

**MINUTES OF NEBRASKA TRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**January 26, 2024, 1:30 p.m. CDT**  
**Location: Nebraska Public Service Commission**  
**300 The Atrium, 1200 N Street (Commission Hearing Room), Lincoln Nebraska**

1. **Roll Call:** The Nebraska Telecommunications Relay Advisory Committee met on January 26, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. at the Public Service Commission hearing room.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Tami Richardson-Nelson. Present from the committee were Tami Richardson-Nelson (Chair), Norm Weverka (Vice-Chair), Robert Feit and Commissioner Tim Schram. Annette Campbell, elected to the committee last year, withdrew from the committee.

2. **Introduction of Guests:** Present from T-Mobile was Emma Danielson, TRS Account manager; Representing the Commission were Cullen Robbins, Director of Communications, Steve Stovall, Accountant/TRS Administrator, Jonathan Smith, Attorney representing legal support for TRS issues for the Commission, Justin Williamson, Policy Analyst with the Commission. Justin also provided audio/video support; Representing NCDHH was Kelsey Cruz, Marketing/Communications Specialist; Joining online were Carrie Gans, Associate Director of Communications, Thomas Golden, Executive Director for the Commission and Gregory Walklin, Attorney for the Commission. Sharon Sinkler and Amber Tucker interpreted the meeting. Representing the Public was Karen Weverka.

3. **Election of New Officers – Chairperson and Vice Chairperson:** Current Officers are Tami Richardson-Nelson (Chair) and Norm Weverka (Vice-Chair). Motion by Robert Feit to nominate Tami Richardson-Nelson as Chair, to cease nominations and to poll the committee for the vote. Seconded by Commissioner Norm Weverka. Motion approved by all members present.

Motion by Robert Feit to nominate Norm Weverka as Vice-Chair, to cease nominations and poll the committee for the vote. Seconded by Commissioner Tim Schram. Motion approved by all members present.

4. **Approval of the Agenda:** Motion by Robert Feit to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Norm Weverka. Agenda approved by all members present.

5. **Approval of the Minutes of the January 27, 2023 Meeting:** Tami provided a correction to those minutes. Nathan White represents OAD (Omaha Association for the Deaf) not NAD. Motion by Robert Feit to approve the minutes as corrected. Seconded by Norm Weverka. Minutes approved as presented by all members present.

6. **Chairperson's/Vice-Chairperson's Comments:** Tami expressed appreciation to the committee for their continued willingness to serve. Tami extended her thanks to Kelsey Cruz with NCDHH for her work on LB1180. Norm expressed similar appreciation.

7. **Public Service Commission Comments:**

1 & 2) **Updated Relay Statistics/Equipment Program Update (\*\*Note\*\* Steve combined items 1 & 2);** Steve provided three TRS surcharge assumptions – one at the two-cent (\$.02) rate; one at the current three-cent (\$.03) rate and; one at the

four-cent (\$.04) rate. Steve indicated the change in fund balance goes from a projected balance of \$389,335 under the three-cent scenario to \$143,569 under the two-cent scenario. There is a concern that the fund balance under the two-cent projection may be insufficient to serve the program. Assumptions under both scenarios include a \$102,200 payment for January 2024 in anticipation of the November – December 2023 Verizon redemptions the PSC has not paid yet. Thereafter, \$60,000 payments for the month following each calendar quarter are projected for Verizon expected invoice submissions. Steve stated that the difference in fund balances from the two-cent and three cent projections are due in part to the impact of a one-cent change in the surcharge. With an assessment base of over 2,000,000 subscribers this equates to a \$20,000 change per month in surcharge income. Also, the change also affects interest income since this fund is interest-bearing. Steve indicated the NSTEP program could approach a \$930,000 expenditure level assuming consistent payment for Verizon vouchers. The Verizon NSTEP invoicing are becoming more timely. Steve indicated that the three-cent (\$.03) surcharge, although rendering an acceptable fund balance, does not reflect the effects of LB1180 legislative proposal. Cullen will address this bill in item 3) below.

Steve also explained there will be the impact of a new contract for relay services effective July 1, 2024. CapTel will no longer be offered by T-Mobile so it is presumed Hamilton will bid on that service as a sole-source provider. The projections for CapTel (column g on the forecasts) assume a monthly minimum charge plus a provision for a partial outreach program. The TRS/STS portion (column f) assumes a contract rate increase of 30%.

