

MINUTES OF NEBRASKA TRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
January 27, 2023, 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 27, 2023, 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; Commissioner Tim Schram and Annette Campbell.

2. **Introduction of Guests.** Present from the Commission, Cullen Robbins, Director of Communications, Steve Stovall, Accountant/TRS Administrator, Jonathan Smith, Attorney representing legal support for TRS issues for the Commission, John Monroe, Executive and Technical Assistant; Commissioner Eric Kamler representing District 4; Representing NCDHH were Kelsey Cruz (Interim Director); Representing T-Mobile, Emma Danielson (Joining remotely); Representing the Public were Karen Weverka, Nathan White (Chair of the Omaha Association of the Deaf), Carrie Gans, Assistant Director of Communications and Thomas Golden, Executive Director for the Commission; Sharon Sinkler and Frances Beurivage interpreted the meeting.

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 Tim Schram. 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 February 25, 2022, Meeting. ****Note** The January 28, 2022, meeting had no quorum, so the committee rescheduled February 25, 2022, under a shortened agenda.**** Motion by Norm Weverka to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2022, meeting as presented. Seconded by Robert Feit. Minutes approved as presented by all members present.

6. **Chairperson’s/Vice-Chairperson’s Comments:** Tami expressed appreciation to Annette Campbell for her willingness to serve on this committee. Norm expressed similar appreciation.

7. **Public Service Commission Comments:**

- 1) **Updated Relay Statistics (Steve Stovall):** Steve provided two TRS surcharge assumptions – one at three-cent (\$.03) rate and one at the two-cent (\$.02) rate. Steve indicated the change in fund balance goes from a projected balance of \$533,158 under the three-cent scenario to \$279,713 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 \$195,000 payment for January 2023 in anticipation of the July – December 2022 Verizon redemptions the PSC has not been billed. Thereafter, \$90,000 payments for the month following each calendar quarter are projected for Verizon quarterly invoice submissions.

Motion by Norm to recommend to the Commission to keep the surcharge at its current \$.03 rate for the assessment period beginning July 1, 2023. Seconded by Robert. Motion carried by all members present with Tim Schram abstaining. Steve will follow up with Tami to provide a recommendation letter for inclusion with the Docket.

- 2) Equipment Program Update (Steve Stovall). Steve provided additional details from the surcharge exhibits to the committee. The October 2022 payment for voucher expenditures include \$65,485 for Verizon redemptions that paid for the Oct-Dec 2021 time period. For November 2022, out of the \$202,372 paid, \$101,520 was for the Jan-Mar 2022 redemption period and \$89,957 for the Apr-June 2022 period.
- 3) Summary of Legislative Bills Introduced That Impacts the Relay Fund (Cullen Robbins). Cullen deferred items #3 and 4 until after Dave Sankey provided his update (item #7). Cullen indicated that there are no bills this session that directly impact the TRS fund. There is a proposed bill that changes the funding source for the 211 program to the general fund.
- 4) Update Committee on NPSC Broadband Bridge Program (Cullen Robbins). There is a bill (LB 683) that provides for a Broadband Officer under the direction of the Dept. of Transportation in determining broadband policy as opposed to the PSC. For 2022, \$20.0 m awarded for broadband grants (37 applications). There is also a federal program, 'Capital Projects Fund' (CPF) that makes available up to \$80.0 million for grants.
- 5) Determination of Surcharge for July 1, 2023, Assessment Period. Docket C-5473, '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, 2023.' Hearing time is March 14, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. CDT (Steve Stovall). See discussion under item #1 above.
- 6) Proposal For Bylaws Change Regarding Required Meetings. Steve provided the committee with proposed Bylaw changes. Changes included changing 'speech-impaired' to 'speech-disabled.' Also changing the Meeting Rules (III.A.1) to a simple majority of the active Advisory Committee membership. Changes to III.B1. under 'Meeting Schedule' to reference 'shall meet as necessary but shall meet at least once a year' (previous language was twice a year).

Motion by Robert to accept the changes as presented to the committee. Seconded by Norm. Motion carried by all members present.

- 7) Update on Text-to-911 Implementation in Nebraska (Director, Dave Sankey).
Dave gave an update on Text-to-911 in Nebraska. Two handouts were provided, 'Nebraska Text to 911 Implementation' and 'Nebraska PSAP Regionalization.' 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 currently serves as interim director while a search continues for a new Executive Director. The next NCDHH full Board meets March 10, 2023. Steve directed Kelsey to solicit approval from Norm and Robert for reappointment to the Advisory Committee (their terms expired as indicated below).
Advisory Committee Members Terms – Appointments/New Appointments Needed.
- Norm Weverka and Robert Feit were reappointed to three-year terms beginning March 15, 2019 – March 15, 2022, per the March 15, 2019, NCDHH Advisory Board meeting. **These member's terms have expired:**
 - 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;
 - Annette Campbell (Position previously held by Jerry Siders). Three-year term beginning September 20, 2021 – September 20, 2024. She represents the Public;
 - There are now two (2) vacancies on this committee – 1) one position representing speech-disabled individuals and; 2) one representing the telephone industry.
9. **T-Mobile Accessibility Comments:**
- 1) Sprint Presentation on Recent Activities and Outreach Plans for 2023. Emma Danielson presented a PowerPoint presentation on relay activities, relay center traffic and outreach for 2022. Proposed outreach plans for 2023 were also presented.
 - 2) New website implemented for Nebraska Relay. Link to the website is <https://nebraskarelay.com/resources-4/>.
10. **Old Business:**
Steve to Provide Committee Update on T-Mobile Process for NSTEP Applicants Seeking Assistance in Acquiring Wireless Devices. Steve participated in a Zoom meeting March 2022 with various T-Mobile personnel to discuss a procedural change in how T-Mobile provides wireless devices in the NSTEP program. Steve would like to change the process from a single point-of-contact (POC) to a multi-store solution. The discussion was positive – though it may be slow in implementation.
11. **New Business:**
NCDHH Board Recommendations Regarding NSTEP Program (Position Paper dated January 12, 2023). Two changes in how the PSC administers wireless devices for the NSTEP program were submitted; Change #1): Change the 'one- per-household' rule to two and change #2): Revise the reapplication term from five to three years. Each of these scenarios has a cost effect which was provided in a handout. Discussion centered on feasibility and necessity of such changes. Legislation would be required. It was

suggested by the committee that Steve and Kelsey compile research that could be incorporated into a bill. Work would have to begin in August 2023 if a bill was contemplated as well as soliciting a senator willing to sponsor the bill.

Nathan White (from NAD) provided some information on Iowa's implementation of wireless devices in their equipment program. Iowa's program for wireless devices is separate from non-wireless devices. Iowa's program allows multiple individuals within a household to be recipients (subject to income guidelines).

12. **Public Comment:** None provided.
13. **Next Meeting:** Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. by Tami Richardson-Nelson. Next meeting to be scheduled at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven G Stovall
February 27, 2023.