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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20210049-TP

REQUEST FOR SUBMISSION OF
PROPOSALS FOR RELAY
SERVICE, BEGINNING IN
MARCH 2022, FOR THE DEAF,
HARD OF HEARING,
DEAF/BLIND, OR SPEECH
IMPAIRED, AND OTHER
IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS IN
COMPLIANCE WITH THE
FLORIDA TELECOMMUNICATIONS
ACCESS SYSTEM ACT OF 1991.

PROCEEDINGS: TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS SYSTEM ACT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STAFF
PARTICIPATING: CURTIS WILLIAMS
KATHRYN COWDERY
JEFF BATES
CAYCE HINTON
GREG FOGLEMAN

DATE: Tuesday, June 4, 2024

TIME: Commenced: 1:30 p.m.
Concluded: 2:08 p.m.

PLACE: Gerald L. Gunter Building
Room 105
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter

PREMIER REPORTING
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 CURTIS WILLIAMS, PSC staff

JACOB IMIG, PSC staff

3 GREG FOGLEMAN, PSC staff

CAYCE HINTON, PSC staff

4 CECIL BRADLEY, FTRI

JEFF BRANCH, T-Mobile

5 GARY LEWIEN, Hamilton Relay

MARGARET LYNN DUGGAR, Florida Council on Aging

6 TOM D'ANGELO, Florida Association for the Deaf

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. WILLIAMS: With that, we are going to go
3 ahead and start the meeting. Do we have our court
4 reporter on?

5 COURT REPORTER: Yes, Curtis. This is Debbie
6 Krick. How are you?

7 MR. WILLIAMS: All right. Great to have you,
8 Debbie. So we will go ahead and get started.

9 Good afternoon, everyone. I am Curtis
10 Williams with the Office of Industry Development &
11 Market Analysis. I am chairing today's meeting.
12 Joining me today is Jacob Imig, with the Office of
13 General Counsel.

14 Everyone should have received the some agenda
15 and presentations, so we will proceed as printed.
16 The first order of business is to have our attorney
17 read the notice.

18 MR. IMIG: By notices issued May 21st and May
19 28th, 2024, this time and place has been set for a
20 meeting in Docket No. 20210049-TP, to discuss
21 current relevant issues related to relay. The
22 purpose of the meeting is more fully set out in the
23 notice.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

25 As always, before we proceed, I want to cover

1 some preliminary matters to make the call more
2 productive and to not have any interference. So we
3 ask that you please keep your phone on mute until
4 you are ready to speak. And also please state your
5 name each time before speaking for the court
6 reporter.

7 At this time, we will take appearances. We
8 can start with Jeff with T-Mobile. You spoke
9 earlier, so we will start with you.

10 MR. BRANCH: Hi, everybody. Good afternoon.
11 Jeff Branch on behalf of T-Mobile, and I am the
12 account executive for T-Mobile TRF team.

13 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

14 MR. LEWIEN: This is Gary Lewien with Hamilton
15 Relay.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Welcome, Gary.

17 MR. LEWIEN: Thank you.

18 MS. DUGGAR: Curtis, it's Margaret Lynn Duggar
19 with the Florida Council on Aging.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you. Welcome.

21 MS. DUGGAR: Thank you.

22 MR. BRADLEY: Hi. Yes, this is Cecil Bradley
23 on standby from FTRI. Hi.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Welcome, Cecil.

25 MR. D'ANGELO: Hi, this is Tom D'Angelo

1 representing Florida Association for the Deaf.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Welcome, Tom.

3 Do we have anyone else on the call who would
4 like to make an appearance?

5 MR. FOGLEMAN: This is Greg Fogleman,
6 Commission staff.

7 MR. HINTON: This is Cayce Hinton, staff.

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Do we have anyone else on the
9 call who would like to make an appearance?

10 Hearing none, at this time, we will start with
11 the meeting. To start things off, I will present
12 an update on Public Service Commission activity.
13 That will be followed by an update by FTRI, and
14 then an update by T-Mobile.

15 So with the Commission, there are a couple of
16 items I want to give the committee an update on.
17 One is the 2024 request for proposals for relay
18 service.

19 Earlier this year, the Commission was notified
20 by T-Mobile that they would not extend the relay
21 contract, didn't have a desire to extend the
22 contract into the one-year option. So at that
23 time, staff initiated a docket on March 5th, 2024
24 to issue a new request for proposal to begin relay
25 service on March 1st, 2025.

