

Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group Meeting Notes
October 8, 2003
Room 2, First Floor
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C.

Attendees:

Mary Bray MATAAC 301-745-5601
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Attended via conference call

Nicholas Ramfos COG 202-962-3313
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Danette Campbell COG 202-962-3286
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Pam Tucker MATAAC 410-252-5782
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Attended via conference call

Denis McElligott COG 202-962-3314
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William Michael GSA 202-273-4663
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Ronald Mitchell DDOT 202-671-2231
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Gerry Morrison VDOT 804-225-3709
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1. Introductions

The meeting was called to order and introductions were made to include those attending via conference call.

2. Minutes of the July 9, 2003 Meeting

The July 9, 2003 meeting minutes were approved by Mary Bray and seconded by Billy Michael.

3. Change of Chairperson

Danette Campbell thanked Mr. Gerry Morrison for his leadership as Telecommuting Ad Hoc Group Chair during FY 03 and presented him a plaque of appreciation on behalf of the Telecommuting Ad-Hoc group. She continued by welcoming Mr. Ronald Mitchell as the 2004 Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group Chair.

4. Telework Resource Center Update

Ms. Campbell gave an update of recent activities of the Telework Resource Center. She stated that she had attended the International Telework Association's annual conference where she had moderated a roundtable discussion about regional telework incentive programs. She went on to say that she had also attended the Association for Commuter Transportation's annual conference that was held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Ms. Campbell stated that she had met with GSA, OPM, and the Telecommuting Advantage Group (TAG) to address the specifics of the Expanded Telework TERM. She went on to say that database validation had taken place by contacting over 90 employers that were being targeted for this TERM. During this validation process, contact information for employers was verified and an explanation was given to those employers contacted regarding the program goals of this project.

Ms. Campbell told the group that she had held meetings with the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to address modifications to the Telework Partnership with Employers Program.

Ms. Campbell stated that she had been partnering with the Employer Outreach personnel in the City of Alexandria to coordinate the details of the upcoming Telework Virginia Employer Luncheon. The luncheon will be held on November 5 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Alexandria.

Ms. Campbell stated that since the last meeting of the Ad-Hoc group, she had attended the Telework Coordinators meeting at OPM, had met with STI, Inc. to discuss employer outreach for the District of Columbia and Prince William County and had made a Commuter Connections presentation at the GSA Office of Workplace Initiatives.

Ms. Campbell stated that she had assisted in the preparation for the MATAC program meeting, "Telework Initiatives in the Washington Metropolitan Region," which was held in the Council of Governments Board Room. She said that approximately 70 individuals, including private and federal employers, attended this event.

Ms. Campbell introduced a motion to approve the 2003 Employer Seminar Report. She explained that after the Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group approved this document it would go to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee for final approval. Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve this document. Mr. Morrison seconded the motion.

5. Telework Virginia Update

Ms. Campbell reported on the status of this pilot project by stating that there are currently 12 companies participating and that 2 new contracts had been signed. She went on to explain that she would be making a Telework Virginia presentation to the Human Resource Consortium and that Mr. McElligott was scheduled to meet with the American Management Systems on October 28. Ms. Campbell added that to highlight the Telework Virginia incentive program, the Telework Virginia display was set up at the October MATAC meeting.

6. Telework Partnership with Employers Program

Ms. Campbell reported on the status of this program by stating that there are currently 30 companies participating. She stated that pending companies include United Educators, ICPRB, and Census. She said that she would be meeting with the Census Bureau on October 15 to discuss reporting requirements and the actual number of teleworkers participating in the pilot program.

Ms. Campbell said that she and Mr. McElligott had met with the Maryland Department of Transportation to discuss modifying the TPE program to include quarterly consultant meetings, a COG presence at the initial employer/consultant meeting, issuing contracts and consultant selection information directly from COG to the employer.

Ms. Campbell reported that marketing for the TPE program was also discussed to include designing and developing a new brochure and advertising via email. She added that there was also discussion at the meeting regarding working in tandem with the Telework Virginia pilot program.

7. Expanded Telework TERM Update

Ms. Campbell told the group that a kick-off meeting was held on September 25 with COG, TAG, and GSA. She also said that the ACT data base had been validated and turned over to the contractor on October 2. Ms. Campbell told the group of a meeting scheduled with the Greater Washington Board of Trade to discuss marketing the expanded telework TERM and its benefits to Washington businesses.

