

Public Service Commission

Relay Missouri Advisory Committee Meeting

April 18, 2023

CART Reporter: Kimberly A. Pfleinger Schacht, RPR, CRR,

CRC, CCR, CRI

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. The rule of thumb is whoever is speaking, say your name so we can follow along, because sometimes, you know, the screen doesn't show up well who is speaking. So that's a good rule of thumb.

I want to remind everyone, before we begin the meeting, we want to go through and do introductions. We will wait until Kari gives us the go ahead, and then we will wait until Kari gives us the go ahead and then I will let you introduce yourselves.

KARI SALSMAN: I think it is okay to go ahead.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Perfect. Good morning, this is April Mason Donovan. And I work here in a new job at the Delta Center, and I am currently an independent living specialist for consumer-directed services. So I am the Chairperson for this meeting and this will be my last meeting as that. So it is kind of weird because I am thinking after -- what was it? -- nine years, I think. I have a lot of history with this. And so I just want to applaud -- oh, hey, there is Becky. Finally we can see you.

BECKY DAVIS: Hi. Good morning. So sorry. I feel stupid

sometimes with technology.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yes, sometimes we have to have a love-hate relationship with technology.

So, like I said, this will be my last meeting as Chairperson for the RMC, so I would like to, I guess, go ahead and start. And I think we will let everybody introduce themselves, name them as I see them. First person I see on the screen, unfortunately, James Frost. He is new to this, and we will give you some time to speak later. So James Frost, you can go ahead.

JAMES FROST: Hello. My name is James Frost and I am a Deaf individual myself. I am the owner of an interpreting agency out of St. Louis and I also am a lawyer as well. I have been doing that for over 23 years now. And so I would like to thank you for welcoming me to this meeting.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: James, just watch and learn right now. Okay?

And then I see Peggy Belt next to you. She is the interpreter. I am not gonna interrupt her role as interpreter to introduce herself.

Next is Cady.

CADY MACFEE: Hello. I am Cady Macfee with Relay Missouri. So currently I am in doing another part of my job with T-Mobile.

BECKY DAVIS: Wow.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I hope you have a safe trip.

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And then next we have David Baxter -- oh, Baker, excuse me.

DAVID BAKER: Good morning, everybody. David Baker, Director of Missouri Assistive Technology. Good to see some of you after an absence and to make the acquaintance of some new folks.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. David, I am happy you are back.

Next we will have Sarah Prechtel.

SARAH PRECHTEL: Good morning. I am Sarah Prechtel and I am the Executive Director at Deaf, Inc. I have been on the committee a little over a year now. Happy to be here today. Good to see everyone.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Next we have AJ, another interpreter. I won't have him introduce himself.

Next we have Becky Davis.

BECKY DAVIS: Becky Davis. I am with the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: You got your haircut, Becky. Looks great.

BECKY DAVIS: Yeah, got it cut really short. Helmet hair. Sometimes I look at myself and I go, oh.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: You look wonderful anyway.

BECKY DAVIS: Thank you.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Next we have Stacy Brady.

STACY BRADY: Good morning. Stacy Brady with Missouri

Assistive Technology, and I oversee the equipment part of things here.

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APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Wonderful. And now Karl.

KARL EWAN: Hello. My name is Karl Ewing. I am here coming out of Austin, Texas. I work with T-Mobile and I have oversight over three T-Mobile projects that Cady is administering.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Thank you, Karl. Always good to see you. Amazing to see the growth from Sprint to T-Mobile and everything, yes.

KARL EWAN: Yes.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I worked with them way back when.

KARL EWAN: Yep.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I won't tell any good stories.

Next, the Missouri PSC.

KARI SALSMAN: Hi. Kari Salsman and John Van Eschen is in the same conference room. Sorry we don't have a camera here, but we are both in the Telecommunications Department.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay, well, thank you, John and Kari.

And next we have Kimberly, who is our captionist, and like I said, I am not going to have her introduce herself.

And then we have Claire Mengwasser.

CLAIRE MENGWASSER: Hello. Hi. I am Claire Mengwasser, the representative for speech language pathologists. Nice to see everybody.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Great. Thank you, Claire.

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And now we have Marc Poston.

Mark Poston, are you with us?

We can't hear you if you are trying to speak. Okay, well then, we will go on to the next person.

That is IRVIR1.

RON IRVING: Okay, hello. Can everyone hear me?

KARI SALSMAN: We can hear you, Ron.