1 So that process has started. We've had a
2 bidders conference, and staff is in the process of
3 drafting a recommendation, a draft recommendation
4 to take to the Commission to issue the RFP. That
5 recommendation is scheduled to be filed on June
6 27th, 2004, for the Commission's July 9th, 2024
7 Agenda Conference.

8 Once the Commission approves the request for
9 proposals, it will be issued and the Commission
10 will go through an evaluation process for those
11 proposals that are filed by the bidders. And on
12 October 24th, 2024, staff will file a
13 recommendation to select the new provider, and that
14 recommendation will be addressed and voted on by
15 the Commission at the November 5th, 2024, Agenda
16 Conference. And again, that will be for service to
17 begin on March 1st, 2025.

18 Are there any questions regarding the
19 Commission's request for proposals for relay
20 service docket?

21 MS. DUGGAR: Curtis, it's Margaret Lynn
22 Duggar. I have a question.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes.

24 MS. DUGGAR: What would be our -- is there any
25 role for, first of all, for the advisory group to

1 follow involved in this? But my real question,
2 more serious question was, if no one applies, or if
3 the applicants are not qualified for some reason,
4 what is the procedure that you all would follow
5 according to your rules and regulations?

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, we have issued requests
7 for proposals in the past, and we have always had
8 at least two interested bidders submit proposals.

9 MS. DUGGAR: Okay.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, so we had the bidders
11 conference, and we will did have active
12 participation by T-Mobile and Hamilton Relay, and I
13 think both companies are on the call today. So we
14 do --

15 MS. DUGGAR: Okay.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: -- we do anticipate interest.

17 And as far as participation, as I indicated,
18 we will have an evaluation process. And in the
19 past, we have -- we have staff at the PSC serve as
20 evaluators, and we have, in the past, requested, or
21 at least made members of the committee informed
22 about the evaluation process, if they are
23 interested. So we will keep you posted on that.

24 MS. DUGGAR: Sounds good. Thank you.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Any additional questions? If

1 not, I just want to give you a brief update on the
2 FTRI budget docket.

3 We can't discuss the details because it's an
4 open docket, and staff is in the process of
5 developing a staff recommendation to take to the
6 Commission for consideration of Florida
7 Telecommunications Relay's 2024-2025 proposed
8 budget. The recommendation is scheduled to be
9 filed with the Commission Clerk on this Thursday,
10 June 6th, for the Commission's June 18th, 2024,
11 Agenda Conference. So that will be the time when
12 the Commission will consider staff's recommendation
13 on FTRI's proposed budget going forward.

14 Are there any questions? If not, at this
15 time, we will -- I will turn the floor over to
16 Cecil Bradley with Florida Telecommunications Relay
17 to give FTRI's update.

18 MR. BRADLEY: Okay. Thank you. Yes. So I
19 needed a little bit, you know, just to say I do
20 have an interpreter with me, and she was in
21 recovery, but it was a relay interpreter. So she's
22 doing great and everything is working out, you
23 know, there is a little bit of patience here, so
24 just helpfully there won't be any
25 misunderstandings.

1 I hope you all have received the report that I
2 got. It explains pretty much everything here. The
3 first part, there is a few bullet points here --
4 let me see. So, again, we are continuing the same,
5 you know, as usual. There are a few RDC regions
6 and centers and. Now we have 14, and unfortunately
7 it looks like we have 13 that are starting July
8 1st, but, you know, we are going with the new
9 agreements and the contracts. So right now we are
10 kind of reviewing things and waiting. So that's
11 July 1st for two years for that agreement.

12 So there is some modifications and
13 improvements here as well. And our number of
14 services continues the same as expected. It looks
15 like it will be the second week here on the
16 schedule. And really, the number is a little bit
17 low, you know, lower than expected of RDC. And
18 also, there is more people that seem to prefer the
19 weld or the braided.

20 So that's, you know what, we sort of expected,
21 for it to be lower. But in any case, we are trying
22 our hardest with the media to kind of spread the
23 awareness, advertise it more. And we do get calls,
24 families, individuals. We do get some emails, you
25 know, for people who are applying. The number

1 seems pretty good to me. And the number is going
2 up overall, so that's great.

3 The other services, just various changes here.
4 And I remember last year, it was over 100 years
5 old, so it's been many -- you know, people have
6 been passing away. The number has been going down
7 a little bit.

8 And we have more plus individuals. And it
9 seems like in past years, you know, thanks to our
10 offers and recommendations for who's qualified for
11 the Squareglow, so there is a lot of people that
12 are contacting us for that new offering, and it
13 matches with, you know, their old, like, TTY or,
14 you know, their other phones.

