

**TRS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 18, 2026**

**In Attendance:**

Amy Goldman, TRS Advisory Board Chairperson  
Paul McGann, TRS Advisory Board Vice Chairperson  
Sandi McNally, Assistant Director, TechOwl, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University  
Melissa Hawkins, Director, PA Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing  
Steve Samara, Pennsylvania Telephone Association  
Laura Grassia, TDDP Program Manager, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University  
Thad Graham, Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton Relay  
Jenny Pearson, PA Relay Captions Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton Relay  
Spencer Nahf, PUC, Bureau of Technical Utility Services  
Derek Sharp, PUC, Bureau of Technical Utility Services  
Denise McCracken, PUC, Office of Communications  
Tiffany Tran, PUC, Law Bureau  
Marc Hoffer, PUC, Bureau of Technical Utility Services  
Thomas Giannantonio, PUC, Bureau of Consumer Services  
Jessica Bentley-Sassaman, interpreter  
Rosalind Brown, interpreter  
Michelle Paonesa  
Jessica Demartino

>>DENISE McCracken: Good morning to those who just joined us! I can see that Rich is connected. I would just like to say hello. This is Denise McCracken. Hello! It looks like we have a frozen screen, but we have a thumbs up! All right, we have a live video now. It is very nice to meet you, this is Denise McCracken speaking now with the PUC. And we do have you on mute right now.

>>SPEAKER: Denise, can you hear me?

>>DENISE McCracken: I can hear Amy, yes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, I do not know why I am getting another sign in screen .

>>DENISE McCracken: Okay, we lost - this is Denise again and we lost Rich and I am thinking maybe they signed off and maybe they are signing back onto work on their audio issue.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: You have to watch those gremlins!

>>DENISE McCracken: And Amy, I still only see one of you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, good, because I ignored the other thing. Who knows!

>>DENISE McCracken: Okay, I can see Rich again. This is Denise McCracken with the PUC. Unfortunately - okay, I think I can hear audio now.

>>SPEAKER: Can you hear our audio now? This is the interpreter speaking. Before we joined it was all frozen and so I am happy that it is working now.

>>DENISE McCracken: This is Denise and I can confirm that we can both see your video and hear the interpreter.

>>SPEAKER: All right!

>>DENISE McCracken: And at this time we will be waiting just a few moments until

everyone joints. And then I will turn it over to our chairperson, Amy Goldman. So, please stand by. Thank you.

>>TIFANNY TRAN: I can see that Sandra is still engaged in the Irish spirit, perhaps!

>>SANDI McNALLY: This is Sandi, yes. I work from home yesterday so I had to wear my regalia today. I am wearing a green sweater and a shamrock scarf and I was just up on Monday, but I was one of the few people in the office and so I am making a last all week!

>>SANDI McNALLY: With a name like McNally you cannot get away with not wearing green!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Well, Denise, do you think that we should get started?

>>DENISE McCracken: This is Denise with the PUC. And yes, I think that we are ready to begin, Amy!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, good morning, everybody -

>>TIFANNY TRAN: I think it looks like Paul is still getting situated so maybe wait a moment for him to settle in.

>>DENISE McCracken: My apologies, thank you, Tiffany.

>>SPEAKER: I am all set.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, good morning everyone. I am Amy Goldman and I served as the chair of the Pennsylvania telephone relay service advisory board. Pleased to welcome you all this morning. Just a few reminders before we get started. Please remember to speak slowly and clearly as we have several interpreters, different modalities on the line. And it is probably a good idea to always speak slowly and clearly. And please remember to say your name before you speak. So, we will start with some introductions and actually, Rich, I would like to start by welcoming you and asked if you want to say a few words of introduction.

>>PAUL McGANN: Yes, first of all, good morning, everyone! My real name is Paul Richard McGann Junior. However, my friends call me Richard. My father and I have the same name and my three sisters all decided to call me by my middle name instead - hold on one second, my door bell is ringing. Give me one second. I'll be right back.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sure, okay.

>>PAUL McGANN: Are, hello again, I apologize. Another interpreter just got here. All right. I am deafblind myself and I was a deafblind assistant for many years, I served many other deaf/ hard of hearing folks back in the day, back in the 1990s when I got involved with the community and with the relay service as well and I did a lot of advocacy work at that time. We worked on a team with AT&T and that was fantastic and I understand that the team has changed to the Hamilton team now, but there are a lot of different situations and environmental shifts at the moment and I am also a care person on the city task force and I am also on the Allegheny County task force for behavioral health as well as ID. Intellectual disabilities. And for the deafblind community as well. So, please be patient with me -

>>SPEAKER: I apologize, this was the interpreter clarifying. I apologize, I don't want to get that wrong -

>>PAUL McGANN: I am a big troublemaker, that was and interpreting errors! So, be patient, apologies! All right, I love helping - I have a huge heart for advocacy and support and I understand technology and the situation with technology, as well. However, it can be so

helpful for blind people and individuals and the only problem is for deaf folks, deaf folks tend to have sidedness and are able to see but cannot hear and so for example blindness separates us from things whereas deafness separates us from people. Meaning that blindness, individuals who are blinded depend on their ears and deaf folks are dependent on their site because we cannot hear, right? And so as deaf blind people we are in that life situation and condition and this is how we use technology to improve these barriers and I advocate for that.

