

ATEL Committee Meeting

Public Utilities Commission

June 7, 2012

9:00 AM

Attendees:

**Roberta Greene Whittemore, Denise Corson, James Litvack,,
Courtenay Petracca, Ellen Lenox Smith , Charles Brown, Nancy
Shuster , Pam Kling, Melissa Rosenberg, Lori Duffy, Laura Peterson
and Interpreter Yvette Johnson**

1. Introduction

2. Minutes from last 2 meetings were reviewed and accepted.

**3. Legislative Update- it looks like House Bill No. 7540 will not be
going through in this legislative session. This is the status report:
02/15/2012 Introduced, referred to House H.E.W.**

03/15/2012 Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration (03/21/2012)

**03/21/2012 Committee recommended measure is held for further
study.**

**Denise, James and Steve Florio all testified to this bill, and it looked
like there were no issues with the new wireless program moving
forward. However, two months after the Committee recommended
the measure be held for further study, Daniel R. Orgel, the state's
Principal Budget Analyst, asked our chief Human Services Business
Manager, Mario Olivieri about the fiscal impact of the wireless**

legislation. Roberta and Denise met with Mario to advise him that we would not be requesting any increased funds. Since the price of our devices have dropped significantly, it has allowed us to expand our program to include wireless, but we would have a controlled release so as not to need any increased funds. We wanted the bill to go thru and not have any funding attached to it. However, Mario felt strongly that DHS should still request a minimum amount because they would have a hard time believing that there would be no financial increase. We BOTH again stated that we wanted to nothing to jeopardize the bill from going thru, but Mario felt very strongly that we should just put in request a minimal amount. Roberta and Denise were unaware that the additional funding would be requested thru the PUC. Once Roberta and I were made aware of this request to the PUC, we contacted Stephen Brunero, to advise the State that we want to rescind our request and we strongly feel that we will not need any additional funds, and if any additional funding came to us thru the PUC, we would not use these funds. The state seemed comfortable with our answers and we were hopeful that this doesn't impact the bill from going thru. Yet, it looks like it will not be going thru this year. Roberta and Denise stated that they are going to work on a Pilot Program with more details, and a controlled release, and then try to have the bill reintroduced next year. The committee also suggested introducing the Bill next time in both the House and Senate, simultaneously. In addition, to possible contain wording in the Bill that states there will be no fiscal impact. Furthermore, this reinforced the need to have an ATEL representative in the Senate; ATEL's only

vacancy on the board.

4. CART Services Update- Denise mentioned that she had met a 50 year old deaf lady last December that had no assistive technology for the last 18 years when her hearing went almost completely. Denise installed a Captel phone at her house, and then informed her of our monthly Hearing Demonstrations, to find out about other technology; at the meeting, not only did she learn about alerting devices she could use around her house, but also CART Services. She had always wanted to be more a part of her community and attend a town meeting, but knew that she would not be able to participated due to her hearing. James and Denise advised her that she could request this 'reasonable accommodation' from her town, but it might be a bit of a battle especially since W. Warwick could argue that this would be a financial burden on their town; however, on June 11th she was scheduled to attend her first captioned town meeting. In addition. 2 weeks earlier another town, Newport, also had CART Services for one of their town residents.

5. New Devices –

Freedom Alert is the world's first 2-way emergency pendant communicator. Family, friends and 911 are just a click away. This device is like lifeline where you have an emergency pendant, but there is no monthly fee since it does not contact a monitoring service, instead it contacts friends and family, and or 911 in the event of an emergency. Also, the device comes with 2 rechargeable batteries, one for the pendant, and a second that remains in the charger until

the pendant battery needs to be replaced. In addition, the pendant has a button on it that you can push to make sure that the battery is charged! Denise is working with OSCIL to do outreach together on this new device.

CapTel 840i - this telephone works the same way and includes all of the features of the current model CapTel 800i. In addition, the new model includes several user and program-requested features, such as:

- * A built-in answering machine - that takes voice messages & displays captions**

- * A larger 7" display screen with greater resolution**

- * The ability to work with either WiFi or Ethernet connections**

- * Additional extra large font option for captions**

6. The time and date of this year's quarterly meetings is scheduled at 9AM- 11AM at the PUC on September 13, 2012, and December 6, 2012.