

**TRS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**December 3, 2025**

**In Attendance:**

Amy Goldman, TRS Advisory Board Chairperson

Sandi McNally, Assistant Director, TechOwl, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University

Melissa Hawkins, Director, PA Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Allison LaBrie, PA Account Manager, CapTel and TRS, Hamilton Relay

Spencer Nahf, PUC, Bureau of Technical Utility Services

Derek Sharp, PUC, Bureau of Technical Utility Services

Denise McCracken, PUC, Office of Communications

Laura Grassia, TDDP Program Manager, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University

Thad Graham, Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton Relay

Tiffany Tran, PUC, Law Bureau

Jessica Bentley- Sassaman, interpreter

Rosalind Brown, interpreter

Thomas Charles, PUC, Director Office of Communications

Marc Hoffer, PUC, Bureau of Technical Utility Services

>>AMY GOLDMAN: We will start in about two minutes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning, everyone.

>>SPEAKER: Good morning!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning! So, that was weird. Teams signed me out. Anyway, thank you all for joining this morning at our last TRS advisory board meeting of 2025. How is that possible? I am going to go through a roll call and then ask anyone who has not been present previously to identify themselves. When you say here, please turn your microphone and your video on. So, we will start with board members, myself Amy Goldman, I am the chair and a public member. Next on my list is Sandi McNally.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Hello, Sandi McNally, Inst. on disabilities.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning. Melissa Hawkins?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Good morning, everybody. This is Melissa Hawkins. With the office of the deaf and hard of hearing.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning. Allison LaBrie?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: This is Allison LaBrie, Pennsylvania relay account manager from Hamilton relay.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning. We did hear from Steve Samara that he will not be able to attend today. And then we have a whole lot of staff and guests. So, Eric Jeschke, are you on this morning? Melissa Derr?

>>SPEAKER: Melissa and Eric will not be here. I will be representing them today.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. Spencer?

>>SPENCER NAHF: I am here.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. Matt Hrivnak? Denise McCracken?

>>DENISE McCRACKEN: Good morning, I am here.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning. Tom Giannantonio? I hope he was not here for me to Whitcher his name. Derek Sharp?

>>DEREK SHARP: I am here. Bobbie Anderson? Christian McDewell? Aaron Margolis? Don Paul Rogers? Riley Schaeffer? David Screven? Goal Cheskis? Kayla Rost? Laura Grassia?

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Yes, good morning.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Jenny Pearson? Thad Graham?

>>THAD GRAHAM: Good morning everybody.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning. Tiffany Tran?

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Good morning, I am here.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning. And our sign language interpreter is Jessica and Roslyn. And I assume we have CART. Who is CART?

Okay, anybody who I did not call? Could you please make yourself known with your name and affiliation.

>>SPEAKER: Hello, I am Thomas Charles, office of communications, I work with Denise and I also wanted to note that Joel Cheskis is no longer with the commission, he is with the office of consumer advocates.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, I did see that date somewhere, but -

>>TIFFANY TRAN: One sure, thank you all.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Anybody else?

>>SPEAKER: My name is Marc Hoffer, technical utility services. Hello.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Anybody else here? Well, welcome, all. So, chairpersons report - you may have seen in the email that Kay Tyberg has resigned from her membership in this board. We will discuss later how we can acknowledge her many years of service and adding to new business when we get there is appointment of a secretary. So - we do not want that pop up. Okay.

Also I wanted to note that we did receive an application and it is being reviewed by the commission in accordance with our bylaws, thank you, Tiffany. I am particularly impressed with his resume, background - he is a person who is deaf/blind. Those of you who know ushers syndrome. And so the plan is to wait for the commission to take action on this appointment and then we will hope we welcome him in our March 2026 meeting. Also, Kathy Zimmerman has helped in the past as an interpreter and again we welcome her replacement, Rosalind Brown. And as we heard, Joel Cheskis who had been a regular guest is no longer working for the chairman office and is working in the office of the consumer advocate.

So, just as a reminder, again - please, if you want to speak, unmute your audio, open your camera and state your first name before speaking so that we can capture who you are. I will call on people when I see - hopefully I can see a and raised and speak slowly. To ensure accuracy, when we vote, if we vote, please raise your hand and say yay or nay. And we will do that with time to respond.

Okay, secretary report. One of Kay 's last actions was to send the draft minutes to us from

the September 3 meeting. I like the new abbreviated format and I wanted to hear a motion to approve or if there are any additions/corrections or discussion of the September 2025 meeting minutes.

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: This is Melissa, sorry I could not unmute myself. I make a motion to approve the minutes. Whatever, sorry -

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you for the motion, Melissa. Is there a second?