15 Let's see what else do we have? Oh, yes, so
16 there is more centers doing out of -- doing
17 outreach, so it's a little bit more money, you
18 know, there is more events. That's good.

19 And also, it seems that the equipment is the
20 same as the last year's numbers. The percentage is
21 about the same overall. There is just one change
22 off of the Squareglow, so that went up. So really,
23 I think, you know, this is all positive.

24 And then going back to the first sheet here,
25 so we have -- we are trying to come up with new

1 services. It's called the Referral Partner. So
2 its purpose -- so it means that we would be working
3 with audiologists and hearing aids, you know,
4 trying to encourage people to refer us. So we are
5 trying that this coming year.

6 Also I know that there is on-line chats, and
7 that's been going on for a while. The PSC, you
8 know, wants us to have it. So the numbers are not
9 super high yet. They are pretty normal. But, you
10 know, there is just a thing with WiFi, and -- but
11 we do try to help with the chat. So that's also
12 showing good numbers. We haven't yet filled the
13 position yet. We are still on hold. So hopefully
14 next year the demand goes up. So -- and then we do
15 have a proposal for that -- the proposed budget.

16 We are really excited, we are working with the
17 State, legislator state and their staff, and we are
18 trying to make some changes here to the laws for
19 the TASA laws. FTRI has provided, you know, like
20 the WiFi -- the wireless or broadband equipment,
21 and so we have pretty good, like, staffers that
22 will be able to support -- state senators that will
23 be able to support the bill.

24 And then for the Senate or House for that
25 bill, however the PSC had proposed that their --

1 their version of the bill, that we would be are
2 would be meeting for last week. It was a plus with
3 their -- it seems like the bill is a little bit
4 more in-depth with the language that they were
5 using, but it's similar to what we have been
6 talking about for the wireless, the broadband. So
7 now we are trying to review it, clean things up.
8 And for the summer, you know, we would expect new
9 numbers to be given to designate to the bill.

10 And the committee, you know, is trying to hire
11 more people and give introductions. It will be for
12 this fall. So we are going to let the community
13 know and see what's going in progress there.

14 And we have seven people working, not
15 including me. So all is good with that. The work,
16 you know, we have been doing this for a long time.
17 We have great employees here.

18 What else do I have? Hang on. So I think
19 that's about it.

20 All right. So now back to you.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you, Cecil.

22 Are there any questions for Cecil?

23 MR. D'ANGELO: I have a question. This is
24 Tom, here.

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, Tom.

1 MR. D'ANGELO: Okay. Of course I am excited
2 about the WiFi process with the bill. I also want
3 to know what FAD strong support for that bill. But
4 we want to include us, and also we can work with
5 you to make the process successful and spread it to
6 the community, because that WiFi bill will really
7 change many of our lives with the technology and
8 the day-to-day update and everything. So I am
9 really excited about that.

10 So, please, share the information. Send it to
11 me, okay? And I can share it with my team and the
12 community.

13 MR. BRADLEY: This is Cecil.

14 Yeah, this -- Tom, thank you for that. I
15 appreciate your interest. I will definitely keep
16 you informed, because I am -- I foresee a lot of
17 adjustments going out to the community this fall.
18 I will give you an update.

19 Right now we are waiting for the senators to
20 talk with the Senate to clean up the bill -- that's
21 the PSC bill -- and designate a bill number, or a
22 Senate bill number and, at the same time, look for
23 House sponsors, so that they can all work together.
24 And when the time comes, that we have the Senate
25 and the House bill number, I will definitely start

1 to share that information with the community, with
2 the advocates that I am -- although, I am not
3 suspecting until end of summer or early fall.
4 That's my expectation, my hope.

5 MR. D'ANGELO: Yeah. That sounds great.
6 Thank you.

7 Like I said earlier, we are here ready to roll
8 up our sleeves. Please get in contact with us.
9 Let us help with the language and the wording, and
10 everything, that will be included in our community,
11 so that would be great for them.

12 Thank you. Thank you for your hard work with
13 this team.

14 MR. BRADLEY: Yeah. Thank you.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Are there any additional
16 questions for Mr. Bradley? If not, we will proceed
17 with T-Mobile's presentation.

18 Mr. Branch, you have the floor.

19 INTERPRETER: Just testing, can you hear the
20 interpreter? Can you hear me?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

22 MR. BRANCH: Okay. Perfect.

23 This is Jeff here. Thank you, Curtis.

24 Like I said before, this is Jeff Branch
25 speaking through a sign language interpreter, and I

1 know many of you have already got the PowerPoint
2 that I shared out to everybody, so I will kind of
3 follow through and go through that deck.

