

DakotaLink Advisory Council

Zoom Meeting

06/17/2026

Notes

The DakotaLink Advisory Council meeting on June 17, 2026, confirmed a quorum with 18 members. Key updates included the introduction of new members Melissa Flor and Tony Russell, and the approval of March 18 meeting minutes. James Honomichl demonstrated the \$1,600 Caption Companion device, which captions verbal text without internet access, and Tim Weiland showcased the \$699-\$899 Captify glasses with real-time captioning and speaker identification. The council discussed federal funding increases, noting a \$2 million boost to \$40 million for the 2027-2028 act. The next meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2026, at 10:00 AM Mountain Time.

Action Items

- Complete the outstanding membership applications and align the council's voting membership so that at least over 50% of voting members are people with a disability.
- Send a calendar invite for the September 16 in-person Dakota Link Advisory Council meeting (10:00 a.m. Mountain / 11:00 a.m. Central) within the next week, including the Zoom meeting link for remote attendees.
- Reach out to the Sioux Falls office to reserve a meeting space for the September 16 in-person DakotaLink Advisory Council meeting.
- Plan and schedule the next in-person DakotaLink Advisory Council meeting, coordinating with the Sioux Falls and Rapid City offices and confirming a date and time that works for the group.

Outline

Meeting Introduction and Attendance

- Brett Burden suggested calling the meeting to order, and James Honomichl and Richard Moeller agreed.
- Richard Moeller confirmed a quorum, noting that 18 members are listed, with more than 50% of the voting membership present.
- Roll call was conducted, with all attending members introducing themselves and their roles.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes and Agenda

- Richard Moeller moved to approve the meeting minutes from March 18, and Amy Scepaniak seconded the motion.
- The minutes were approved unanimously.
- Richard Moeller confirmed the approval of the agenda, noting it includes DakotaLink updates and a tech demo.

DakotaLink Updates

- Brett Burden and James Honomichl shared that there are no new staff updates and that DakotaLink is staying busy with work from Voc Rehab and SBVI.
- James Honomichl introduced the Caption Companion device, a Samsung tablet with a Bluetooth microphone, designed for captioning verbal text without internet access.
- James demonstrated the device's features, including its ability to caption in real-time, its \$1,600 price tag, and its potential benefits for clients in retail environments.
- Tim Weiland introduced the Captify glasses, which caption text in real-time and allow users to maintain eye contact during conversations.
- Tim demonstrated the glasses, noting their \$699 to \$899 price range and the \$15/month subscription for advanced features like speaker identification and environmental awareness.
- Brett Burden added that the glasses can be customized with prescription lenses, making them accessible for users who wear glasses.

State and National AT Updates

- James Honomichl provided updates on federal funding, noting a proposed \$2 million increase for the 2027-2028 Act, and a separate \$2 million grant competition for alternative financing programs.
- James mentioned that the funding is still under appropriations and that the House has approved the \$40 million budget request, but the Senate has not yet signed off.

Membership Updates

- Melissa Flor introduced herself, mentioning her 20-year tenure at the Office of Special Education Programs and her experience with assistive technology.
- Tony Russell introduced himself, sharing his background as an Air Force veteran with a traumatic brain injury and his work with service dogs and advocacy for service animals.
- Amy Scepaniak is a renewing member.
- An additional 2 members with disabilities are needed to fulfill the Council composition requirements. There are a couple of applications in place for possible new members.

Election of Officers

- Richard Moeller, Kendra Gottsleben, and Lyle Cook are recommended for another term as chair, vice chair, and member at large, respectively.
- Amy Scepaniak made a motion to accept the slate of officers, and Heidi Mecham seconded it.
- The motion was approved unanimously.

Next Meeting

- The group discussed potential dates for the next meeting, ultimately settling on Wednesday, September 16, at 10:00 AM Mountain Time (11:00 AM Central Time).
- This will be a hybrid meeting. In-person locations will be the Sioux Falls office and Rapid City office, with an option to use the Aberdeen office if desired. For those not able to attend in-person, a Zoom meeting will be available.
- Richard Moeller and James Honomichl agreed to finalize the details and send out calendar invites.

Adjournment

- Richard Moeller announced the adjournment of the meeting.
- The meeting concluded with thanks from all participants.