>>SANDI McNALLY: This is Sandi. I second.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you. All in favor? Of approving the minutes as submitted? Say or indicate, aye.

(MULTIPLE SPEAKERS)

aye.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sandi, aye, who else?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Allison.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And me. So, we only have one, two, three, four members present. So, the motion passes.

Okay, I am going to turn it over to Laura and Sandi to give the TDDP report.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Good morning. This is Laura Grassia, program manager of the telecommunication device distribution program. I submitted a document for the report and that it was July 1 through September 30 of 25. Our first fiscal quarter. And just some highlights. We have been receiving way more applications than last year and so I think that is a wonderful thing. Philadelphia, of course is our breadwinner with 28 applications and I can attest to having good relationships with our vision agencies and also OPR 's office wanting these services and that is where most of the applications are coming from. I am also working with the ATRAC to maximize their outreach efforts so really honing in on places that can refer folks in need instead of fruitless efforts from the past. And so 62% of applicants who are 65 years and older, we had 101 eligible applicants. And so that is a really great start to the year, I think. Ineligible applicants were about eight and so we are still seeing the same type of folks you know the same type of reasons for ineligibility. So, over income, a request for work or school and so we can only provide equipment to folks who are in home or in the community and so we had three people applied to soon and one person had a nonqualifying disability and that was a mental health disability that did not affect their use of the phone. It did not impact the use of telecommunications. And also, another application reflected that the device was not going to be used for telecom. And so we get a few applications every year for folks who want an iPad for regulation and that would be with autism spectrum disorder and so they would listen to music or play games or things like that. You know the screen type of thing to relax someone. Some people call it doom scrolling here but, unfortunately that is not a good use of our program and so they were referred out - and with the applications received we also have incomplete applications and so 20 is a pretty big number and that is just because folks - their service coordinator says I will submit your application and then you know you provide the documents. Send them to this address or something. And there is a little bit you know the folks in that situation need a little bit more help hence the service coordinator. So, we are

trying to convince the service chlorinator's to send incomplete applications and that way they do not go inactive or incomplete or something like that. So, more education all around.

So, 80 recipients received equipment from this quarter - and so really trying to turn all of those zeros to a number. And in the first quarter we are at a good start right here. And I would say more than 1/4. So, always on the sunny side! So, those 80 unduplicated consumers, they received 86 pieces of equipment and three of the consumers received both wireline equipment and wireless equipment. And so I gave a breakdown of the equipment distributed and I wanted to note that I added a price differential here. So, Amy, this is for you. Because, I know that you love data. So, the price percent plus or minus I know that looks a little bit funny. But, this indicates the increase of price for the new fiscal year. So, we did a competitive bid for equipment vendors over the summer and in the end of spring/summer to have a new price list and equipment list for the new fiscal year. We do this every five years. So, 2025 is you know every five years is not even, but the 20, the 25, the 30s, yes - and so I'm not surprised, but some folks may be surprised that most of the landline equipment has increased. Some, double. And this is the prices of the equipment due to tariffs. The Captel phones have increased just because of shipping costs and so 1% is a dollar. And so that is okay. If you noticed we did not even give out any caption telephones unfortunately. We have just been - we have just had a lot of blind and low vision folks applying. And note that some wirelessly Quitman has decreased in price. So, the iPhone 16 E is what we are offering for the new year and it decreased from that 15 that was in the \$1200 range for every piece and now we are in the thousand dollars per piece. And so I thought that was very interesting. And I also included the amount of money, the dollars that each wireline, 11 devices vs. our 75 devices for wireless equipment. And so \$1675 for a traditional landline equipment and 78,000 for wireless equipment. And that just goes to show what is popular right now and what people need. So, Amy, if you get a chance, that extra column is for you. I will try to put in a little bit more glare for the next time. I know that numbers are going to some folks.

So, recipients, 65 and older - 50 folks were 65 or older who received equipment. And now we are onto our consumer education and we had a total of almost 3000 folks this past quarter with 20 - so, reaching 12 counties with the new increase, but what is really great is the underserved populations. And so for new folks, each ATRC or resource Center picks a group of people that they would consider underserved. And so in my region it is always deaf and hard of hearing people, because we have a very low device distributed the folks with hearing disabilities. And in some areas it is classroom students and those ages could be ages six through 21 which is the transition age for folks or for students that have IEP's and things like five affords and things like that.