Mr. Ramfos said that the expanded TERM would target large private sector employers and larger Federal agencies and that the contractor would be taking an organizational approach when attempting to secure employers for this project. The contractor, Telecommuting Advantage Group, will be working with these employer groups to expand teleworking at their respective work sites. Mr. Ramfos added that Maryland and Virginia have provided the funding for this project. However, Federal agencies in the District of Columbia can also benefit for the project.

8. MATAAC Update

MATAAC President, Pam Tucker, reported on the recent activities of MATAAC. She said that the first program meeting was held on October 2 at the Council of Governments. This program, entitled, Telework Incentives in the Region, drew over 70 participants. She stated that these program meetings have been well-attended since MATAAC began sponsoring them. Ms. Tucker stated that MATAAC continues to attempt to attract private sector members to these program meetings, which are largely attended by federal workers.

Ms. Tucker told the group that the MATAAC Board was moving forward with the upcoming award luncheon plans and that an e-invite would be sent in place of a hard-copy, mailed invitation. Ms. Tucker also said that the new MATAAC brochure had been developed and was being printed. She said that the new MATAAC web site was live but some repairs had to be made to the “Members Only” section. She also stated that there is a new URL for MATAAC: www.midatlantictelework.com.

Finally, Ms. Tucker added that the MATAAC Board had already begun thinking about the annual WACOT (Washington Area Conference on Telework) activity normally held in the spring of each year.

Mr. Ramfos congratulated Ms. Tucker on the new MATAAC site, but added that there was no way of connecting from the old site to the new one. He asked if it was possible for MATAAC’s web contact to make that link possible.

Ms. Bray responded that Mark Wiatrowski has renewed the old MATAAC name for another year and that the web master would point the old to the new by October 8.

Mr. Ramfos inquired about the events page of the site.

Ms. Bray replied that the old events were listed for informative purposes and link to handouts from previous meetings. She further explained that Ms. Ussery would be taking over the task of updating the site with event information. Ms. Bray said that MATAAC would now be updating the site on a regular basis.

Mr. Ramfos inquired as to the cost for the MATAAC awards luncheon.

Ms. Campbell responded that the cost to attendees, members and non-members, would be \$25.00.

Mr. Michael stated that GSA would be advertising the luncheon to federal employees. He stated that GSA would also like to announce the new web site and encourage participation in joining MATAAC.

9. Telework Centers Update

Ms. Bray stated that the center directors had all been in attendance at the ITAC conference in Baltimore and that the WMTC had a booth there. Ms. Bray told the group that she conducted a roundtable discussion there. She said that the Telework centers are working with GSA to do a 60-day free trial and would like to have this initiative begin in January 2004. She stated that the WMTC would like to coordinate with the Telework Resource Center radio advertising so that the two tie together.

Mr. Ramfos stated that in January, COG would be marketing the Telework centers. He said that two ads would run: a general spot advertising the centers would run in November and that an ad advertising a 60 day free trial would run right after New Year's.

Ms. Bray stated that the centers definitely want the radio exposure and are also looking forward to advertising the 60 day offer. Ms. Bray added that the center utilization is currently at 62%. She explained that the SLA's have been received through January 30, 2004, which means that the centers are set for one more year of operation. Ms. Bray advised the group that some agencies are dictating that workers work from home and not from the telework centers.

Mr. Michael responded by saying that some agencies did, in fact, make that determination, but ultimately had to reinstate workers at the telework centers.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the agencies are currently expected to have 100% of eligible positions teleworking.

Mr. Michael responded that the federal agencies are expected to have 100% of eligible positions teleworking by 2004.

Mr. Ramfos asked if there is a law that addresses budget for teleworkers in the federal sector.

Mr. Michael replied that yes, there is a law in place that addresses a \$50,000.00 set aside for Telework. However, the agencies don't always comply. He stated that some departments are so big that \$50,000.00 is relatively little in relation to their overall budget. He added that some agencies have made better progress with the telework initiative than others.

Ms. Bray said that GovExec.com addressed recent Telework initiatives within the federal government and sited the most recent MATAC meeting.