RON IRVING: Yes, this is Ron Irving, legal counsel for Public Service Commission. Thank you.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay, I thought so. I just wanted to make sure.

Marc, can you hear us? We will go back to you if you want to introduce yourself.

Well, okay. Well, then.

Okay. I guess I know that we will -- we have a lot of information to talk about. So if there are any questions, please put that in the chat or raise your hand or whatever.

We will go ahead and start talking about T-Mobile report on Relay and CapTel report. I will let them have the table.

Okay?

CADY MACFEE: Have the floor, you mean?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Or the screen, whatever it is.

CADY MACFEE: Thank you. I am going to voice and I am going to ask the interpreter to sign. But I am going to ask everyone

to turn off their screen so I can share the PowerPoint and have the interpreter stay on the screen. Then I will turn off my video. 6

Can you see the PowerPoint?

SPEAKER: Yes.

CADY MACFEE: Good morning, everyone. This is Cady Macfee. I am the Account Manager for the Relay Missouri. Good morning, everyone. This is Cady Macfee, and I am the Account Manager for Relay Missouri, and I have been doing this for four years.

I want to introduce the people on my team. So I have myself, of course. And then Karl Ewan on the call, senior manager. And then we have Chris Smith; he is the sales for Relay Missouri but he is absent right now. And then we have what is called the support team of people supporting me doing outreach. We have Kim McRae, Emmanuel, and Josh. They are in Missouri, and they can drive and support me at different events.

So what is new with Relay Missouri? I am currently in the middle of switching vendors for marketing and website. Just having some conflict with the previous vendor that I decided I am going to -- oh, hold on. Somebody asked me if I could do full screen. Okay.

Is this better? Somebody say something on chat. That would be great.

SARAH PRECHTEL: Yes. Thank you so much.

CADY MACFEE: Okay. I am used to working with multiple monitors but I don't have that today. So our website is going to look the same. We are just going to have a new vendor maintaining the website for us. And that will start on May 1st.

And I know you all saw the e-mail, I believe it was like in March, that we have what is called voice response unit. We are getting increase in different relay calls across the board like speech-to-speech, CapTel, TRS, TTY phone, just people not understanding what the 1-800 number is used for. It is just a lot of hang ups. So we have to minimize that because we don't want the customers to be paying for all of those calls. So we have to implement what is called voice response unit. And you guys gave excellent feedback about what you wanted on that recorded message, and we took that feedback and it has been implemented last month.

I have just the numbers from July, 2022 to February, 2023 for TRS minutes. As you are all aware, yes, we are seeing declining usage. But we do have, you know, about 2,000 minutes being used. That was in February, we had about 2,000. And the highest we saw was last month in February -- sorry. In January we saw about 4,000 minutes being used.

I know this is more colorful than the previous chart. So this is the -- the blue one you see on the very top, that is 2009 and now we are in the purple. It says fiscal year 2022

because that's where we are. We do fiscal years. So we are staying less than 2,000 minutes volume until 2022 for Relay Missouri. So it is a big decline. And I am sure Stacy will share about CapTel in her report.

Relay Conference Captioning. We are still seeing usage, not as much. I know that most people are using what is called ASR, automatic speech recognition. But I should want to say that, yes, that's a great service. But you have to keep in mind that it does not understand the content. It is always great to have a live person on the call, especially if you have a very intense meeting that you need to make sure that you are understanding everything that is being said. And this is the no cost service available for everybody in Relay Missouri who are deaf or hard of hearing or have difficulty speaking.

And on the next slide I am sharing that, did you know that you can use Relay Conference Captioning for breakouts? And yes, this is possible. So let's say that you have, you know, a big staff meeting and you have multiple deaf and hard of hearing and speech users, you can break them up in different rooms on Zoom or WebEx platform. But we do ask that you look for that starting two hours in advance to make sure we have enough captioners because that will require three to four captioner per room. I mean one captioner per room if you are using three or four rooms.

RCC is now embedded on Zoom, WebEx, Adobe Connect, and

YouTube. What that means is if I have requested Relay Conference Captioning for this call, I would go to the caption settings and assign the captioner to caption what is being said and it would be like the caption on your TV or the Zoom platform.

I have already mentioned this, that ASR is great, but we are finding out that they are still about 75% accurate and RCC is 95% accurate. That's the benefit of using a live captioner on the call because they can -- they can pick up on different dialect, language, just how you -- slang, just how you project out your words. It is very different. I know when I use BIXBY on Android or iPhone that they don't always understand everything that is being said, especially when my Deaf friends. (Laughing.) I find RCC understands me better. That's why I like RCC.