Previously, deaf and hard of hearing relay was available, but not for the deafblind and now finally we do have about eight years ago we finally were able to achieve the caption relay, but it is a different group that is global CRS. And that later with financial issues with the FCC coming along, they asked me to get involved and I ended up reaching out to the FCC and reminding them that the deafblind folks need assistance that way and I am willing to help however there was still be 70% of those who sign whereas the rest of the deafblind folks use their voices. And so we had to again add that support as well. And so we have been going through that process. I used to be involved with the conversation for America for the deafblind I was involved for eight years and I apologize I am now with the national Association for the deafblind and I have been in advocacy for a long time. Recently, it was eight years ago, I got an award and I want a court case and I brought students to a movie theater that would not provide interpreters for me and I was not able to attend and then then you have to use the captions and I said I cannot use captions, there is no braille and I cannot hear and I cannot use headphones and so I said how do I get both captions in braille and at first it was a local soup that I lost and I said no, I am not accepting that. We went to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and I went with my lawyer and I used my technical sign language there and we were able to work together. Five judges at the Circuit Court and we won and they said okay, Cinemark, you're breaking the law.

That is insane! And that open the door for all movie theaters and all Broadway shows with football, baseball games, things like that, different conventions and now they must provide interpreters for the deafblind. So, that is some of my work. Okay?

In addition, I have been involved with one PA senator, Merle Phillips. He has a daughter in Maryland and the daughter has been very helpful for those with disabilities. And he is willing to meet with many people in the Maryland area who communicate with speed and then end up learning more about the situation and using hand braille and print on back signing and eventually came to understand each other. We came back to Pennsylvania and reached out at the Helen Keller national Center for the deafblind and reached out there and then they asked me what this person might need so I provided more resources in that way. And we went back and forth and I saw that they needed all of this different advocacy and these different supports that would help communicate more effectively. You know a free braille and all of these things - and the FCC had set up the national deafblind program. So you can get equipment for the deafblind. That has been here for 10 years now. And now deafblind people do receive the special equipment that we need under I Can connected.org. And that will do the NDB, the national deafblind equipment where you can receive that you commit from. In addition, my wife is here and she manages the Pittsburgh

Catholic diocese for the deaf. And so my wife will go around and interpret and I think that is something that we need to improve, we need to improve further advocacy and support and you know with Pennsylvania we need to see a better SSP program supported. I understand that now we have better FCC support. We need a greater deaf and deafblind support. You know we use video relay and now we need greater advocacy for the SSP. I know things are changing slowly over time and it is very important that we continue the advocacy and support. We need more hours with SSP. There are a lot of things and I hope that you have been able to follow my comments clearly and I want to remind you all that SSP are our ears and eyes and they relay information to us when we are out in the community and that means it is something that we need, we need our eyes and ears to relay communication and information, as well. So - so, hopefully that helps you understand and I hope you follow clearly my comments. Do you have any questions?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: This is Amy. I want to say thank you for your continued advocacy and certainly we appreciate you making time to add another opportunity for advocacy to your schedule. So, we will continue with the introductions.

I am a trained speech language pathologist, but my entire career was focused on people who do not speak. So, people who use technology for communication. So, we are very lucky that several years ago the mandate for the telephone relay services was expanded beyond deaf/hard of hearing and communication impaired so that really any disability that impacts telephone access is now served under the umbrella of the TRS in Pennsylvania. So, let's continue with the members of the board. So, Melissa, would you like to introduce yourself although I have a feeling that you know each other. Oh - Melissa said that she will be right back. Okay, let's go Sandi McNally.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Hello. I am Sandi McNally. I work at the Inst. on disabilities at Temple University and I work with the assistive technology program, as well as the telecommunication device distribution program.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: This is Amy. And you probably know Rich, that the Inst. on disabilities also manages that I can connect. Is Steve Samara here?

>>SPEAKER: I am here. Hello, my name is Steve Samara, I am president of the Pennsylvania telephone Association and I represent all of the local phone companies all across the state and the advisory Board is one of the bodies that the PTA was one of the founding members of way back when and I said in the capacity of helping to - I learned more than I educate, by helping to educate the rest of the Board members on some of the technological changes that are happening in the telephone and telecommunications industry and so I bring that perspective to the Board so that the Board members can understand how easy or difficult it is to implement some of the things that need to be done to implement all of these services. So, that is my role here. So, welcome.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great. Alison, would you like to introduce yourself?

>>DENISE McCracken: Amy, this is Denise. I do not believe Alison was able to attend today.

>>THAD GRAHAM: This is Thad. Yes, Alison is out of the office today.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, Thad, would you like to represent?

