

# Assistive Technology Advisory Council and FFAST Board of Directors Quarter 1 Meeting

## Minutes

November 19, 2021



### 1. Opening

Mr. Paul Tobin opened the meeting. A recording was established. The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM.

Members Present: Mr. Paul Tobin, Ms. Janet Good, Mr. Eddie Hall, Ms. Genevieve English-Charles, Mr. Brandon Palermo, Mr. Brian Nerland, Mr. Horace Brown, Ms. Betsy Burgos, Ms. Mary Jarrett, Ms. Lesa Kretschmer, Mr. T.J. Moon, Ms. Elizabeth Moya

Staff Present: Ms. Whitney Doyle, Ms. Hannah Brock, Ms. Megan Germain, Mr. Eric Reed, Mr. Tim McCann

Members of the Public: Ms. Sarah Goldman

### 2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Tobin suggested item #12, *Agency for Healthcare Administration American Rescue Plan Technology Program* report be moved up on the agenda until after item #6 *The Treasurer's Report* due to its impact to FFAST. There were no objections to this change. Mr. Tobin asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the modification. Ms. Burgos motioned. Mr. Hall seconded. The agenda was approved as amended with no objections.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Doyle was made aware of two modifications to the minutes, Mr. Brandon Palermo's name was misspelled and Ms. Kailey Medlock was marked as present when she did not attend. The administrative corrections will be made. Mr. Hall made the motion to accept the minutes. Ms. Good seconded the motion. The September 2021 ATAC/BOD Meeting Minutes were accepted as corrected with no objection.

### 4. Co-Chairs' Report (Executive Committee Report)

Mr. Paul Tobin explained that he continues to work with Ms. Doyle on the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) proposal which he will discuss later in the meeting. In addition, Mr. Tobin states that FFAST continues to follow the Strategic Plan. FFAST continues to approve Regional Demonstration Center contracts with three more up for approval today.

No questions were asked of the Co-Chairs' Report.

#### 5. Executive Director's Report | Whitney Doyle

Ms. Doyle presented her report to the ATAC members. She repeated the fact that in September that FFAST did hire Ms. Marquesas Blimes as the Assistive Technology Specialist for the Northwest Regional Demonstration Center. In October, Mr. Eric Zimmerman was hired as the Financial Loan Program Assistant.

Ms Doyle stated that we wait to hear whether or not FFAST will be awarded the iCanConnect Grant. The selection should be known by the end of the calendar year.

The TASA Advisory Committee met on October 27, 2021, the Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living (FACIL) determined that they did not have enough support to move forward with the legislative action to move the administration of the TASA program from the Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) to FFAST. FFAST has requested a meeting with FTRI's new Executive Director, to explore how FFAST can collaborate with them and support any future action to update the TASA statute.

The lease for the FFAST headquarters office is up March 31, 2022. FFAST will be looking move out of our current location to a larger office space in the Tallahassee area. Ms. Doyle did locate a corporate realtor who assist us in finding an acceptable office. She will also give written notice of our decision to move to the landlord 120 day prior to the end of our lease. Our current landlord does not have acceptable units available.

Mr. Tobin motioned to add Ms. Janet Good and Mr. Eddie Hall to First Federal Bank, Capital City Bank, as well as investment accounts as signatories. Ms. Moya seconded. There were no questions. Hearing no objections, the motion was approved as a unanimous vote of the board.

Mr. Tobin called for a motion to remove Mr. Enrique Escallon and Ms. Brande Shelton from First Federal Bank, Capital City Bank as well as investment accounts as signatories Mr. Hall motioned. Mr. Palermo seconded. There were no questions. Hearing no objections, the motion was approved as a unanimous vote of the board.

There was discussion about the two social media proposals from Bella Business and LaVant Consulting. Both contacts are under \$25,000. Bella Business Solutions created the new FFAST website and logo. They currently have a contract for the maintenance of our website LaVant Consulting did positively impact our social media present June, July, and September. Mr. Nerland stated he was happy with Bella Business Solution previous work and would support moving forward Bella. Discussion ensued amongst the board members. Mr. Tobin called for a motion to award the social media contract to Bella Business Solutions. Mr. Palermo motioned. Mr. Nerland seconded. Hearing no objections, the motion was approved as a unanimous vote of the board.

#### 6. Treasurer's Report | Eddie Hall

Mr. Hall presented the Treasurer Report. He began by highlighting figures in the financial spreadsheet. Mr. Tobin noted the board operating reserve of \$446,464.29, which has been growing steadily but may change with the AHCA proposal.

