

**NEBRASKA TRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**January 21, 2016, 1:30 p.m. CDT**

**Location: Nebraska Public Service Commission**

**300 The Atrium, 1200 N Street**

**Lincoln, Nebraska.**

The Nebraska Telecommunications Relay Advisory Committee met on January 21, 2016 at the Public Service Commission Hearing Room in Lincoln, Nebraska.

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Tami Richardson-Nelson. The following committee members were present at the meeting:

Tami Richardson-Nelson  
Commissioner Tim Schram  
Albert Sparks  
Norm Weverka

**Introduction of Guests:**

From the Commission, Nichole Mulcahy, Gene Hand and Steve Stovall; from the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH), John Wyvill; Representing Sprint Communications, Emma Danielson, Sprint Relay Program Manager and Peter Seiler, Outreach Specialist. From the public, Karen Weverka. Jamy Elker and Kelly Brackenhoff interpreted the meeting.

**Election of New Officers:**

Motion by Norm Weverka to retain existing officers Tami Richardson-Nelson as chair and Kim Remington as vice-chair of the committee. Albert Sparks seconded. Motion approved.

**Approval of the Agenda:**

Motion by Norm Weverka, seconded by Albert Sparks, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion approved.

**Approval of the Minutes of January 17, 2014 meeting:**

Motion by Commissioner Schram, seconded by Albert Sparks to approve the minutes as presented. Motion approved.

**Chairperson's Comments:**

Tami Richardson-Nelson welcomed Norm Weverka to the committee. Also, this is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sprint's involvement with relay service.

**Public Service Commission Comments:**

- 1. Updated Relay Statistics (Gene Hand/Steve Stovall).** Gene Hand shared historical and projected call volume and cost data with the committee. Steve Stovall presented three forecast scenarios based on either the two or one-cent surcharge levels.
- 2. Equipment Program Update (Steve Stovall).** Steve Stovall indicated that forecast assumptions in both services (traditional and CapTel relay) and the NSTEP program have been revised downward based on a review of historical trends.
- 3. Determination of Surcharge for July 1, 2016 Assessment Period.** Steve Stovall informed the committee the staff recommendation to the Commission would be for the surcharge to remain at its current two-cents (\$.02) for FY 2016-2017. Motion by Norm Weverka, seconded by Albert Sparks, to recommend to the Commission that the monthly surcharge remain at the current two-cent (\$.02) level effective July 1, 2016. Motion approved. Tami-Richardson-Nelson, as chair of the committee, agreed to provide a letter to the Commission documenting the Committee's recommendation.

Comments received from Norm Weverka regarding broadband service availability in rural areas. Gene Hand provided some background on activities at the FCC level and the Nebraska NUSF fund that should provide additional financial resources to increase service availability. A discussion of broadband speeds to premise and Gene Hand shared what the current broadband speed requirement is for CAF II funding.

Tami-Richardson-Nelson discussed possible changes to the NSTEP program that could be proposed at the next legislative session. One area of emphasis will be proposing the five-year wait for NSTEP reapplication period be revised to three years. Concerns regarding the one recipient per household rule were also discussed.

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

John Wyvill indicated that Norm Weverka was appointed September 11, 2015 to replace Steven Manning. Commissioner Tim Schram and Kim Remington were reappointed March 6, 2015. Diana McIntosh submitted her resignation per email notification to Steve Stovall on December 7, 2015. There are now two open positions on the committee. John Wyvill indicated that applicants for the open positions on the Advisory Committee are being solicited by the NCDHH Board.

John reported that effective January 1, 2016 all VRI (Video Relay Interpreting) providers must be licensed in the state. John added enforcement actions are a part of this new law.

#### **Sprint Telecommunications Comments:**

Emma Danielson gave a presentation to update the committee on recent activities and outreach plans for Sprint in 2016.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:**

Tami agreed to work with NCDHH, the PSC and the community in drafting ideas for the next legislative session affecting the NSTEP program.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Next Meeting:**

Meeting adjourned at 3:23 p.m. by Tami Richardson-Nelson.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steven G. Stovall - Staff Accountant  
Nebraska Public Service Commission  
March 21, 2016