So, we have Asian communities and also veterans. These are the underserved communities and we have great activities for those folks. Whether they were exposed tabling events or presentations and I also did one statewide event, I attended the Pennsylvania State Association for the deaf in Penn State over summer and that was a really awesome - it is kind of cool to see people that you know and sign with folks and meet new people. So, that

was really fun. I am going to skip through a little bit here on some of the other highlights, 78% was for low-vision and 14 was for hearing and eight was for other disabilities. So, physical, cognitive disabilities and speech disabilities. We had 19 folks request support with their devices that they received from us and that totaled 22 hours of set up training or troubleshooting and 100% survey response, because we asked of them right then and there in person and 89% were highly satisfied. I do like to mention the folks that are not satisfied, they usually pick the wrong phone and do not request a demonstration or the equipment they wanted is a little too complicated and so we try to refer them to folks - agencies and service coordinators to assist them further. We do have that up to two hours for each person that we can offer. So, total outreach efforts reached almost 29,000 Pennsylvanians and satisfaction surveys were awesome, just because it was summer and I had the time recall folks and 91% were highly satisfied. So, those numbers are for you, Amy. And so I will add that for under new business I will be chatting about the proposed rulemaking for the modernization of TRS. So, it is exciting and scary and I hope that as an advisory board counsel that you would want to submit a comment to the FFC and so we can get into that, but thank you so much and I am out!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you for that report and for the additional data. I really appreciate it. And I found the pricing very telling and interesting on many levels. Are there any other questions or comments on Laura's report?

Okay, hearing none, we will get back to you in new business. Thank you, Laura. Okay, Pennsylvania really report. Allison?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Hello. This is Allison. First off, if you have any issues hearing me, just let me know. They are replacing siding on the house and it should filter out the noise, but sometimes it over compensates and filters me out, too! So, sorry - all right, here is Hamilton's report. This is covering through October of 2025. This first slide just tells us the services that are provided to Pennsylvania. If you have questions about any of these, I am sure Thad would love to give you all of the information - I volunteer him.

This slide is the TRS percent answered in 10 seconds over the last two years. We stick around 97% average and including this last quarter and we were happy about that and the requirement is 85% in 10 seconds and we are still surpassing that.

The next, this is the CapTel percent answered in 10 seconds again over the last two years. A really nice 100% over that entire time at which is good to see. And we are happy about that.

This slide is the TRS session and conversation minutes over the last two years. We have that blue line showing the session minutes and the pink or purple depending on your screen is conversation minutes. We are seeing a little bit of a decline over the last order, but nothing too scary right now . A pretty sharp drop off from September to October, but I do believe that we go up a little bit in November. I have not seen the final numbers yet. So, not surprising TRS is a service that we are seeing declined usage across the country.

This slide is the CapTel session and conversation minutes. Again, last two years and again, session minutes is the blue line and conversations is the pink/purple. We are staying fairly steady on this over the last even six months. There has not been a drastic change in that time which is interesting. Still a little bit of a decline, but not like we see in other states and

so definitely still have a good amount of CapTel usage happening in Pennsylvania.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Allison, this is Amy. Could you just again clarify the distinction between session minutes and conversation minutes?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Yes, absolutely. So, for CapTel you can see that there is not a huge difference in that, that is because session minutes is the time not a CA is on a call, a captioner or communication assistant depending on if it is TRS or CapTel and conversation minutes is the time that the call is actually happening. So, it is after they have connected to whoever they are trying to talk to. And so in CapTel there is not much of a difference, because that happens simultaneously whereas with TRS you have the time with the dialing and sometimes they are just trying to reach customer service and so there is a whole thing there. But, that is the big difference whether it is conversation when they are talking to who they are wanting to talk to end the session is the whole call. Beginning to end, from when they connect to relay.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you for the clarification. Because - I was having a hard time understanding why the line was the same.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Yes, that is why. So, for the next slide, this is the CapTel phones that were actually used in the last 12 months and of course the last quarter almost exactly 75 I think we dropped to 74 is what you see in October, but otherwise saying exactly the same and this is still pretty high for what I am seeing in other states. So, CapTel is definitely still very valuable in Pennsylvania and definitely seeing a lot of usage.