I encourage you. If you have not tried it, please try it. It is on Relay Missouri website and you can book for the event 48 hours in advance and if you need to cancel 24 hours and you can share if you have like an all hands meeting, you can share that up until you book the event with your teammate and they can all share and read the captions on the screen.

After your media is done, you can save, e-mail, and save the transcript, which is something you cannot do on Zoom captioning.

We have been busy this year going to different events in

Missouri, and that's just between me and my co-workers. In February I attended an event and saw several of you there. It was a great event and crowded space, but it was great to see everybody and meet more people, consumers. 10

My co-worker attended a breakfast in Blue Springs. It is mainly for seniors. And another co-worker attended an event in Cape Girardeau, and he promoted speech-to-speech service and met a lot of folks who are -- work with the senior living and shared that information with them.

A couple of weeks ago I went to Power-Up, and that is always a great conference -- sorry, St. Louis, I know it is in Columbia. That's my fault. I saw it so don't correct me. I know. Power-Up was in Columbia and it was a great conference. They had more than 200. I made that mistake. But it was a great conference. I met so many people and networked with so many people as well. I have some pictures I will show after this.

Co-workers got back from Missouri Speech and Language at Lake of the Ozarks, and she said it was an excellent event. Lots of people asked about our services, especially the speech-to-speech.

And another co-worker is attending the Federation of the Blind Conference this month.

So this is just two pictures from the Power-Up Conference. On the left you will see a woman in a power wheelchair. She is

with my co-worker Kim McRae. She came up to me and said, I love Relay Missouri. I am a speech-to-speech user. This is the first time I have met a speech-to-speech user in Missouri. So I asked her, can I please take your picture and she said, yes. So this is the picture of a woman that is a speech to speech user. And we loved talking with her. She was so friendly. She was sharing her story. So it was amazing.

And then there is a picture of myself and Kim McRae at our booth. We were sponsors at this event. So we had a great space right next to the registration desk; so we had a lot of traffic.

One of the big things I am working on this year, part of my outreach plan is called a Deafblind Taste of Technology event, and I am hosting it on September 20th, this fall, at Deaf, Inc. community room. And what I am planning to do is to promote different services and vendors that support and, you know, have resources and tools for the deafblind community. And we are hoping to have about 50 vendors because we need to be mindful of the space. And I am coordinating this with Relay Missouri because when I went to Deafopia, and I went to a deafblind town hall in St. Louis, I came to find out that a lot of people from southern Illinois would cross over to St. Louis for different services. So I asked my co-worker if we can work together to host this so she can invite some vendors from Illinois to come to the event. So I think it will be a great event. I foresee

about 125 coming in and out throughout the day. If you are interested in learning more, just e-mail me.

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Different outreach events that is on the calendar this year. I am going to the Missouri Rehabilitation Conference, and that is coming up in June. And the Federation of the Blind conference is later this month. We usually go to the Missouri State Fair on Seniors Day. And I mentioned my Taste of Technology for deafblind. And I know that Missouri Association for the Deaf are having their Biannual Conference. I am still trying to figure out if I can go or not.

So that concludes my PowerPoint. If you have any questions, you can always e-mail me and this is my personal cell phone. You can text, voice, call me, or Facetime me at this number.

All right. I am going to stop sharing. If you have questions, please pop up your video.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. Does anybody have any questions in regards to this presentation? If so, go ahead and ask. You can voice or type it into the chat, whichever is more comfortable.

I don't see any questions.

JAMES FROST: I do have a question. I am only here to learn; right? So should I speak?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I guess it depends on what your question is. Go ahead and ask.

JAMES FROST: I was wondering if you were thinking about

reaching out to hospitals. You know, they can use some of them -- some of their technology to speak about.

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CADY MACFEE: Yes. Yes, I have met with hospitals in the past. And I have actually had several -- I would -- I am not really good at saying it, but some type of speech laryngectomy -- is that how you say it? I had a woman from a center that focuses on this surgery. And she is very interested in learning about IP Relay because she is preparing her patients to -- for the surgery and they need to know the different tools and resources. So she recommends her patient to use IP Relay. And we got that set up and I sent her brochures, and she really likes that. So she has the IP Relay for herself, and we were able to get her an account even though she doesn't qualify. But she acknowledged that this is for demo purpose only. And she is showing her patients how it works and then she can call them and show them how to make calls before they download the service on their phone. So, yes, we have talked to a lot of hospitals and people who work for hospitals and different conferences. Especially like speech and hearing programs that we just got back from, there is a lot of people from hospitals there.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Stacy, did you want to say something?

CADY MACFEE: You are muted.

STACY BRADY: And Relay Missouri -- Missouri Assistive Technology coordinated a year and a half ago or so and made

sure we were hitting up where to get equipment and how to use the technology, and we did it with ATOS Medical and it really expanded people getting hooked up and learning how to use the relay.

JAMES FROST: That's great. You know, the more accessibility, the better.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So I know the reason why this was brought up with hospitals and accommodations is usually because of the interpreter shortage issue for any medical service that is needed or meeting or whatever it may be, virtual therapy, things like that. We are just wanting to have, I guess, an availability of technology maybe through Relay Missouri, Relay Conference Captioning, things like that. I think that would be very beneficial. I know James is always worried about the interpreter shortage and what to do with that. So I think that's why that was brought up.

Any other questions related to Cady's presentation? Okay. Great. So passing it on to equipment. Equipment program and update there.

STACY BRADY: Okay. Good morning. So Stacy with Missouri Assistive Technology, and we have had a very busy year.

Cady did mention our Power-Up Conference was just last week, and that is always a unique treat that we get to share with Missourians. And the great thing is we actually had -- and I am going to save it for David because he likes to talk a little

bit about the excitement that boiled. But if he has an opportunity to say how many new people to Power-Up we had this year which was incredible.

What I want to focus on is this year's session with the many mini-sessions we had using wireless technology. As we all know it will continue to grow while the house phones continue to decrease or even how house phones used now with the voiceover lines, fiber optic lines, using the cell tower as the home line through Home Connect activities.

But at the conference we had 12 sessions that focused on using wireless technology to make or to access things in the home. So whether that's to make a call or to just get on the Internet, or to be able to control an environment through the Internet, all of that is happening and it is becoming more and more overwhelming but abundant in what is available.

Also, in the last year -- pardon me, I have allergies. And like everybody else, they have overwhelmed me.

We did nine training sessions on different types of parts related to the equipment program, whether it was on new equipment, such as the RealSAM or the BlindShell 2 that came back, or whether it was about going about how to do new sessions with consumers in the community. That was 74 people who took advantage of those courses because our demonstration centers are located in Centers for Independent Living where you had services for the blind, specialty agencies like Deaf, Inc.,

Society for the Blind and a few others.

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There has been some turnover so it has created a shortage, and we are doing our best to try to get the information out to the new people. We actually recorded our training videos this year, and it has made it a lot easier rather than me going out every week or every few days to train someone new on new equipment. That was a huge benefit for us.

What I have learned from manufacturers is they are really not focusing on the phones anymore. They are focusing on accessories. They may be accessories that can be used on a house phone or something that could be used with a wireless device. That's kind of where -- again, all of that focus is going to continue going that direction.

And then last CapTels. So because of changes in the 21st century accessibility and video act -- that's not the exact words -- the lines for the phones have also been changing to be able to support the data going across them but also because of the copper line retirement. And so CapTel has really -- and analog series have kind of really stopped functioning. And what happened is the data packets were not carrying. So now when we are talking captioned phones, individuals either have to have Internet to be able to use it or they are having to do it through what we are calling hot spotting. CapTel is still available as long as it is Internet on our telephone program. But we also have the CaptionCall. Right now it is pretty even

on how many captioned phones we are purchasing. And so I am going to suspect that most of the minutes we saw in Cady's report aren't even related to the captioned phones because that all falls under federal funding of IP CTS. Chances are that the equipment that is still usable, still working and a lot of what is working for our people with speech disabilities was back to old school using TTY, using hearing carry-over through the voice carry-over system, and then speech-to-speech relays. So we do still have a vast array of ways of getting equipment out to people. We are still offering services as in as many different ways as possible. But we are also not blind to the fact that people are having to get Internet and we are doing more training in that aspect of making sure, one, they are matched to appropriate equipment and the equipment they know how to use. So we have often called in Cady and her staff and said, hey, we have got a new person in such and such part of the state and they are getting some hands on training to use IP Relay and that has been beneficial as well.

That pretty much concludes my report unless David would like to add anything that I might have missed.

DAVID BAKER: I don't believe you missed anything there, Stacy. Fine job.

Just a couple of things to add on in reference to Power-Up. The first one being we certainly appreciate Relay Missouri's support and that was nice to hear you say that you had a lot of

positive interactions while you were at the conference.

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And then, you know, Stacy's point there that there were 12 sessions that kind of touched on the subject of telecommunications and sort of the related aspects of that, just kind of continues to underscore the need -- the problem out there with access in telecommunications and then the need for programs and services and ways to help people learn and obtain and acquire the related technology. So ...

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. I just wanted to throw this out there. With the Delta Center, we are working on setting up a deaf and hard of hearing program. When that will be, we are not exactly sure. But we are still working on the planning. So just to keep it in the back of your mind. I am looking forward to that, you know, having that dream come true.

Any questions related to the equipment program update? Or any concerns or whatever, statements? Going once? Going twice? All right.

We will move on. Next we will go on to Missouri PSC report. You can take the screen.

KARI SALSMAN: Hi. This is Kari Salsman. The first item under the PSC staff report is the Relay Missouri Fund balance update. The current fund balance is right at 1.1 million as of March 31st. The fund target balance range we like for it to be between five to nine months of expenses. Currently that balance is slightly higher than the nine months range. So we

are doing okay where we increased the surcharge last June in order to increase the balance so we have -- we are already over the actual target range and I think that's probably due to the decrease in usage for Relay Missouri, which John is going to kind of go over that a little bit later when he discusses the fund balance and the next surcharge review.

And then the next item is committee vacancies. As you all know, we have had a vacant spot for a speech impaired for quite some time. I know April has worked on trying to get that filled. That is still open. If you have anyone in mind, please send them my way. And then we also have some committee members whose third three-year term is up either this month or in May. Those spots are April's, which represents the Deaf. And Stephanie Logan represents the late deafened. Claire Mengwasser is a speech pathologist or audiologist. And then Scott Dollar is an at-large that can be any of the representatives on there.

So, April, James Frost is on the call with us. He had stated interest in serving on the Board for April's spot. April sent me his resume this afternoon. I will be forwarding that to the committee members because they will need to vote on James joining the committee. And then, of course, we will have to have Commission approval for that as well. And then the other three spots are Stephanie Logan's, Claire's, and Scott's. Which I believe I reached out to all three and they have agreed

to go ahead and keep serving until we are able to find them a replacement. I will also send by e-mail the different spots we have open because I know sometimes it is kind of confusing. So I will send that out. If anyone knows anyone that might be interested in serving, if you could send them my way.

And then also with April leaving the committee --

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I want to say something. I just want to let you know that James Frost, yes, he is interested in serving after a vote and it is approved. He is interested. He has confirmed that he wants to.

Am I correct, James?

JAMES FROST: Oh, yes. Hello. So I guess, first, I do know of one possibility of a person with speech impairments who may be interested in joining the committee. I will reach out to this person. If this person is interested, if that's with your all's approval, if that's okay.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yeah, that's good.

JAMES FROST: Okay. If everybody is okay with me asking or would you prefer that I give you the name? Or how does that protocol work?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So, James, yes, go ahead and reach out to the person you are thinking of. See if they are interested. If so, we get the resume and we will get it to Kari. Okay?

JAMES FROST: Okay. Great. I will do that. And then I am interested as well in joining the committee for several

reasons. But I think most importantly, the reason why I am interested is that I want to preserve accessibility for a wide range of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. From my point of view, it is not -- not all Deaf people are the same, if that makes sense. People who are profoundly Deaf, those who use sign language, there are some who speak, there are some who sign as well, some who just completely prefer to use their voice or voice carry-over and things like that when it comes to IP Relay. So I really do think that's very important to preserve that accessibility, especially with the shortage of interpreters, absolutely, like April had mentioned. And so the second most important reason I am interested in serving on this committee is because I wanted to make sure that's -- I can help increase accessibility in general when it comes to communication access to all Missourians who are late deafened or deafblind. You know, there are so many times where you don't see these groups. Attention is not given to them. Like Cady had said, you don't really realize until you start to pay attention to people like deafblind individuals what they need. So I am really interested in making sure that that's covered. I think that's all I have to add.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Thank you, James.

Are there any questions about the vacancies or the committee members?

Then I will let Kari continue. Thank you.

KARI SALSMAN: Okay. And in relation to the vacancies, as you all know April currently is the Chair too. With us losing her, we will need to have somebody fill the role of being Chair. I don't know if somebody wants to volunteer. You can let me know by e-mail at a later time when I reach out about the vacancies in general, at that time too, if anyone wants to volunteer. If we have multiple volunteers, we can vote. We don't have to do that today because not everyone is on the call. So we can take care of that by e-mail.

And then the next item for the staff report is the next surcharge review. John Van Eschen is going to go through the PowerPoint that I sent out by e-mail, and we will also share it on our screen.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I will turn off my video then.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: This is John Van Eschen. I just want to start out by saying that Kari and I, we have to evaluate the surcharge levels for the Relay Missouri Fund at least once every two years. In doing that, I wanted to pose the question: Should phasing out be considered? When I say that, I am saying it because I feel like we at least need to explore that possibility. It is not something that we have made any decisions on or anything like that. In fact, besides myself, this group is the first people that I have attempted to talk to about phasing out the Relay Missouri Fund. And the reason why I want to explore it will become somewhat self-evident as we go

through the slides. But I really want to use this opportunity with the Relay Missouri Advisory Committee to see what they have to say about this topic. And maybe it is a topic that should be brought up at another time in another way. 23

But anyway, I wanted to bring up some things with the committee. And in doing that I created the slide show just to divide some basic information about relay services, what the fund pays for, and things like that. I don't intend to go through in detail each and every slide. But the information is there.

So in terms of what the Relay Missouri fund pays for, it pays for all analog intrastate relay and CapTel calls. And the keywords here are analog and intrastate. Basically, the federal relay fund pays for all analog interstate relay and CapTel calls. And the federal relay fund also pays for all digital relay and CapTel calls. In other words, when I say digital, I really mean calls that use the Internet. And the Relay Missouri fund doesn't pay for any Internet-based relay or CapTel calls. The fund does pay for all Relay Conference Captioning calls. I provided the rate there that we pay T-Mobile, these are conversation minute rates.

The -- of the Relay Missouri Fund is based in Missouri statutes. The statutes were initially created in 1990, and they were later revised in 2000 where the statutes were revised to appoint the Missouri Assistive Technology to administer the

Telephone Equipment Program and be financially supported by the 24
Relay Missouri Fund.

As I said, relay services began in Missouri in 1990. I list four different types of call types for relay service there. These are types that were used in January of 2023. CapTel service does require users to have a CapTel phone. This service in Missouri began in 2004. CapTel services are considered to be optional services to states to provide and T-Mobile has announced its intentions to not offer CapTel service for new contracts or at least that's my understanding of T-Mobile's intentions. If anyone wants to interrupt me at any time, feel free.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: This is April. Is it possible to see your slides? Can you show them on the screen? That would be easier for us to follow along.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Okay. Hold on.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: No, it is not on our screen. It is not on the Zoom screen.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Our apologies. Just a second.

Do you see it now?

KARI SALSMAN: Sorry, everyone.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: We thought they were up there. But can you see it now?

Can you see it now?

No?

SPEAKER: Yes.

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JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Okay. Relay Missouri -- well, the existing contract is the four-year contract. It expires on April 31st, 2025. Yeah, October 31st, 2025. The fund is funded by a 10-cent surcharge on landline telephones. Wireless subscribers are not billed anything and do not contribute to the Relay Missouri fund. As I noted earlier, the PSC is required to review the surcharge level every one to two years. And the last review was completed and an order issued on February 23rd, 2022.

Here is how the fund balance has gone since January, 2020. As you can see it did dip and the fund balance is slowly going up. Most of the expenditures for the Relay Missouri fund go to the equipment program. About 82% of all expenditures are for the equipment program. And the other expenditures are listed there for relay service, CapTel service, RCC, as well as outreach.

These are the minutes for relay and CapTel service over the years. And I think Cady's presentation showed this as well. But as you can see, usage has significantly declined over the years. In looking at relay usage, the amount that the Relay Missouri fund pays, paid at least in January and February, it was 647 calls in January and 466 calls in February. But the second row from the bottom is something that is of interest to me. These are unique relay equipment users that are using

Relay Missouri service. And it indicates that there were 53 unique relay equipment users that used Relay Missouri service in January. There were 60 unique relay equipment users in February of 2023. Voice callers, these are voice callers that are using Relay Missouri to reach and talk to a relay equipment user. It is the way that the data is being collected by T-Mobile. Presumably they are trying to communicate with a lot of the unique relay equipment users that are placing calls through Relay Missouri. But it is really unclear who the voice callers are calling other than they are using Relay Missouri service that the Relay Missouri fund pays for to reach relay equipment users.

In regards to CapTel usage, I will just focus on the bottom row here. Here statewide in January of 2023 there were 30 unique CapTel users. These are people that use Relay Missouri to place analog intrastate CapTel calls. In February it was 27 unique CapTel users, so not that many users when you are talking about the entire State of Missouri.

RCC service. Again, Cady had information up earlier. This goes back a few more months. In my opinion, RCC services is not widely used. In August and September it was not used at all. But there appears to be only two parties that have used RCC service over the past year or so. The Missouri Suicide Prevention Conference used RCC service in July, and Contemporary Literature is the only one who used RCC services

in the past several months.

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In regards to future expectations from my perspective, we expect usage and users of Relay Missouri services, at least those services that are paid for by the Relay Missouri fund, to continue to decline. I expect T-Mobile will probably cease offering CapTel service when the contract expires. And it has been mentioned before, but it has been talked about for I would say over a decade. But I really don't expect the FCC to ask states to help pay for services currently paid for by the federal relay fund.

And what I am really interested in hearing from the committee is whether you want to share your thoughts about all of this in regards to a discussion about the prospect of phasing out the Relay Missouri fund. And I have to say, I don't know if the Missouri Commission even has the authority to phase it out. This is something that might require legislation to do. But I guess in teeing up the subject of phasing out the Relay Missouri Fund, we are interested in knowing what services might be acceptable alternatives to analog relay and CapTel service users and what are the pros and cons of those alternatives.

I heard a little bit about, I think, Cady mentioned at least for RCC service, automated speech recognition, there is a variety of services out there in regards to that service. And she mentioned there was an issue with accuracy.

But overall I guess I wanted to open it up and just I can go through these other questions that we are interested in getting feedback on. But I just wonder if anybody has any thoughts about the prospect of phasing out the Relay Missouri fund.

And I realize, you know, in particular the Telephone Equipment Program, 80% of the expenditures out of the fund go to the equipment program. And I don't want to create any harm for the equipment program or anything like that. But does anybody have any thoughts about what I have been talking about, the prospect of phasing out the Relay Missouri fund? Do you have concerns about it? If so, we would really like to hear what those concerns are.

DAVID BAKER: This is David Baker with the Missouri Assistive Technology. I will kickoff an idea here, I guess. First of all, John, thanks for the background and the thinking and, you know, you are just seeking feedback at this stage of the game. So, obviously, there is more conversations to come. So you know I appreciate the fact, the statement you made that you didn't want to create any harm for the equipment program. And that's obviously what we are most interested in here in this discussion here at Missouri Assistive Technology. And, you know, it obviously is something that would be concerning to us if the relay fund was eliminated. I think it would also be concerning to other individuals across the state for other reasons.

And it -- I can only -- in terms of disruption that would occur to the equipment program, it is probably the kind of thing that just off the top of my head just kind of sharing thoughts would be sort of a -- to replace it would probably be a multiyear operation on our part to find other funding sources to replace that program. I don't, you know -- legislative support through general revenue would be a pretty set option I would think. You know, there is not like anything on the cell phone lines that we could possibly tap into. So it would be a struggle, I think, for us to find some way to replace those funds and continue that program going forward.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: All right. Do you foresee this as something that would require a change in the legislation?

DAVID BAKER: Yeah, when I was looking at your slides when you all sent them out, I did -- that was a question that occurred to me since this was all set up, including the Telephone Equipment Program, in state statute a number of years ago. I really am not sure how you would unravel those things.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Okay.

SARAH PRECHTEL: Hello. This is Sarah speaking.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Go ahead.

SARAH PRECHTEL: So April is mentioning as well, having your hand raised makes it hard to see the interpreter. When John and Kari are finished discussing, we can talk about those questions.

This is Sarah. So I did have some thoughts, but I wanted to make sure when it comes to the funding and how that worked, I mean obviously there are some people, individuals in the state that will be impacted by that if the funding is phased out. And so is there a possibility to use some of the current funding towards education possibly, using that for outreach, people in the state, letting them know what is available, or educating? If we do need to fund that out, how do we inform those individuals what other options are? I think that would take a long time as well, at least one or two years. So I was just wondering how those funds could be otherwise used.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I agree. