

Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service/Public Utility Commission (TRS/PUC) Advisory Board

Commonwealth Keystone Building
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

June 7, 2023 - Second Quarter Meeting Minutes
Conducted via Virtual Remote Platform Microsoft Teams Teleconference

<p><u>Board Members Present</u> Kay Tyberg, Chair; President, HLAA-Blair County PA Chapter; member of HLAA national, National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of Deaf (PSAD), Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) and What's You Say Club-PA. Public member.</p>	<p><u>Visitors/Guests:</u> Spencer Nahf, Public Utility Commission (PUC) (BTUS) John-Paul Rodgers, PUC BTUS Melissa Derr, PUC (BTUS) Denise McCracken, PUC Office of Communications Lori Shumberger, PUC Office of Communications Thomas Charles, PUC Office of Communications Matt Hrivnak, PUC Bureau of Consumer Services Joe Witmer, Office of PUC Chairwoman Brown Dutrieuille Joel Cheskis, Office of Vice Chairman DeFrank Eric Jeschke, PUC Annuitant Aaron Margolis, PUC Commissioner's Office</p>
<p>Amy Goldman, Secretary; President, US Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Public member.</p>	<p>Laura Grassia, TDDP Manager, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University,</p>
<p>Sandi McNally, Assistant Director, TechOwl, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University</p>	<p>Amy Strawser, TRS Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton Relay Thaddeus Graham, CTRS Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton Relay</p>
<p>Christa Cervantes, Pennsylvania Account Manager, CapTel and TRS, Hamilton Relay</p>	<p><u>Legal Advisor to the Board:</u> Tiffany Tran, PUC Law Bureau</p>
<p>Steve Samara, PA Telephone Association</p>	<p><u>Sign Language Interpreters:</u> Jessica Bentley-Sassaman & Kathy Zimmerman Student Interpreters assisted</p>
<p><u>Board Members Absent</u> Melissa Hawkins, Director, PA Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Aaron Magolis, PUC Commissioner's Office</p>	<p><u>CART/Real Time</u> Abby Estes</p>

Accessibility Etiquette Protocol for Members and Attendees:

a) Speak clearly and concisely, b) say your name prior to your comments, c) only one person speaks at a time, d) avoid backlighting, e) participants on Zoom please face the camera allowing people that can lipread you, and f) raise your hand when you vote.

Call to Order

The June 7, 2023, Second Quarter TRS/PUC meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Kay Tyberg at 9:34 a.m.

Welcome/Introductions

A hearty welcome was given by Kay Tyberg. Attendees and guests introduced themselves and their roles and representation. A roll call was taken of voting members followed by attendees conducted by secretary, Amy Goldman.

Chairperson's Report

On behalf of the advisory board chair, Kay Tyberg welcomed and thanked everyone for attending today's TRS/PUC Advisory Board meeting.

Kay Tyberg reminded everyone to please make sure you let Denise, Amy, or me know if there are any changes to your mailing address, title, email, or phone number. The contact list is updated at each meeting.

The public member recruitment campaign effort is a top priority with only two current public members out of seven people who can serve on the board. Outreach is critical and the TRS/PUC Advisory Board is working on a memorandum for the PUC Commissioners to approve. Once approved PUC Communications can design and develop the appropriate public material and flyer for distribution.

Secretary's Report/Approval of the Minutes

The meeting minutes of June 6, 2023, were reviewed. A motion was made by Christa and seconded by Kay Tyberg; the meeting minutes were unanimously approved as submitted.

OLD BUSINESS

Ratification of electronic voting

Thomas Charles (PUC Communications) and Tiffany Tran (Law Bureau) mentioned when the board votes electronically, at the next public TRS/PUC Advisory Board meeting the action must be presented with a new motion to ratify the electronic vote.

Report of the Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) including Wireless (WEI) by Laura Grassia

Laura Grassia, Program Manager for TDDP provided statistical information from January to March 2023 which indicates 78% of devices are going to the visually impaired, and 14% of the devices go to the hearing impaired. Laura plans to contact D/deaf individuals. Laura explained she routinely conducts a quarterly survey. There was a 97% satisfaction survey during the first quarter. She has been involved with consumer education. Laura reported outreach to underserved populations (domestic violence, rape, and similar other organizations) has been positive. In addition, Laura is developing a new strategic outreach plan.

Sandi McNally shared with the board Laura will be participating in the Broadband Development Authority's stakeholder meetings. Kay has asked Laura to provide a report to the TRS Advisory Board as to developments at those meetings.

Hamilton TRS Outreach Report by Amy Strawser

Amy Strawser reported on activities in February, March, and April 2023, promoting caption telephone services and training staff on how to send and receive relay calls. These include webinars, consumer education training, and participating in several 50+ expos where 400-plus attendees came at each, presentations at senior centers, and presentations at Bloomsburg University's ASL classes. In addition, Amy trained PA Senator David Argole (29th District) staff on operating relay calls. A training session was held at the northern tier's Regional Planning and Development Commission.

Hamilton CTRS Report by Thad Graham

Thad Graham provided an update on his first quarter report whereas he and Amy worked on several webinars. Thad hosted his first Lunch and Learn at Ben Wilson's Senior Center which was well received and attended. Individuals were interested in the app and further questions centered around the telephone. Thad attended several resource fairs, met individuals at the Philadelphia School for the Deaf, and attended the Pittsburgh SignAthon event. Upcoming events will be visiting healthcare facilities in the Philadelphia area, other senior centers and conducting webinars. PA Relay hosted a Relay Night at Scranton-Wilkes Barre's Rail Riders baseball game providing more public exposure.

TRS Advisory Board Member Recruitment

Thomas Charles with Denise McCracken discussed the preparation of the memorandum to send to the PUC Commissioner Chairperson Gladys Brown for the commissioners' approval to publicly appeal for new public board members. During the June 6th meeting a motion was made to accept and submit the memorandum. A discussion arose following the meeting via e-mail concerning the budget for the project. Tom shared that the PUC Office of Communications would oversee the administration of public flyers/materials and cost in-house.

A new motion was made by Amy, seconded by Sandi M., to submit the approved memorandum and unanimously approved.

Broadband Presentation by Joseph Witmer

Joe Witmer, counsel to Commissioner Chairman Gladys Brown-Dutrieuille gave a PowerPoint presentation on "The Funding of Broadband Networks and Services: Current Issues in Pennsylvania" (attached) to the TRS/PUC Advisory Board.

A thorough recap was provided of the various programs for broadband, and clarification regarding what falls under the FCC 's jurisdiction vs. the PA PUC. Joe presented the statistics and funding involved and what will be exhausted in 2024-2025. Laura Grassia will provide updates at future meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

ODHH Hearing Loss Expo

In Melissa Hawkins' absence, Kay Tyberg informed the members the Hearing Loss Expo will be held in October 2023. The details of the expo will be released by ODHH. A discussion followed about whether TRS/PUC Advisory Board will have a table to recruit new public members.

Eric Jeschke – PUC Annuitant

Eric is serving as a part-time PUC annuitant temporarily for the remainder of the year. The Board welcomed Eric back out of retirement.

September Meeting Date

Amy G. brought our attention to the next board meeting in September stating she has a conflict due to another board meeting. Discussion followed

with possible dates in September and the board agreed to meet Wednesday, September 13, 2023, for our third quarter meeting.

Thomas C. suggested our future meetings be held virtually due to room restriction logistics and the need for sign language interpreters and CART. Once we acquire additional public members we will return to in-person meetings.

TRS/PUC Bylaws

Discussion followed on when and if the bylaws were reviewed and accepted. On or about March 21, 2023, an e-mail with one change in the bylaws was recommended; "deaf blind" should be one word, "deafblind". The Board approved this change by e-mail. Amy made a motion to ratify the electronic vote accepting this change, seconded by Christa and passed unanimously. This action finalizes the 2023 TRS/PUC Bylaws.

Election of Officers

The election of officers is held in June. According to the bylaws, only public members can hold office. Amy Goldman will become chair and Kay Tyberg secretary.

Tiffany T. reminded board members should anyone want to revisit the election issue once we have further recruitment, there is a provision of the bylaws allowing for an officer to resign their position and the board chair would then convene a special meeting to hold an election to fill the vacant officer's position.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments or questions.

2023 Meeting Dates

The remaining 2023 TRS/PUC Advisory Board will be conducted:
Wednesday, September 13, 2023 (new date) via videoconference
Wednesday, December 6, 2023 via videoconference

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Tyberg, Secretary

Attachments:

July 17, 2023 Memorandum to Commissioners
ODHH Hearing Loss Expo Flyer
Joe Witmer's Broadband Presentation

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