

DakotaLink Advisory Council
Quarterly Zoom Meeting
Meeting Notes
September 25, 2023

Members Present: Richard Moeller, Kendra Gottsleben, Eric Weiss, Amy Scepaniak, Kayla Kane, Gloria Pluimer, Gaye Mattke

Members Absent: Mary Sjerven, Sarah Rush, Mollie Keating, Beth Schiltz, Lyle Cook, Matt Cain, Bill McEntaffer, Keith Bundy

Staff Present: Page Hudson, Andrea Steele, Brett Burden

Guest Present: Jessica Sehnert

Meeting Start

Richard called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm MT, 2:03 pm CST.

Agenda

There were no corrections to the draft agenda. Richard motioned to approve the agenda. Amy seconded.

Meeting Notes

There were no corrections to the June 27th meeting notes. Eric motioned to approve the meeting notes. Gloria seconded.

Vice Chairperson Vote

Richard nominated Kendra for vice chair at the June 27th meeting and there were no other nominations today. Eric moved to approve her nomination and Richard seconded.

New Council Member

Keith Bundy is visually impaired and lives in Madison. Over the years, Keith has gotten much of his assistive technology through DakotaLink. He has been a long-time member of the South Dakota Association of the Blind. He has also served on the advisory board of SBVI and on the DakotaLink Advisory Council.

Technician Update

Mark Cook in Aberdeen is retiring October 27, 2023. Tim Weiland has been hired and Mark is now training him full-time. Tim is going to school for computer programming. He has experience working in a machine shop, retail, and teaching people about computers.

ACP: Affordable Connectivity Program

Page met with people in Washington D.C. and they provide him with trainings that the government is providing. One program in particular is called the Affordable Connectivity Program. They would like DakotaLink to promote this program. Please go to this website www.getinternet.gov to see if you qualify.

The program is a government program that helps provide people with affordable internet services. If a person qualifies, they could benefit from a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet services and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

If eligible, people can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

AT4ALL

The data system called AT4ALL helped DakotaLink record their activities. AT4ALL was increasing their price and changed some other things that did not fit DakotaLink's needs. When the AT4ALL subscription ends October 1, 2023, DakotaLink will switch to a new data recording software called NATADS. NATADS stands for National Assistive Technology Act Data System. NATADS is free and will be used to enter day-to-day activities. Page used to have to enter the AT4ALL data into NATADS and now all the DakotaLink staff will directly enter their data into NATADS.

Leadership Symposium

Page attends the Leadership Symposium in April in person on the 21st through the 24th. Page will network and show the other people at the meeting what we are doing in our state for assistive technology efforts.

Outreach

DakotaLink is advertising on Midcontinent with some digital online ads. The Midcontinent ads were focused on the West River Area from May to September 2023. October 2023 through September 2024 advertising will be focused on the East River area. Sioux Falls advertising is expensive so people outside Sioux Falls will see more ads. We also have TV ads occurring on KELO and that covers the whole state of South Dakota.

Page mentioned the FaceBook post on the SureHands lift success story at Joy Ranch Horse Ranch which is located in Florence, SD near Watertown.

Page asked the council for more insight on what kind of topics they would like to hear about in the council meetings from speakers. Eric would like to learn about new technology and more about all the DakotaLink locations. Kendra said the Joy Ranch example is a good example of what DakotaLink is doing. Richard mentioned presentations on new technology are nice too.

DakotaLink Low-Interest Loan Program

No applications have been completed since the last meeting. Eric asked why the program is not being used. Brett Burden replied that several people were told about the loan program and Brett recalls two people who had bad credit. Those people did not fill out the application because they knew they would be denied. Several people call looking for a grant and when they

find out this is a loan program, they do not want something they have to pay back. DakotaLink can be more flexible with this loan program than most banks. The interest rate is usually five percent but there is some flexibility with that. The loan program uses examples are vehicles, vehicle modifications, and various equipment.

Next Meeting

The next virtual meeting is set for Monday December 11, 2023 at 1:00 pm MT, 2:00 pm CST.

Meeting End

Kendra motioned to adjourn the meeting. Gloria seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm MT, 2:35 pm CST.

Notes taken by Andrea Steele