>>THAD GRAHAM: I can represent Alison, sure! Would you like me to tell you about Alison? (CHUCKLE).

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Yes, your role on the Board and then speak slowly and clearly.

>>THAD GRAHAM: My name is Thad Graham. I work with Alison. And we handle the contract for the telephone relay service as well as the captain relay in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Alison is the account manager and is on the board. My job here is just to do outreach with help from Jenny Pearson who you will meet in a little bit and our job is to make sure individuals who need access to this program can gain access and understand how to use it and that everyone has access if they needed.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you. Melissa, are you back yet?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Good morning! I hope that you can hear me okay. This is Melissa Harkins and Tran and I know each other very well, I am the director for the office of deaf and hard of hearing and I apologize for not showing my camera. I am still in recovery from the hearing loss Expo last week and I definitely still looked tired, but it is good to see everyone!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, thank you. And I think that is it for the Board members. So, our brother attendees - we have a lot of bold who come from the PUC, the Pennsylvania utility commission who attend. And so if you wanted to begin and introduce yourself and you guys tend to use a lot of abbreviations and so if you could actually say the name of your bureau, that would be great. I cannot see who all is here. Is Spencer here?

>>SPENCER NAHF: Yes, I am here.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, just go through and say your name and your bureau, please.

>>SPENCER NAHF: Okay, my name is Spencer Nahf, supervisor for the Bureau of technical services, the TelCo division. A.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, and Denise who has been our technical support.

>>DENISE McCracken: Yes, good morning, my name is Denise McCracken. I am with the office of communications with the Pennsylvania office of public communication.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, is Derek here?

>>DEREK SHARP: Yes, I am here as well. I am an analyst with the Pennsylvania utilities commission working in the TelCO section. Working with Missy. And still learning!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, welcome! Is Tiffany here?

>>TIFANNY TRAN: Yes, good morning. This is Tiffany Tran and I am an attorney with the law bureau at the Pub. utility commission.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great. Thank you, Tiffany. Is Thomas here?

>>THOMAS GIANNANTONIO: Yes, hello. My name is Thomas Giannantonio. I am a policy analyst in our Bureau of consumer services and I largely handle telecom issues.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great. Thank you. Who am I missing from the PUC, please introduce yourself.

>>SPEAKER: Good morning, Amy. This is Missy Derr working for the public utility commission in the Bureau of technical utility services. I work with Derek and Spencer is my supervisor.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, thank you. Anyone else here this morning from the PUC?

>>MARC HOFFER: This is Marc Hoffer, I am a manager in the Bureau of technical utility services.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Good morning, Marc! Okay. We have other representatives from programs that will be providing reports for us this morning. So, Laura, would you like to introduce yourself?

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Yes, hello. My name is Laura Grassia. And I am the program manager of the telecommunication device distribution program. We are housed at Temple University under the Inst. on disabilities. Sandi is my supervisor and I have also known as the free special phone lady.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I love it! Okay. And Jenny Pearson, are you here this morning?

>>JENNY PEARSON: Good morning, this is Jenny. Apologize in advance. I am dealing with some allergies this morning. So, forgive me. My voice gets a little bit shaky. I am the Pennsylvania relay captions service outreach coordinator for Hamilton relay.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great and good morning. We also have with us several interpreters and we are so grateful for you this morning to make sure that everyone understands what is transpiring at our meeting. Is there anyone who has not introduce themselves?

>>SPEAKER: I will. I am Jesse Demartino. Sorry!

>>JESSICA DEMARTINO: That is okay. I am a vocational rehabilitation specialist with the office of vocational rehabilitation and I administer and provide oversight for the telecommunication device distribution program grant. Thank you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Wonderful. We are delighted to have you join us this morning. Okay. Chairpersons report? Really have nothing in particular. We did submit some comments to the PUC and regarding the TRS modernization thanks to Laura for assisting me with that effort. And we will hear more about the FCC addressing TRS modernization under new business.

Secretaries report. As you know that we have no secretary, but I was very pleased to learn that at least for the foreseeable future, the transcript and I forgot to acknowledge our captioner - but, the transcript will serve as the secretary 's report or the minutes of the meeting.

So, having served as Secretary, I think that is a good decision.

This is Amy again going through the agenda. The next item which requires action is the review discussion and hopefully approval of the minutes or the transcript of the December, 2025 meeting. So, I believe the minutes, the transcript was sent out to all of the members - and is so if you are a member, not an observer, please indicate by either raising your hand symbol or by voice and actually let's do a roll call. Would you help me with that, please? Well, we will start, Sandi, say or indicate aye.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Amy, this is Sandi. Melissa has her hand up, I wonder if she has a comment?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I can only see part of her screen. Thank you for queuing me in. Melissa? You have your hand up?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: I am sorry, this is Melissa speaking. She said raise your hand and I put my hand up - and then I realize now that you're going to go down the roll call. Sorry

about that!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Yes, well, Melissa may I take that as a aye? In favor?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Yes, thank you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sandi?