Board members had questions regarding Chase business credit card expenses of \$24,620.67. Ms. Doyle explained that FFAST was looking to buy the most current assistive technology by the end of fiscal year. The First Federal credit cards were used but it took time pay off the low limit which involved getting treasurer approval. As a result, the Chase business credit card was used. The Chase card has since been paid off. Moving forward we will look at increasing the First Federal card limit. Ms. Jarrett asked if we could have used our reserve account to address a cash flow issue. Ms. Doyle responded that it was not an issue of cash flow. It was an issue to purchasing power and the different mechanisms available to pay for it. Currently FFAST doesn't have a debit card attached to an assigned bank account, which is something the board could discuss the future.

Ms. Good asked for a motion to accept the September 2021 financial reports as written. Mr. Palermo seconded. Mr. Tobin confirmed we have a motion and a second. There was no discussion and seeing no objections, the vote passed unanimously.

#### 7. Agency for Healthcare Administration American Rescue Plan Technology Program | Whitney Doyle

Ms. Doyle and Mr. Tobin explained the proposed project plan to the FFAST board noting that this is not a done deal and that FFAST continues to be in discussions with FFAST.

Discussion ensued about the project plan and its impact to FFAST. Mr. Tobin stressed the possibility of the ten percent indirect costs, which is the financial incentive for doing the contract. These dollars would greatly enhance our reserve

account sustaining potentially growing FFAST programs and services in the future.

Members had questions about identifying the Floridians in need, how to be distributing the devices, internet access, training and proper accounting. Many of these questions who need to be answered in some type of contract negotiation.

Members suggested creating a subcommittee overseeing this proposal while perhaps pausing other committees. Subcommittee volunteers include Mr. Paul Tobin, Mr. Eddie Hall, and Mr. Brian Nerland. Ms. Good motioned to create a subcommittee to oversee and assist Ms. Doyle in the execution of the proposed AHCA contract. Mr. Moon seconded. Hearing no objections, the subcommittee is established by unanimous vote.

Ms. Moya suggested that the board go on record as possibly deviating from the FFAST Strategic Plan. Mr. Tobin suggested it was more of a parallel track.

#### 8. ATAC/BOD Demographics and Skills | Whitney Doyle

Ms. Doyle discussed the current ATAC Member Roster. She explained that five board members were removed from the board for not meeting the attendance requirements. They are Ms. Shevie Barnes, Mr. James Bayonne, Ms. Ryan Fierst, Mr. Marcial Lembert, and Ms. Brande Shelton. The five new applicants who were approved by this board at our last meeting will be submitted to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation this afternoon for appointment. Currently we have roster of 15 members. The FFAST webpage which lists of our board member will be updated to reflect the correct fiscal year. Ms. Moya of DOE requested that she be copied on the nominations so that she can follow up with VR Director Flanagan.

#### 9. Committee Reports

##### a. Service Delivery Committee

All three contracts would be for a period of 9 months January 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022. Afterwards Centers would have the option to renew twice for a 12-month contract like the established centers

##### 1. North Central Regional Demonstration Center (NCRDC)

FFAST received one applicant for this region, the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida. Mr. Palermo stated that he has a conflict of interest as he works at this center. This applicant scored above the threshold. They scored 80.5%. Ms Doyle recommended that FFAST move forward with this center as an NCRDC. Mr. Hall motioned to award the NCRDC contract to the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida. Ms. Good seconded. Mr. Palermo

abstained from voting. Hearing no objections, the award is given to the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida.

#### 2. Northeast Regional Demonstration Center (NERDC)

FAAST received one applicant for this region, CIL Jacksonville. This applicant scored above the threshold. They scored 91.75%. Ms Doyle recommended that FAAST move forward with this center as an NERDC. Mr. Hall motioned to award the NERDC contract to CIL Jacksonville. Mr. Palermo seconded. Hearing no objections, with silence being consent the award is given to CIL Jacksonville.

#### 3. Southeast Regional Demonstration Center (SERDC)

FAAST received one applicant for this region, CIL Broward. This applicant scored above the threshold. They scored 82.75%. Ms Doyle recommended that FAAST move forward with this center as an SERDC. Mr. Tobin motioned to award the NERDC contract to CIL Broward. Ms. Good seconded. Hearing no objections, with silence being consent the award is given to CIL Broward.