This slide is the quality scores for it says most recent month, that would be October. They are looking good, I will not read every number here, but they have that 99% quality average and right around 82 words per minute and 98% accuracy and so that is amazing to see well above what we ask of them which is 60 words per minute and words are hard when there is a lot of noise in the background! But, happy with this and happy with the work that our CA 's are doing and so the next slide, this is CapTel quality scores and again, October, this looks a little bit different than it has in the past. They have changed how they are doing their quality metrics in CapTel and so this is a sampling of all of the calls with the total errors divided by the word count. And so right now we have a .86 error percent rate and we require less than 2%. And so we are doing good here. It is good to see. If you have questions about the change here, I am happy to explain a little bit further.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Allison, this is Amy again. So, if you would go back one slide. Yes. So, these are your different centers?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Yes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And so how is a call routed to which center?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: So, we have what is called dynamic call routing and so when a call comes in to relay it is automatically routed to an available CA at any center. So, it could go - it is just based on who is available. It could be someone at any center at any given time, it could deem random if you were to try to track, but that is what is done. When they come in, it automatically goes to the first available CA wherever they may be.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, it is not because we are in Pennsylvania it will go to Maryland.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Right.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And the next question I have and maybe this has to do with the modernization which is these are all human beings that are transcribing - TRS? Yes. These are all people. For CapTel, it is both. It is called CA assisted and so I will come back to this one. And so how these calls work is that there is a automated voice recognition doing a speech to text and then there is a CA watching and listening and correcting any errors that are coming across. So, it is a little bit of both on that one. We used to have CapTel with - it was called re-voicing where someone would sit on the call and repeat everything into a speech recognition and now we have the automated system that does not which makes the captions come across a lot faster, but that we do have a CA knitting there correcting any of the -- we do have a CA sitting there correcting any of the errors that come across.

>>THAD GRAHAM: I just wanted to add to that, Amy, the corrections on the screen, the user will see them and they can actually pick the color so they will see that there was a corrected statement or corrected word so they know that yes, this is what they actually meant.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: That is cool. Thank you.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Thank you. It is really cool. Before I came over and did account management I worked in CapTel and so it is interesting to see how much the technology has changed from when I was doing it. Laura?

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Yes, this is Laura from TDDP. I just had a quick question - so, CA assisted - so, there is no option just for AI like a completely private call and when did CA assisted begin? Because I don't know it was explained to me that if you called and wondered if you had the call you could pick CA and then that would be the real person in between and then you can pick AI or another term that would be completely like no person in the middle.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Yes. That -

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Sorry!

>>ALLISON LABRIE: You are okay! That is for the IP-based phones. So, the Internet once, you get to choose. So, any of the ones where new or in the digital you can choose to do the full ASR only with new CA involved. PSTN you do not get a choice.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: So, PSTN -

>>ALLISON LABRIE: That would be analog.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Is that when it is switched with the DSL filter through like DSL or is this like on the line?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: I can tell that Thad really want to answer this question.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: I can tell that sad really want to answer this question.

>>THAD GRAHAM: I was actually - I am not sure on that one to be honest with you. I can tell you that when it comes to the analog phones that it is what it is. I don't think of switches or changes with the DSL filters or anything like that. I would have to double check that. I was just going to follow up and also say that with the Internet-based phones, individuals also have the option of switching mid conversation from automatic to assisted captioning on you know there CapTel phone or the application, as well. So, if they're using just the automated and they are getting something funky and they are not sure, they have the option of switching mid conversation to get those corrections, as well. So, they can get like

you said not fully you know private conversation, no person whatsoever. And if for some reason it is being screwy today, they can switch over and get the assisted with the CA as well in mid conversation.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Okay, so then like IP, CapTel is CA only and then assisted CA and then ASR, there is like three options now? C7 say that one more time.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Just the two.

>>THAD GRAHAM: Yes, just the two.

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Sorry, backing up!

>>THAD GRAHAM: You are good. It is either CA assisted or voice to text. So, those two options. The Internet-based having the option to switch between the two and the analog and no Internet, there just getting the assisted. And they have the person, I believe.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Right. So, that is - this is for the 840+ model is what you mean, that is only CA and yes, I just got confused because it said that it was CA assisted like basically on the 840+. Is that what you meant? Or did I hear it wrong like I may have heard it wrong.

>>THAD GRAHAM: Sorry, I was running a back through my head. I believe so. I will be honest with you that I have to verify a double check just because most people that I'm talking to are getting the Internet-based phones and so they have the option you know to switch back and forth and honestly if I am talking about analog I'm usually referring to you guys to get the device. I would have to double check on that to verify for certain exactly how that is done in the background. And I can help get back an email that to you or I can send it out to everyone if everyone else wants to know, as well. Before yes, I just want to be sure I am telling the consumer is the right thing.

>>THAD GRAHAM: I completely get it.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Especially the analog because we do get some applications for them but their phone line does not match up and so I cannot get them out. And so that would be great. I will follow-up with you because I have to email you anyway about something else.

>>THAD GRAHAM: Perfect!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: This is Amy. Pranay, why don't you email the clarification to everybody.

>>THAD GRAHAM: I can do that.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Who might be totally confused by the conversations. (LAUGHTER).