>>SANDI McNALLY: This is Sandi. Aye.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Steve?

>>STEVE SAMARA: Aye.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thad? Representing Hamilton?

>>THAD GRAHAM: This is Thad, I am sorry.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I don't know if you had a chance to review -

>>THAD GRAHAM: I did. Give me 30 seconds here - can you come back to me - let me verify with Alison.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sure. And Rich. I don't know - well, you are not at the December meeting.

>>PAUL McGANN: That is correct, I was not at the meeting so I cannot verify what happened. So, yes. Moving forward I will be involved!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Yes, thank you! Thad, are you ready to cast your vote on behalf of of Hamilton?

>>THAD GRAHAM: Yes, we are good with the minutes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great. Thank you, everybody.

All right, we will move along. To the program report. From the telecommunication device distribution program. Laura and/or Sandi?

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Yes, hello. So, I did send out my report and this is Laura. The program manager. This is for October 1 of 2025 - December 31, 2025. We received 101 applications from 34 counties and I always like to mention that myself and in the representative that serves Pittsburgh area, we have a unspoken competition and Philadelphia County had 21 of those applications compared to Allegheny County who had nine applications. So, a little healthy competition is always great. 54% of the applicants were ages 65 and older. Of the 101 applications received we had 86 eligible applicants. And of those you know 101 applications received we had nine ineligible applicants for various reasons. 12 of those applications went inactive which means they did not respond to multiple reach out from myself. And we have carryover of 16 incomplete applications.

Device recipients, we had 89 unduplicated recipients. They received equipment. And they were from 31 counties . Also healthy competition. Allegheny County received 13 devices and also Philadelphia was able to win out at 14.

So, during the second quarter I ordered 96 pieces of equipment for 89 unduplicated consumers. Two of those consumers received both wireline equipment and wireless equipment. Wireline equipment numbers were 13 devices for a total of \$2185. And wireless equipment totals were 83 devices totaling \$79,929. And the total was \$81,114. So, recipients by age demographics, 63% of recipients were 65 and older and were going out to outreach for that second quarter. We had 14 events and 10 counties. Four of those events reached underserved populations which were identified as veterans, children with

disabilities and the Deaf/HoH communities. We also had statewide events which were the HLA or hearing loss of America Walk4Hearing which was held in Philadelphia and I also made a presentation to the PUC 's consumer advisory Council meeting. Some other highlights were 83% of devices distributed were for vision disabilities. 8% of devices distributed were for hearing. And 9% were for other disabilities and they included cognitive disabilities, physical disabilities and speech disabilities.

Social media posts reached over 1900 people. Nine recipients requested support with their device and that totaled 10 hours of set up, training and troubleshooting. 100% was the survey response and 56% were highly satisfied with the service. Sometimes, other people pick the device for the person applying and they are unsatisfied or not highly satisfied due to the difficulty of operating this device. So, that is why it is 56% for highly satisfied. Total outreach efforts reached 4209 Pennsylvanians. And after they receive their device we give them an email or phone call and 45% was the response rate for satisfaction surveys and 88% were highly satisfied with the program.

Reason being the 45% response rate is because I said tell satisfaction surveys later in December and most of those surveys were received in a different quarter. Are there any questions?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: It looks like Rich has a question.

>>PAUL McGANN: Thank you so much, Laura. I was wondering - I do understand that we have had this pandemic six years ago and people were staying home and it was hard to connect and to use relay at that time. And I was wondering whether there was any research done on telehealth or research about telemarketing as well and developing research and regarding communication for the deaf telehealth or telemedicine type things

-

>>LAURA GRASSIA: This is Laura again. Rich, I am not aware of a program providing or researching. I do know that another program in the Inst. Under the assistive technology act program was a program that gave free tablets to people in the state who needed a way to communicate with their doctors and that was during the pandemic and that program was called Connect with Tech. And I know Sandi will have more data on that. And that program served all Pennsylvanians that had a barrier to communicating with their physicians or providers. I am not aware of any service done by us, but we do work closely with the deaf and hearing communications center which is called DHCC. And they have asked us for device, just aggregate data about how many deaf folks that we serve or deafblind or hard of hearing people. And so I hope in the future that we have the bandwidth to answer that question. With data and research. I hope that helped or answered some part of your question.

>>PAUL McGANN: Thank you!

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Any other questions?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: I do not see any. This is Amy - I am sorry -

>>LAURA GRASSIA: This is Laura again, I wanted to say thank you to Melissa and her team and everyone who I met over at the hearing loss Expo. It was a great time. And yes, thank you for reaching out. I kind of could not leave my table. Because, we were constantly

mobbed which is a wonderful issue. But, thank you so much, Melissa, your team and yourself did a great job. I cannot wait for the next one!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: That is great. Laura, thank you for your comprehensive report.

>>LAURA GRASSIA: You're welcome, Amy.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. Pennsylvania relay report. I don't know who is - Thad, you're doing that one as well?