#### 4. West Central Regional Demonstration Center (WCRDC)

Serves Pasco, Hernando, Lake Sumter and Citrus County. Despite FAAST's best efforts we were unable to identify possible applicants for this region. Upon talking to council, since we have made a good faith effort twice to find open bids, we can award the contract ourselves. Discussion ensued about how best to serve this area. Ms. Burgos motioned that Ms Doyle be authorized to enter into discussion the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida to see if they would be agreeable to fulfill the WCRDC contract. Mr. Hall seconded. Hearing no objections, with silence being consent, Ms. Doyle is authorized to discuss the WCRDC contract with the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida. and award if applicable.

##### b. Public Policy and Advocacy Committee

Ms. Doyle presented the report in Mr. Escallon's absence. While there was no written report, Ms. Doyle informed the board of the FAAST Legislative Day at the Capitol. She along with Mr. Tobin, Ms. Burgos, Mr. Hall, Mr. Moon, and FAAST staff member Mr. Tim McCann attended legislative visits at the Capitol yesterday. The five legislators they met with are working to pass the FAAST Legislative Priorities.

##### c. Interagency Committee

The committee has not met since the last board meeting. The committee consists of the three state agency representatives that make up the board. Although more members are expected pending the nominations of FILC and CareerSource. Ms. Doyle stated that the Interagency Committee needs a

chairperson. Ms. Moya volunteered to chair the Interagency Committee if they can meet quarterly.

d. New Horizon Loan Program Committee

Mr. Palermo updated the board on the New Horizon Program progress with positive growth in the number of loans this year so far and year-to-date loans totaling \$454,946. The charge off rate remains low at 1.72%. Mr. Palermo mentioned the hiring of Mr. Eric Zimmerman as the NHLP assistant & that the approval of the NHLP continues to move forward and awaits DOE's approval of the separation to stand alone program. Discussion ensued about draft bylaws and articles of incorporation. These documents will be reviewed prior to the program going live.

e. Technology Awareness Committee

Mr. Nerland shared some of the work the Technology Awareness Committee has done in integrating the new FAAST logo and color scheme into the current marketing materials.

He also wanted to members aware of upcoming events that FAAST will be involved in. The event list can be found in the members board packet. Lastly, he reminded members to share FAAST information in your social media activities.

f. AT Expo Subcommittee

Ms. Doyle reported that the AT Expo Subcommittee has not met yet.

10. State Agency Representatives Reports

a. Florida Independent Living Council

Ms. Sarah Goldman shared the highlights of FILC's annual report from last year. Her organization preformed some 49,168 services most of which were in the form of information & referral services. They worked with some 14,700 consumers, and 95 % of all Independent Living goals were completed.

As some of the CIL become FAAST centers, Ms. Goldman is hoping to see their Assistive Technology numbers increase.

b. Vocational Rehabilitation

Mr. Horace Brown shared some of the highlight of the 2020-2021 fiscal year. He did mention that consumers are reaching out for hearing aids and computer software.

He also pointed out that VR an educational series for their counselors on rehab technology. They have reached out to Ms Doyle and FAAST to get their input.

c. Division of Blind Services

Ms. Genevieve English Charles reported on her organizations first quarter numbers.

d. Department of Education

The Department of Education did not present a report.

e. CareerSource Florida

CareerSource Florida did not present a report.

11. FY 20-21 VR Contract Deliverable Report | Hannah Brock

Ms. Hannah Brock presented the VR Contract Deliverable Report. All deliverables for quarter 4 have been met. Ms. Brock continued by presenting a detailed analysis with charts and graphs of each center's statistical achievements.

12. Strategic Plan 2020

There were no changes or updates to the Strategic Plan 2020.

13. Friends of Rish Park Letter Discussion

Mr. Hall discussed the campaign to reopen Rish Park. An accessible park on Cape San Blas near Port St Joe Florida. The park has been closed due to Hurricane Michael. FFAST has been asked to sign a letter of support calling for the park to be reopened. Mr. Tobin motioned and Mr. Hall seconded for FFAST to sign the letter. Hearing no objections, silence being consent, the board agrees to sign the letter of support to reopen Rish Park.

14. Closing

No new business.

List of ATAC Meeting Dates FY2022.

- QTR 2 – Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (Teleconference)
- QTR 3 – Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (Teleconference)
- QTR 4 – Thursday, September 8, 2022, 9:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (In-person in Tallahassee, plan for travel on Wednesday and return Thursday/Friday)

Mr. Tobin called for public comment. No one can forward.

Mr. Tobin adjourned the meeting at 11:34 AM EST.