>>LAURA GRASSIA: I am sure! I did not mean to!

>>THAD GRAHAM: Laura and I know exactly what we are talking about here!

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Exactly!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. Allison. Would you like to continue?

>>ALLISON LABRIE: Yes. This is Allison. So, we may have lost half the class there, but that is okay. I actually got this same question at another meeting with the state once and I had to call people and the like can you explain this to me like I am five and that is the only reason I know like I found what I'm talking about. I mean I do, I just am not great with all of the different phone models and I mixed them all up somehow. And it is a good thing that it is Thad 's job and not mine. Anyway - so, this slide is our customer care contact for the last order. Most of the calls are the wrong number hang up, but we see a scattering elsewhere I guess you could say. Not much to say about them - they are how to replace or receive a

relay call in that general information category. Otherwise, asking about equipment, changing profile and external complaints are when they are calling us and they mean to call like Verizon or something like that. This slide is the CapTel customer care contact. We have only had two this order and one asking for help setting up a phone and to the other just asking for information. We still will accept any call that comes in. The lines are open. And next if Thad is ready I am ready unless there are any questions for me. Seeing none - Thad, but to you.

>>THAD GRAHAM: Good morning, everybody. Let me turn my camera on here. Good morning, everybody. So, I will be both myself and Jenny again this quarter and so right now I am myself. So - as you can see, quite a few pictures on the screen there appeared in the middle this is my youngest son, his name is Reese. He attended one of the Philadelphia and actually he attended every Philadelphia event with me this quarter that we are discussing paired he loves hanging out. And that photo is at the HLAA walk for hearing in LA this past quarter. This was very busy when it comes to TRS outreach. It was probably my biggest and most busy quarter I have had ever. We went from one end of the state to the other and I truly do mean that and I participated in several major senior expos and one in Scranton and we also attended the Jefferson County area agency on aging senior affair as well as the Pennsylvania assistive technology foundations bilingual resources fair that was located in Philadelphia and that picture is actually in the top left and we were actually at the church where they filmed the first Rocky movie. One of the scenes from the Rocky movie. We were right in front of the window. Did not know anything about it until one of the singers came out and explained it to me and my son. It was really cool. We also joined a representative Zachary Mako for his senior Expo up in Cherryville and also hosted a information table at the crescent senior center in Cambria County. They have their own open house and healthcare, as well that I was able to attend.

I was able to present and share resources for attendees at the southwestern Pennsylvania area agency on aging, senior Expo which was located in Washington, PA. And I was also able to attend the Western Pennsylvania school for the deaf hear they had a community block party and you will see those photos in the bottom right in the bottom left and I was able to attend that event and I was able to talk with a lot of people and they also had a petting zoo. Those animals were adorable.

Across the state I was able to connect with diverse audiences and seniors and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as community professionals across the Commonwealth and was able to strengthen relationships with the community and reinforce PA Relay commitment to Pennsylvanians having access to reliable telecommunication resources. Overall it was a very busy month or a very busy quarter and we got a lot of outreach on. Any questions on outreach for that quarter? No hands? Okay, perfect. I will say that October was insane, September and October I swear I was not home for more than a day before I was gone again. It was a great few months.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I'm glad you had company on your travels point.

>>THAD GRAHAM: Yes, my son loves going with me on those weekend trips and he loves going to explore Philadelphia and some of the studies you know we live right outside of

state college and so for him it is really different. And Pittsburgh you know that is normal, he gets to see that really often and Harrisburg, no big deal, Bautista, he loves it.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you for the report.

>>THAD GRAHAM: You are welcome. Moving onto the CT S reports and now I am Jenny. She did have some - two senior expos, one in Philadelphia on 9.18 and one in Lehigh Valley on 11.19 and she was able to attend and she also had two sponsorship presentations to Pro aging sourcebook and they were webinars on both October 1 and October 16 and then also a major event in Pittsburgh in November that I am just going to throw it in there because she has a photo on there which was the Omnium circus. It was a really really cool event and she is excited for the Philadelphia circus which is in spring of 26. And then of course we also have a for both of us, TRS and CTRS, the PA farm show coming up here in January and we are really excited to be attending that. She also has some ongoing outreach with positive aging discussions, website ads and joint webinars to be scheduled the are a continuation of the Pro aging sourcebook / webinars and presentations and ads.