>>THAD GRAHAM: Actually Alison had sent out the report previously for everyone to review. She asked if anyone had any direct questions on the report to please email her or if there is something that Jenny or I could answer, we would be happy to try our best here, as well. So, Alison hopes that you got a chance to look over her report and if something comes up later if you have a question, feel free to reach out to her directly. I don't have a report in front of me, I'm sorry.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: That is okay! Thad, as long as you are on, do you want to give the Hamilton relay outreach report?

>>THAD GRAHAM: Absolutely. This is Thad, still. I will talk about the telephone research outreach report. You'll notice it has changed slightly but all the information is still on there. You will see the recent events for this quarter which for us was from November, December and January and so November and December 2025 and January 2026 and we had multiple events throughout the state. I was able to conduct 18 field visits at different locations. Mostly senior living facilities as well as some other locations. I was able to have one meeting with a local business to discuss relay friendly business as well as a networking event. And you will see a bulk of my report were exhibits as well as presentations. Some of those presentations, most of those presentations were actually conducted up in the Erie/Pennsylvania area where I was able to present the senior centers and senior living facilities up there. I was also able to present to the speech language pathology students at Gannon up in person (SP?) which was a wonderful presentation to a wonderful group of students and they were actually getting ready to go out into the real world and so that was a great opportunity. I was also able to host 14 exhibits across the state. And mostly were senior living and health expos as well as one disability Expo for state representatives and state senators across the Commonwealth and then of course our biggest event for the year includes the PA farm show which is just a massive event and a lot of fun and we were able to talk to a lot of people, myself and Jenny, while we were there. And so that is my report and I open for any questions, comments or concerns.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Rich, you have a question?

>>PAUL McGANN: Did anything important happen with Zoom or Teams? The problem is that sometimes is that there can be a lot of problems with technology with meetings online. And we need to improve that technology, plus - like family - and different meetings and things like that. And that gets frustrating or if we have friends and especially if we have friends. Or if we need help with relay in those ways, because if there is a Zoom meeting or something like that there is not good access and they may not have interpreters for those kinds of situations, especially like if we are discussing like transportation and how does that get provided for me if I do not have an interpreter and do not have access? Was that clear?

Did you understand my question?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, Rich, this is Amy. It sounds like you are asking about accessibility of Zoom?

>>PAUL McGANN: Yes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, so specifically in terms of the outreach efforts of either Hamilton or the free phone program?

>>PAUL McGANN: Yes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, part of the question would be when you do remote outreach, do you ask people about needing accommodations ahead of time and would you - I assume that you would be able to provide them if they were requested? Would you like to address that, Thad and/or Laura?

>>THAD GRAHAM: This is Thad. I will just talk about what Hamilton 's policies are and then I will turn it over to Laura. When it comes to virtual presentations, webinars, anything like that, we do always ask the organization that we are working with if they have any special accommodations that need us to take care of even if we are hosting for the public, we always ask them to request an interpreter or other accommodations as needed and that way we can make sure that everybody has access to the information. Oftentimes if it is for example just a public webinar we ask them to give us you know a specific timeframe so that we have the opportunity to get an interpreter for that individual or to meet those accommodations in a timely manner. We do have options for interpreting in a last-second kind of you know situation, but we try not to do that, because it is just not a great thing for anybody. But, we do make sure that we take into account accommodating anyone 's needs to make sure that everyone has equal access to information. Jenny, really quick. Am I forgetting anything? Hamilton wise? We do a pretty good job from what I have seen to make sure that we are providing accommodations for individuals in person or virtually.

>>JENNY PEARSON: This is Jenny. Thad pretty much hit the nail on the head there. I would also add that we are also using contracted CART providers, as well. So, transcriptions and things like that are also available. I believe that when we do host a webinar we ask for 48-hour notice if somebody needs accommodations and so as Thad said we also can pivot quickly and provide interpreting at the last minute, as well. Thank you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you. And Laura?

>>LAURA GRASSIA: Yes, this is Laura. We have a similar policy, as well. So, we make sure that you know if someone needs large print, that is available. If they need interpretation, that is available, captioning, transcript - so, we do have a similar request, as well. And I am learning ASL and I love to practice with folks and they are so helpful and lovely in helping me. But, if I do feel overwhelmed, I will get an interpreter, especially at the hearing loss Expo. That did happen, somebody signed it so fast and they were so excited and I am kind of left in the dust and I will get an interpreter. So, thank you!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, thank you for your responses. Okay. Jenny? CapTel outreach report.