Mr. Michael said that Tonya Ballard had written this article for GovExec magazine.

10. FY05 Commuter Connections Work Program Development

Ms. Campbell explained that the fiscal year 2004 Commuter Connections Work Program is a culmination of efforts of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee and details the effective use of federal, state, regional, and local, and private agency resources with an interest in promoting voluntary commute alternative programs.

She said that the first Commuter Connections Work Program was developed and approved by the Transportation Planning Board in 1997. Ms. Campbell explained that implementation details of the Work Program are agreed upon by the members of Commuter Connections, and approved by the TPB Technical Committee and the TPB. She stated that evaluation results on each of the regionally adopted TERMS implemented through the Work Program were completed in FY03. Ms. Campbell said that a 3 year evaluation cycle is used to show results of the effectiveness if the TERMS.

Ms. Campbell told the group that the information that was distributed included a timeline of Telework Resource Center activities slated to begin in October 2003 and run through July 2004. She explained that the second page of the document provided an overview of funds application for the Telework Resource Center.

Ms. Campbell said that pages 46-52 in the handout provided objectives and previous and on-going work for General Technical Assistance, Local Coordination, Telework Center Marketing, and Program Evaluation. She said that pages 53-55 provided information on the Telework Resource Center Summary of Goals and Impacts.

11. ACT International Conference Update

Ms. Campbell stated that she attended the Association for Commuter Transportation's International Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah in September. She said that she was responsible for attending six sessions to include:

- Using Incentive Programs to Engage Commuters and Employers
- Telework Success Stories: Public and Private Sector Case Studies
- Using Special Events and Promotions to Enhance TDM Programs
- Developing a Regional Telework Assistance Program
- Everything You Wanted to Know About TDM and Weren't Afraid to Ask
- 2003 ACT Award Winners: Roundtable Discussion
- University Surveys: Information From the Latest Research About University Transportation

In the interest of time, Ms. Campbell handed out a copy of the notes that she took at the conference. She also provided the group with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation she gave while at the Salt Lake City Conference.

12. Other Business

Mr. Michael stated that the ITAC conference appreciated COG's support this year. He said that 60% of conference attendees represented the federal government in some capacity. He also stated that COG was invited as an honored guest to speak at the pre-conference workshops. Mr. Michael said that Dr. Ronald Sanders and Ron James attended the conference. He said that the conference had a good program and that the on-line evaluation reflected that as well.

Mr. Michael told the group that GSA would be doing a satellite broadcast on Telework on October 16 at 2:00 p.m. He stated that they are working out technical issues. He added that many of the Office of Government Wide Policy staff are being included in a video that is being made for distribution at the November 4 OPM Telework Coordinator training. Mr. Michael explained that this training is being made possible due to the funding Congressman Hoyer secured for training teleworkers.

Mr. Michael said that all federal agencies are being encouraged to attend the training that will include focus sessions and roundtable discussions. He said that web-based Telework training would be introduced. This training will be accessible through www.telework.gov. Mr. Michael also said that the employee Telework training component would be addressed at the November 4 meeting at OPM and that posters and tent cards would be included as marketing components. Mr. Michael stated that a consultant had been hired to do an article for GovExec magazine, and this article would include an interview with Dr. Ronald Sanders.

Mr. Michael said that Gill Gordon would be conducting a role play activity at the training and that this would cover managerial issues based on focus groups done with managers. Mr. Gordon will also be conducting sales training on promoting Telework to managers. Mr. Michael said that he would like to include Ms. Campbell at the session and would attempt to secure an invitation for her.

Ms. Campbell asked if there had been any further discussion of a "Telework Day" as had been discussed with Mr. Stan Kazmarzck at the ITAC conference.

Mr. Michael replied that this was a good idea but could pose problems. People need to be equipped beforehand, said Mr. Michael. In addition, he stated that this type of activity takes a great deal of coordinating with OPM. Mr. Michael said that if the message got out properly, many agencies would get on board to participate.

Note: The next meeting of the Telecommuting Ad-Hoc Group will be held on January 7, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Please contact Danette Campbell via email at dcampbell@mwkog.org if you would like to attend this meeting by conference call.