I also want to throw this out there, if you are living in the Lehigh Valley, please, if you know someone that receives resources for or from the Meals on Wheels, Pennsylvania TRS and CTRS are sponsoring the Christmas suite to treat and so for everyone who receives the Meals on Wheels, the pie or dessert will be sponsored by Pennsylvania TRS and CTRS and it is to reach I believe 300 individuals and they will have and a half sheet on the program that comes with each and every you know sweet treat or their dessert. So, we are really excited to see how that goes. Any questions?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I was just going to comment that that is a very interesting strategy.

>>THAD GRAHAM: We thought it was different and we wanted to see how it works.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: How much does it cost?

>>THAD GRAHAM: Allison, it was split 50-50 and so it was like \$1500 total and then it was split between TRS and CTRS and it comes with social media advertising and all sorts of other fun stuff. We are excited. It was different and it was a way that we can give back and to be able to see if it worked.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I look forward to hearing more about its success.

So, any questions for Thad or Thad a.k.a. Jenny?

Okay, thank you.

>>THAD GRAHAM: Thank you, very much.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, we will move right along to new business and I am going to ask Laura to talk to us about the TRS modernization.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Okay, this is Laura from TDDP and so I attended the November 20th meeting that was online for the FCC and it was a notice of proposed rulemaking for TRS. And I found the meeting to be absolutely - it was enthralling, I would say. I found that the commissioners that were there, Brandon Carr and Olivia Trusty you know there were concerns, they matched our concerns in a way that are for access technology and thinking of people. So, that is what I think is going to be the difference if people can comments and think about the people that use the service and not just the technology side I think that is where we will win here. But, basically what they are proposing is to retire TTY. Retired TRS

services. And move towards Internet protocol. And there are pluses and minuses you know positives and negatives to anything, obviously - and so I think they are - they are thinking about the alternative to TTY relay and they are also going to address TTY relay abuse and other concerns and I do hope that those other concerns include the price point for some folks. Because, if you discontinue analog, TTY, you would have to have a Internet something. And so either a wireless cell phone service - a hotspot or Internet at the home. And so apparently there are - there is not a program to discount Internet right now or broadband that was not refreshed or renewed in Congress and we all know that as the affordable connectivity program. I had done some research prior and Internet can start at \$80 a month and that is not affordable some folks . I am not sure if they are going to be made to pay this, because that is the way that somebody would use this type of equipment that you would use with others.

We also - you know what are the alternatives to captioned telephone services? And they had addressed speech speech relay - and I really think that in order for this to be successful, there would have to be education to teach folks that there is an alternative on a cell phone called real-time text. And I am a realist here. And so a few years back I had attended the hearing loss Expo in Harrisburg and it was the first time I ever went. I think it was in 2019. And when we, my colleague and I were showing folks our TT, it did not really catch on that well. And it is still really not as known. And so I think education, especially from the EDP in Pennsylvania and maybe even Hamilton relay or CapTel, that can be some type of solution. And so what they are requesting of the FCC is comment. And currently - I did and tout this notice of proposed rulemaking. There are already comments from previous orders and you know you see them from other EDPs and advisory councils and so Virginia and Maryland and they are based on the TRS side of things. And so I am hoping that the PUC would support commenting and would support this group to comment on why it is important to have a way for folks enroll areas and nonmetro areas and folks that are surrounded by the state parks that cannot get Internet or have shoddy Internet or have in the Valley like there is nothing and you know there is definitely some dark areas - hopefully you know related to connectivity. And so hopefully the PUC would help us submit a comment and you know we are looking for solutions and we are looking for folks to be able to call emergency services and if they did get rid of TTY without an alternative, then they would not be able to call 911. PSAPs which are the emergency beacons and so Philadelphia has one and you can actually real-time text 911 and I am not sure if that is going to be widely available yet in rural areas. And I do see Tiffany here. Please chime in. I am sure that you are a little bit more eloquent - I have not had my 3rd cup of coffee yet.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Yes, this is Tiffany, attorney from the PUC as some of you know. I appreciate Laura going over the TRS modernization order from the FCC. And just as a point of clarification, the way that the TRS advisory board, this body is constituted, it is intended to advise the commission. This is the same as the consumer advisory Council which is another advisory board of the commission. So, in that sense, traditionally, the CAC and the TRS board have been able to submit comments to commission proceedings concerning - concerning PA PUC hearings with the relay service or in the case of the AC, consumer

issues. So, the commission itself is developing comments to be filed and what I'm trying to get to is that the TRS board - excuse me - I have not had a drink of water lately. The TRS board is not able to submit comments directly to the FCC. But, the TRS board can advise the commission on what it would likely commission to include in the commission comments to the FCC. We are in that process and what I would recommend is that the board you know get together and maybe put together an email or letter and send it to myself, Tom or Charles or Denise stating that they would like certain issues addressed in the city can do this the better. The comments are in development. So - I know it is a busy time of year, but maybe we can get it done in the next week and a half and I'm sorry to put you on a time crunch like that, but it is just the timeframe. Laura, you seem to have some great ideas about what you would like to see. So, if you guys could get together and come up with a consensus document to send to us. We will take that into consideration when putting together our comments to the FCC and of course when it comes time for us to file we will share our comments, the PUC comments to the TRS modernization order.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: That is great. Sorry - I just want to add that I really appreciate that, because this is like a storm in my head. Because, I see folks being abandoned the are in need and vulnerable and then I see like the opportunity for technology like and of course our manufacturers of phone equipment, of analog phone agreement and I don't is the analog, wireline equipment, are not making new things. They are discontinuing things. And right now, if you did plug in your TTY like I have not figured out a way to Frankenstein this phone. And it is kind of funny, because even Microsoft Teams has a TTY function or option in accessibility, but how? Because, it is digital. It is voice over IP. It is IP. And IP and TTY do not mix. And so I am super excited about this. And I do look forward to sending something and also working with the TEDPA and NASRA and TEDPA is the telephone equipment division (SP?) and we have about 39 states that are members and yes, we are just excited to hopefully have a voice in this and kind of make a solution, because those folks, they are calling and it is garbled or static and their message - their voice is not being heard. Air quotes. So, thank you appeared I appreciate that.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Sure. And to make another thing clear, there is nothing that prevents any member of the TRS board from submitting comments to the FCC in their individual capacity. So, I'm just picking, Amy Goldman wants to file comments to the FCC as Amy Goldman, that is fine. But, otherwise the TRS board cannot file their own comments, but they can advise the commission on what they would like to see in the commission's comments. And we would welcome your input. We really would and that is why you are here. To help us understand what it is you are concerned about so that we have these proceedings and we can adequately represent your concerns.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, thank you.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Sure. And as a side note while I have the floor I would like to say thank you to Thad and Laura for both presenting to the consumer advisory Council about relay service and the equipment programs because of the Council, the CAC had some questions about that whole process and it was very informative and we had good feedback and the councilmembers were pleased and I appreciate both Thad and Laura to take the time to

outreach and educate our consumer advisory Council on TRS.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Thank you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, I'm going to ask Sandi who is a member to work with Laura as her consultant to draft something for me to then look at and send to Melissa and Steve. And that would be the sum total of members. And I think that could be a great way to let the PUC know of our A, concerns and B, interest in helping.

All right. Thank you. Thank you, very much. Critical topic. For people with disabilities.

Okay, so continuing with new business. As I mentioned, Kay has retired due to unfortunate circumstances with her family that needs her. So, how can we best recognize her very long service to this body as well as - well - we can only recognize her service to this body. But, we do totally appreciate her lifelong advocacy on behalf of people who are deaf and hard of hearing. New Mexico, one recommendation may be to have the PUC do a letter of appreciation or accommodation, something like that?

>>DENISE McCracken: That is one thing that we can certainly do. Create certificate with her name on on behalf of the commission and TRS advisory board and have the chairman sign it and you know how it - obsolete printed on very nice paper and in a nice older and have it mailed to her and we do have her address. So, something like that. And if there are other ideas we certainly welcome them on behalf of the advisory board.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Certainly important for us to do. Yes. Anybody have any other ideas? Well, if you could carry that forward for us, Denise. We would really appreciate that.

>>DENISE McCracken: Absolutely.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you.

Okay, so two other things - additions to the new business - we need a secretary. I assume that the secretary needs to come from the membership of the board, of the advisory committee and we could ask Steve because he is not here - and again, the members are myself, I already have a job, thank you for this board - Sandi, Melissa, Allison or Steve. So, Tiffany, comment?

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Yes.

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: It is not voluntary - but, I apologize that I cannot support - because my job, I am probably in three meetings right now as it is and I myself - it would just not allow me the time that needs to be dedicated and so I want to apologize that I cannot do it.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Understood. Tiffany? You had some bylaws clarification?

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Yes. Under the bylaws, the only members of the TRS board who can serve as officers are public members who do not serve as part of institutions - so, this is why for so long we had just Amy and Kay switching positions because nobody else could take those positions. So, this is why we are so glad to have received an application from a member of the public and our hope is that this member will be approved by the commission and will be available as a potential officer at the first quarter meeting in 2026. So, at present, unfortunately, Amy you are the only person who can hold an officer position at the TRS board which is why we are really hopeful in trying to recruit more people and we are so glad that we have applicants, because that will make this situation a little less of a problem than it is right now. So, that is where we are right now and unfortunately - Melissa

I love that you would be interested in serving and appreciate that you cannot, but you do not have to apologize, simply because of your particular affiliation, you cannot actually serve as an officer of the TRS board. And I can see that Sandi has a question I don't know if that is for me or for somebody else.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Go ahead, Sandi.