>>JENNY PEARSON: Good morning. This is Jenny again. We had a really successful quarter and we had four captioned telephone, three exhibits including an appearance and

sponsorship at the Omni circus and if you are not familiar with that, it is the first of its kind, singularly inclusive and accessible circus that is multi able and represented highlighting and celebrating that visibility and diversity shine through the joy and excitement of circus arts. So, we were really excited to be a part of that in Pittsburgh. On my report there is a photograph of myself including eight of the cast members of the Omni circus. They were super excited to learn all about the captioned telephone relay service in Pennsylvania. And they are wonderful people. Unfortunately we had an opportunity to exhibit next month, but sadly the venue they selected is not able to host at that time. So, they will be postponing that appearance until the fall which we are excited to be a part of. As far as upcoming events we also have three relay friendly business webinars with career links across the state of Pennsylvania. And that is my report.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, thank you. Rich, you have a question for Jenny?

>>PAUL McGANN: This is related to 911.

>>JENNY PEARSON: I am sorry, can you repeat your question?

>>PAUL McGANN: This is in reference to 911. I was not sure - was there a problem with 911?

>>JENNY PEARSON: As far as captioned telephone services? Not that I am aware of.

>>PAUL McGANN: The reason I was asking is because a lot of people when they are training for 911 calls and things, there is not enough training if they are deaf and especially a deafblind person to get help. And so I understand that they have very short turnaround and training and it is only a little bit of time, but there is not enough interpreters and people to come, you know what I mean? It is such a short thing and it is really hard to get people when there is a 911 call you know for everyone who is involved, the police would just show up and come and you might say where is the interpreter and they are not necessarily trained to handle the situation. And it has happened with me and I have told them this many times and told them I need a tactile interpreter and then somebody would come and the police do not know how to follow-up or who to call and different areas sometimes have different rules and different training and things happen like there is not consistency with the different interpreting services and what they will come and what they will do and how fast they can get there. Sometimes like the police are not in outreach at all, like sometimes nothing happens at all.

>>JENNY PEARSON: This is Jenny. As far as the captioned telephone outreach for 911 centers, we are not providing that, but that is something that we can be open to discuss with the Public Utilities Commission.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Melissa? You have a comment?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Hello, yes, this is Melissa speaking. Just commenting on the emergency response for police, I just want everyone to know that the office of deaf and hard of hearing collaborated with the Inst. for law enforcement education to create a training designed for police of any capacity whether it is state, municipal, county and emergency responders. We just had our very first presentation of this training conducted at the hearing loss Expo and it was packed. We had a lot of people there and a lot of people interested in this. We are working on making this a requirement for all police officers and

emergency responders in Pennsylvania. And I know for a fact that we have been in touch with another Board that I believe is in Allegheny County and that they are looking to schedule this training to be done there. So, while these types of programs take a while to expand, we do hope to continue collaboration and create a type of training for those who respond to emergency calls such as the 911 or anything else. So, we do have it on our agenda as an office to serve the deaf and hard of hearing and deafblind population to try to resolve some of these concerns. Thank you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, Melissa. Thank you for that additional information. All right. I would like to take a five minute break for our caption and interpreters. So, come back together at about 10:36 AM on my clock. I would recommend that you not sign off. So, just turn your cameras and your microphones off and we will see you in five minutes.

(BREAK) □R

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, as we come back slowly - we will start with new business once everyone is back. Okay. Hopefully - this is Amy. Hopefully everyone was able to take a stretch or comfort break. And we will start with new business and the election of officers. So, because we have a very small number of public members, i.e., we only have two public members, myself and Rich. And so I would ask Sandi McNally to help us run the elections of the two offices of care -- chairperson and vice chair. So, Sandi, which open the floor to nominations, please? Sandi, are you there?

>>TIFANNY TRAN: This is Tiffany. I believe Sandi may not be back from our five-minute break yet, it looks like.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. Well, in that case we will skip until she returns and Tiffany, would you talk - address the FCC TRS modernization and the PUC 's response? Thank you.

>>TIFANNY TRAN: Sure thing. So, I think back in December, the FCC issued a proposed rulemaking seeking comment on TRS modernization. And the commission, the PUC, prepared comments to submit to the FCC in response to this rulemaking. And we reached out to the TRS Board for the Board input on this rulemaking since we knew and respected that the Board has experience, on the ground experience, about relay service and what is needed in Pennsylvania and we are happy to report and grateful for the Board 's input and recommendations to the commission for its consideration and as part of the commission 's comments to the FCC. And so on February 2 we did submit comments to the FCC about TRS modernization. I believe at some point, Denise did circulate to the Board the final copy of the comments that we submitted and I believe it is evident from the comments submitted that the Board recommendations were taken into consideration and incorporated and we are grateful for that.

