Gordon-Brown) to accept the renewal of member terms and convert the vacancy as stated. The motion passed. Mr. Zulauf also advised members that Mr. Fowler is considering resigning from the board, which would open up a deaf consumer vacancy. He is busy with other things and has served long enough and wants to resign, although his term does not expire until 2019. Once it is finalized a vacancy will be advertised.

Ms. Endler informed members that there will be a 35th anniversary celebration for KCDHH on October 13th, hosted at the Salato Wildlife Center.

Ms. Gordon-Brown confirmed the next TAP Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for October 12th 2017, in conjunction with KCDHH’s 35th Anniversary celebration.

Members were asked to turn in their travel vouchers to Ms. Endler. Mr. Timon (Mr. Lawson) moved to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.