>>SANDRA McNALLY: Hello, this is Sandi. Just a quick one. Are we able to know the name of the person who has applied yet? Or are we not able to know that as of this time?

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Denise, if I am not wrong, wasn't this person referred by a member of the board? Okay, in which case I think it is okay to share the name and this is somebody as my understanding - goodness gracious, served on the board back in - the old days - apparently some time ago. Denise, go ahead and share the name.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Not sure if he served on the board - but, he was involved in the initial legislation with Merrill Phillips and his name is Richard McAen.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Yes, we are reviewing his application and the commission will make his determination of qualifications and hopefully in March they will be on board!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, I have a question for you, Tiffany.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Yes?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, can the transcript suffice as minutes? Because, we have a real-time transcript available to us.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: I will have to give that some thought. I can get back to you about it. I just don't have an answer for that right now. Since we have not run into this situation before. But, I will let you know, we will let you know what we come up with right there. Because, we can certainly appreciate the logistical limitations of the current composition of the Council.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you. And I don't know if you saw the note from Melissa Hawkins that evidently she is involved with other groups that do in fact do that when a real-time transcript is available.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Thank you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And looking forward, Tiffany, to the ruling on that! And this may also be a question for you, Tiffany - so, some confusion in my mind as to whether this board should consider that it operates on the state fiscal year calendar or a calendar - regular calendar calendar. And so in other words, is this than the second quarterly meeting of the state fiscal year? Or is it the fourth quarterly meeting of the calendar year - and I do not remember what our bylaws define as the calendar year. And maybe you have a recollection?

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Let me see. I actually have the bylaws pulled up because I was going to be talking about them. The bylaws refer to calendar year, not fiscal year. So - as I understand, the bylaws we are supposed to have elections I believe on the fourth quarter? And since we don't have enough people to run for the positions - I think that can be delayed until the next quarter where we have sufficient - and you can maintain your position as current.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: It is just a little bit confusing because I know TDDP contractually operates on a state fiscal year and I don't know you know the fiscal years for Hamilton, but

we will continue to operate on the calendar year in accordance with our bylaws. Thank you.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Sure.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And so at this point before we look at the meeting date for I cannot believe 2026 - is there any public comment?

>>THAD GRAHAM: This is Thad. I do have a clarification once public comment is overcome as well.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Just go for it.

>>THAD GRAHAM: I just wanted to make sure. So, I was able to send a message out to one of our technical gurus. He is 99% sure that it is for non-Internet phones, just assisted captions. He is going to verify that for us, but he had that question recently pop up and is 99% sure it is just the CA assisted captions and so there is a CA on those calls, as well and that is the only option for non-Internet caption phones.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you, Thad for getting the answer so expeditiously.

>>THAD GRAHAM: You are welcome. If that changes I will send it out to everybody, but - I trust what he is telling me. He uses these phones more than anybody I know.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. Last call for public comment or other comments two okay, then let's look at the calendars for 2026 - we tend to be March, June, September, December and we tend to be the first Wednesday. So, that would be March 4. And June 3. September 2. And December 2. As far as I know, there is no conflicting holidays - does anybody have comments, questions, conflict? Okay. Then we shall let that be the meeting dates for 2026. All right. Melissa? Are there other March dates that would work for you? The second? The second Wednesday in March?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: With the hearing loss Expo it is just - the hearing loss Expo is the second week of March and I will be losing my mind the first week with all of the details and the stress, because there is an interpreting school conference the weekend before and so - it is nobody's fault it is just my anxiety thinking about the whole details of that month, but if you can do the latter two weeks in March, that would be greatly appreciated. And so if I happen to hear that -

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So like the 18th?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: You said the 18th, right?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Yes.

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: That would be perfect.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, let's go with the 18th, then. Okay.

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Thank you so much.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: You are welcome. We appreciate you sitting this meeting into your busy schedule.

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Good to see you all.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: All right - yes, Denise, March 18, June 3, September and then December. All right, do I hear a motion to adjourn?

>>SANDRA McNALLY: This is Sandi, I moved to a Jordan.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Is there a second?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: This is Melissa, I reckon.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. All in favor, say or indicate aye.

(MULTIPLE SPEAKERS)

aye.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: All right, we are adjourned at 10:51 AM. Happy holidays to you all and see you next year! All right, we will be in touch. Thank you! ☐R



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