It has just been brought to my attention yesterday that the FCC has just issued a new TRS rulemaking and the solicitation for comments, specifically regarding Internet-based relay service. No, this is just fresh off the press. We did not get a chance to included in today's packet or agenda. You are just hearing this for the first time from me, I believe. But, we will be sending an email out to the Board afterwards with a link to the rulemaking. It does have comments that are due - I just saw this, let me pull it open. I have too many windows open. The comments are due on April 16, 2026 which leaves 29 days left for the filing of

comments and reply comments are due on May 18, 2026. Because this is so new to us at this juncture, the commission has not determined whether or not it is going to file comments to this particular rulemaking, but we would like to share with the Board to ensure that the Board has a chance to review it and if the Board so chooses to make any recommendations to the commission about whether to submit comments and what to potentially include in those comments. If anybody else has questions about that, please respond to the email that we send around or reach out to us in any other way that you feel is accessible for you. And I think that concludes everything I have to say about the FCC and TRS. Does anybody have any questions?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Tiffany, this is Amy. I would also ask that if people - if Board members have a comment or concern, to please put that in the reply email to Tiffany and I will try to assemble those on behalf of the Board so that the PUC can see those combined. Together. So, since we have a little bit more lead time, what did you say, 25 days?

>>TIFANNY TRAN: 29 days, yes.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, I will ask people if you can take a look at that and either comment or say I have no comment or I need to understand this better - within the week, that would be helpful.

>>TIFANNY TRAN: This is Tiffany, again. I would also like to remark that members of the Board are always free to file comments in their individual capacity as a private citizen or an advocate, but again, if you file those comments individually, you cannot do so representing yourself as a representative of the commission as a part of the TRS board. And so what I'm trying to say is that if the commission ultimately does not file, that does not preclude you as an individual from filing comments to this rulemaking.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Great, thank you. I look forward to reading that - as Rich indicated, there are many things that need changing in the area of telecommunications and access for people with disabilities. So, Sandi, are you back?

>>SANDI McNALLY: Sorry, my computer went to sleep and log me out of the meeting. Imagine that, speaking of technology!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, I was explaining that I have asked you to open the floor to nominations for the chairperson and vice chairperson offices.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Yes. So, we will be opening - I am opening the floor to nominations for chairperson and vice chairperson of the TRS advisory Board - we have only public members that can be officers on the Board and as of now the two public members are Amy Goldman and Rich McGann. To my knowledge, right? That is the only two. Okay. And so let's go first we will start with nominations I guess we will do nomination vote, nomination vote? Is that the way that we want to - Tiffany? Would that work?

>>TIFFANY TRAN: First open the floor to nominations and then once the nominations are made, take a vote on each office.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Nominations for both offices first and then the votes.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Yes.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Okay. Okay, so I am opening the floor to nominations for chairperson. And please use your raise hand - I will scan both screens and make sure that I catch

people. If you could use the raise hand - okay, I'll open the chat, too. In case somebody wants to put something in the chat.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sandi, this is Amy. Only members can nominate.

>>SANDI McNALLY: You don't have to be a public member to nominate, you can just be a voting member. That is what it is! So, we are looking for a chairperson -

>>TIFFANY TRAN: This is Tiffany, is anyone forgetting to come off of mute while they are making nominations, perhaps?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: So, the people who can nominate our Sandi, Steve, Melissa, somebody from Hamilton, Rich and Amy. I believe those are the only voting members who can nominate.

>>STEVE SAMARA: Is anyone running for Chairman? I have not seen any campaign posters or anything - so, I am just wondering who is interested in being dominated.

>>TIFFANY TRAN: Well, if you nominate someone they can choose to accept or not accept the nomination. I do not think that we have a political campaign marketing budget for the TRS board.

>>SPEAKER: Melissa has her hand raised.

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Hello, this is Melissa speaking. While I realize it is slim pickings because we are two people (CHUCKLE) to be the chair - I would like to nominate Amy again, because - Rich is very new and I think he needs a little bit of time to get acclimated to the Board with zero disrespect.

>>PAUL McGANN: This is Rich. I agree completely!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: This is Amy. I accept the nomination for chair.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Okay, are there any other nominations? I am supposed to ask, are there any other nominations? Last call? Since there are no other nominations - we will take a vote. And I would say could you just please use the little hand raised on the computer or put it in the chat. So, we - all those in favor of Amy retaining the chairperson position? Do so by signaling with your hand or by saying aye or write it in the chat. Okay. Any opposed? I think it looks pretty unanimous. I vote aye. Okay, Amy, congratulations!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you!

>>SANDI McNALLY: Okay, now nomination for vice chair I think I can safely say that by default, the only nomination for vice chair would be Rich McGann.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: (CHUCKLE).

>>SANDI McNALLY: Rich 's microphone is off.

>>SPEAKER: This is the interpreter, it took me a second!

>>PAUL McGANN: I have a lot to learn, but I accept the nomination as the only one who is available at this time!

>>SANDI McNALLY: Okay, Rich. This is Sandi. Thank you for accepting the nomination.

>>PAUL McGANN: I accept. Thank you for the nomination and as I said I'll have a lot to learn from all of you, be patient with me and thank you so much!

>>SANDI McNALLY: Okay, then let's just follow protocol. All those in favor of Rich McGann for vice chair, please signify by raising your hand or putting it in the chat. Did everybody vote?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Do we have a representative - there is Hamilton -

>>SANDI McNALLY: Hamilton, okay. Okay. Well then, congratulations, Rich. You are now the vice chair! Welcome to the group and now you are vice chair! And I am sure that we have a lot we can learn from your vast experience. So, we are looking forward to working with you.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sandy -- Sandi, this is Amy. Thank you so much for taking us through the elections.

>>SANDI McNALLY: You're welcome.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And I echo the thank you of everybody, Rich, for your presence on this Board and your willingness to undertake a leadership position.

Okay -

>>PAUL McGANN: Thank you, everyone!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: All right, so Missy Derr, I have received the PUC order about evolve IP. So, Missy if you can fill us in on what the situation was banned the order.

>>MISSY DERR: Sure. This is Missy. I apologize if it sounds like I am reading, because I am so I get the facts correct! So, evolve IP filed a petition with the commission in 2020 while in 2020 the commission could not authenticate the money that was in question from Evolve IP paying into the TRS fund. The real issue was that Evolve IP provided no evidence that they paid nor did they explain or provide evidence that they are not liable to make payments to the TRS spot. So, back in 2020 that petition was denied. So, Evolve IP filed another petition with the commission and they changed the amount of money that they were claiming they paid into the TRS fund and when they filed in 2023, they asked for a rescission in that 2020 petition. So, the commission again and died Evolve IP petition and that recently you got a copy of the order, Amy. So, the commission said that Evolve IP provided better proof this time about payments, but it would again failed to explain or provide proof that they were not liable to make payments to the TRS fund. So, I copied a sentence out of the Evolve IP order that stated while the petition provides reported evidence in support of its claims of a payment into the TRS fund, it still fails to provide evidence sufficient to explain exactly why Evolve 's services are not subject to the TRS surcharge. For these reasons, we are unpersuaded that a precision of the June 2021 order is warranted. So, they filed in 2020 and we had a public meeting in June 2021 and the second one just one through public meeting. So, that is the quick synopsis of those two petitions that Evolve had filed with the commission.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you. Does anyone have any questions about this matter? My take away is this company said they should not have paid into the TRS funds and so they want the money back and the PUC said you are not proving your case. So, no. Is that an accurate summary?

>>MISSY DERR: This is Missy. Yes, I would say that is accurate.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And of course we were notified, because it impacts or had potential to impact the TRS fund. All right, any other questions on Evolve? Okay, great, thank you again. Denise, talk to us about the hearing loss Expo and the exciting news that you share about potential recruitment of another member point.

>>DENISE McCracken: Yes, we had a table set up for the two day Expo and I did want to

say and echo Laura 's comments and congratulate Melissa on a very successful event and we have a wonderful job done and just a wealth of information for everyone attended. And PUC, we set up a table and had information on our TRS advisory Board and focus on recruitment to gain more interest from the public. And I had some great conversations with some people who expressed interest. I would say probably three or four people stopped and we had some really in-depth conversations about joining and they took information and one is a special guest on our meeting today and hopefully we garner more interest and again, they have our information and looking forward to receiving maybe some applications via email sometime. But, it was just a great opportunity to talk to people and educate them about our board. So - it was a great two day conference and I would like to say thank you also to Missy Derr and Derek Sharp!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: And Melissa, is this a annual or biannual event? The hearing loss Expo -

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: Hello, this is Melissa speaking. No, it is every other year. So, we need a year to recover from planning! So, 2028 will be our next Expo and believe me, it takes an entire village to get this Expo together and we had several hundred people come to the doors and I think we had 80 something tables and workshops and they were just standing room only. We were absolutely thrilled with the outcome this year and are already looking forward to 2028, but we just need a few months to recover first!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Thank you! And congratulations again. Okay - this brings us to a public comment section of our new business agenda. So - is there anyone who would like to issue a public comment?

Okay. Hearing none - just a reminder our next meeting is June 3. So, hopefully that is on everybody's calendar. And do I hear a motion to adjourn?

>>SPEAKER: Moved.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: All right, is there a second?

>>PAUL McGANN: A second!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay, thank you all!

>>PAUL McGANN: Sorry, I had a question - not a move - I wanted to ask a question before we end. I am so sorry. So - is it okay if I ask a question and say something?

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Sure!

>>PAUL McGANN: Sorry - so, before we finish, just for a few minutes - from the December minutes - I am sorry, the meetings have to be in a .dox, not a PDF because my readers cannot read it. So, if that can be in a .docx file.

>>SPEAKER: And this is the interpreter, if I mixed up with the letters, please ask and we can tell you again.

>>DENISE McCracken: This is Denise. We can make sure that it is in the correct format.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay! Melissa Hawkins, you have your hand up?

>>MELISSA HAWKINS: I do not, I should not! Sorry. I apologize.

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Okay. All right, so we are adjourned. Thank you everyone for taking the time this morning. I look forward to reading the new communication from the FCC and I will see you - have a happy spring, everybody!

>>STEVE SAMARA: You as well, Amy. Thank you.

>>SANDI McNALLY: Goodbye everybody!

>>AMY GOLDMAN: Denise, thank you as always for your support!

###