4 We recently completed the last contract year,
5 so it was the three-year contract term. We did
6 have a one-year extension, but we reviewed
7 everything and came to the decision that we were
8 not going to pursue the extension. I will be
9 touching on 2023 to 2024 fiscal year. Pretty much
10 last year's fiscal year cycle. In March, we
11 started the new fiscal year, and so this would be
12 the third year of the contract. As you know, we
13 provide RCC, CapTel and TRX services with
14 speech-to-speech service as well.

15 On the third slide, you will see the RCC
16 minutes and the usage there in total minutes used
17 throughout the year. There wasn't much utilization
18 there, so we gave Florida, whenever they were in
19 need of RCC, was on a case-by-case as-needed basis.

20 On the fourth slide, you will see the total
21 usage data compared to previous years, the other
22 two years within that contract term. That was 2021
23 to '22, and then '22 to '23. And then you see '23
24 to '24.

25 And if you recall, there was a lot of usage

1 based on the COVID pandemic. And during those
2 years, the COVID pandemic was existing, a lot of
3 people were at home requiring captioning services
4 for various meetings. So there was a large
5 utilization. Now the big push back to office,
6 we've seen it diminish in the usage of RCC.

7 On Slide 5, you will see the billable TRS
8 minutes, and then you can compare that to the prior
9 years. And as a similar narrative there, similar
10 trend that's happening with all the states, you see
11 the steady TRS decline annually, that's based off
12 of new technology, people transitioning to IP-based
13 platforms, other technologies as well. Those other
14 technologies give the freedom and flexibility to be
15 mobile, to travel around, and analog requires
16 specific equipment to be connected at home. And,
17 again, we will continue support to provide service
18 to make sure that accessibility is there for
19 whoever needs to utilize it for TTY users as well.

20 On Slide 6, you will see the total minutes for
21 Spanish to English, and similar trend there as
22 well. You see a decline, same with the other ones.
23 The usage is just not there.

24 On Slide 7, you will see speech-to-speech.
25 And, again, you will see the steady decline there

1 as well. That's with all services year-over-year.

2 And then on to Slide 8, you will see the
3 CapTel minutes. And we are still continuing to
4 provide that service and support that service
5 throughout the rest of this year for the rest of
6 this fiscal year. And you can see the minutes here
7 compared to the previous years over those last
8 three years.

9 And then Slide 9, you will see the TRS state
10 quality reporting. We are continuing to provide
11 the monthly reporting, and the monthly reporting
12 goes to the state, and the metric, the measurements
13 of quality of service. And we continue to --
14 whatever complaints that we get, we continue to
15 respond to those in a timely manner, closing out
16 them, making sure that we meet those resolutions.

17 And that is the same for Slide 10 with CapTel.
18 So similar reporting monthly being sent out. And
19 we continue to abide by the contract and follow
20 what's entailed. We continue doing outreach. And
21 thank you to FTRI for their support with outreach
22 as well.

23 We just ordered some more brochures. Before,
24 there was a booklet, but after some lengthy
25 discussions, we decided to transition to a trifold

1 brochure, which was easier do carry around and to
2 give out. That was based off feedback that we
3 received from FTRI. So we updated and made some
4 adjustments to that, and then we printed those
5 trifolds.

6 Elissa Moran from FTRI, thank you so much for
7 her support with that endeavor with outreach
8 efforts all over the state of Florida.

9 And we are continuing to do advertising for
10 speech-to-speech throughout the community. I
11 believe they are in Gainesville, also in
12 Tallahassee. They will do -- we will be doing
13 another, again, coming up in a small cities, that
14 will be happening later this year.

15 On to slide 12. Some of the things that we
16 have done previously, and they have been completed,
17 the TRS complaint log for last year, for the year
18 2023. We are going to be doing that same process.
19 It's just amazing how time flies. I feel that we
20 just did last year's and we are already ready to do
21 it again for 2024.

22 So fiscal year '23 was for year '22-'23. Now
23 we will be doing '23-'24, handling that complaint
24 log work. And we are required to send that to the
25 FCC annually. And that has a detailed list of

1 complaints, and so we hand that off to the FCC. We
2 did that last year, and we are in the process of
3 doing that again. We just notified the PCS --
4 sorry -- PSC staff, and so we are in the process of
5 submitting that annual report.

6 Also, for the year 2023, we worked on a
7 five-year recertification application that all
8 states required us to do that. And that
9 recertification that was for five years of TRS for
10 the states. It was a lengthy process. A lot of
11 information to be entered. So we initiated that
12 part for the state, and we did it for all the other
13 states as well. We completed Florida, which was
14 great. That way we can kind of rest easy, and we
15 don't have to worry about that for another five
16 years. So it's great to get that completed and out
17 of the way. Everything looks good with that. The
18 State is in good hands. And then the link here
19 will show you exactly where things are posted for
20 the FCC's website.

21 That's all for T-Mobile. Back to you, Curtis.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Jeff.

23 Are there any questions for T-Mobile? Any
24 questions for Mr. Branch's presentation? If not,
25 that concludes today's meeting.

1 Before we conclude, I would like to open the
2 floor up for any additional comments or closing
3 remarks. So at this time, we will entertain any
4 kind of questions or remarks.

5 MR. BRADLEY: This is Cecil here. Thank you
6 to all the presenters. I do have one question.

7 I know that the TASA proposal changed the law
8 that's being worked on that will allow flexibility
9 with relay RSP bidding, so it could be one or two
10 or three more providers. However, the current law
11 is only limited to one provider. So I am curious.

12 Curtis, does your state agency have a plan?
13 If you don't have a single provider for both
14 services, I am kind of curious, how -- what's your
15 plan -- what's your guys' plan with that?

16 MR. WILLIAMS: We -- as you indicated, the
17 statute is clear that we have -- are required to
18 have one provider for relay service in the state of
19 Florida, and as we issue the request for proposal,
20 that is what we will take into consideration.

21 MR. BRADLEY: Okay. Thank you. I was just
22 wondering. Thank you.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

24 Are there any additional questions, comments,
25 remarks?

1 MR. D'ANGELO: This is Tom here.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, Tom.

3 MR. D'ANGELO: I just wanted to follow up here
4 with the comment that Curtis had mentioned and
5 Cecil had mentioned. I know that the law stated
6 that we are limited to one provider, but I do know,
7 with today's technology, it's changing rapidly, and
8 we want to have those choices where you have the
9 challenges with that one provider, and you are
10 stuck with that one person that, you know, one
11 technology that doesn't have it. And it also
12 deprives our rights, our accessibilities.

13 So I hope that the staff would be able to
14 monitor it and maybe adjust it and have more
15 flexibility of whoever lives in Florida would be
16 able to have those choices, and that would have a
17 really great accessibility change for us. You
18 know, with today's -- today's world that's going
19 on, we don't have all of the full services that are
20 provided to us.

21 That's the only remark I want to know. I am
22 sure that there is others that know about this, and
23 we stated it a bunch of times in the past, but for
24 here, with us, at the Florida Association for the
25 Deaf, it's really the same, where we would like the

1 same accessibility as a hearing person would, but
2 we are just stuck with that one limited provider,
3 or that one option, so thank you very much.

4 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you for your comments.

5 Are there any additional comments or remarks?
6 If not, I would like to again thank everyone for
7 participating. And if there are not any more
8 questions or remarks, this will conclude today's
9 meeting. We are adjourned.

10 Thank you again, everyone, for participating.

11 MR. BRADLEY: Sorry, one more thing. One
12 small thing. This is Cecil again. I am sorry.

13 I wanted to respond to Tom. I am in agreement
14 that people like us, deaf, hard of hearing,
15 deaf/blind, we have very limited services. I
16 completely -- I am frustrated too. I understand.

17 One thing I wanted to mention the new law
18 changes will allow for more flexibility with --
19 within -- with committees, advisors, so I am
20 excited for any changes that -- the draft bill we
21 are working on together, there will be a lot more
22 changes and a lot more flexibility for us, so that
23 is a positive.

24 You are right, right now it is frustrating.

25 So I am hopeful next year we are able to finally

1 pass that law. I am hoping and praying that it
2 finally gets signed next year. It would be
3 awesome. Again, we have to go through a lot of
4 groundwork.

5 Thank you, Tom.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Cecil, for that
7 follow-up.

8 MR. BRADLEY: Yep.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: So we would like to, again,
10 offer any final comments, discussion or remarks
11 before we adjourn. So if there are any remarks,
12 please feel free to jump in.

13 Hearing none, again, thank you, everyone, for
14 participating, and this concludes today's meeting.
15 We are adjourned. Thank you.

16 (Proceedings concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER


STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 20th day of June, 2024.


DEBRA R. KRICK
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #HH31926
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024