- 3) **Summary of Legislative Bills Introduced That Impacts the Relay Fund (Cullen Robbins)/Summary of LB1180 Affecting NSTEP Program.** Cullen expressed appreciation to Kelsey for her work on this bill. Cullen indicated the proposed bill has two provisions: 1) change to the one-per-household rule to 2-per-household and; 2) change the NSTEP voucher reapplication period from five to three years. Staff prepared a fiscal note reflecting the potential impact on the fund. With both assumptions, an increase of \$500,000 was likely, resulting in an additional funding increase of two cents (\$.02). This would put the new surcharge at five cents (\$.05). This bill has no emergency clause so it would be effective 90 days after close of session.

Commissioner Schram indicated that the Commission is presenting testimony on this bill but would be taking a neutral position. This is normal practice in legislation that the Commission directly has oversight over.

- 4) **Determination of Surcharge for July 1, 2024, Assessment Period.** Docket C-5555, 'In the matter of the Commission on its own motion, seeking to determine the surcharge for the statewide Telecommunications Relay System (TRS) to be effective July 1, 2024.' Hearing time is March 19, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. CDT (Steve Stovall).

Motion by Norm to recommend to the Commission to keep the surcharge at its current \$.03 rate for the assessment period beginning July 1, 2024 with the provision allowing for an increase up to two-cents (\$.02) with the passage of

LB1180. Seconded by Robert Feit. Motion carried by all members present with Tim Schram abstaining. Steve will follow up with Tami to provide a recommendation letter with her signature for inclusion with the Docket.

5) **Update on Text-to-911 Implementation in Nebraska (Director, Dave Sankey).**

Dave gave an update on Text-to-911 in Nebraska. Handout, 'Nebraska Next Generation 911 Implementation: Text to 911' presented. Dave explained that the 'Interim Solution' phase will have completion within two months. For 'Implementation in Progress' equipment still must be updated to handle text-to-911 calls. This concerns primarily northeast Nebraska. The counties in white represent areas where text is unavailable. Work efforts are being spent in these areas. Positive discussion and comments provided by the committee on the efforts of this department.

8. **Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Comments:**

Kelsey Cruz provided an update to the committee. Kelsey indicated Annette Campbell's position was advertised. She is still working on the Telephone Industry position. Letters need to go out to Commissioner Tim Schram and Tami Richardson-Nelson's position soliciting their requests to be reappointed;

Advisory Committee Members Terms – Appointments/New Appointments Needed.

- Norm Weverka and Robert Feit were reappointed to three-year terms beginning March 10, 2023 – March 10, 2026;
- Commissioner Tim Schram and Tami Richardson-Nelson were reappointed March 12, 2021, and are serving a three-year term March 12, 2021 – March 12, 2024. Their terms will expire this year;
- Annette Campbell (Position previously held by Jerry Siders). Three-year term beginning September 20, 2021 – September 20, 2024. She represents the Public. **\*\*NOTE\*\*** Annette has since resigned.
- There are now two (3) vacancies on this committee – 1) one position representing speech-disabled individuals and; 2) one representing the telephone industry and Annette Campbell's position.

Norm had a follow-up regarding LB1180. He inquired if a website reflecting a history of bills would be appropriate. It may aid as a reference when addressing changes affecting our programs.

9. **T-Mobile Accessibility Comments:**

Sprint Presentation on Recent Activities and Outreach Plans for 2024. Emma Danielson presented a PowerPoint presentation on relay activities, relay center traffic and outreach for 2023. Proposed outreach plans for 2024 were also presented.

10. **Old Business:**

Steve to Provide Committee Update on T-Mobile Process for NSTEP Applicants Seeking Assistance in Acquiring Wireless Devices. Steve indicated a change in the process from a single point-of-contact (POC) to a multi-store solution has been slow in implementation. We are still in the planning stages. With the merger of Sprint systems to T-Mobile, he was hopeful the process can resume.

11. **New Business:** Steve announced to the committee his retirement from the Commission effective March 31, 2024. His last business day with the Commission is March 29. Tami

and Norm both expressed their appreciation for his involvement with this committee as well as his duties as administrator.

12. **Public Comment:** None provided.

13. **Next Meeting:** Meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m. by Tami Richardson-Nelson. Next meeting to be scheduled at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven G Stovall  
February 15, 2024.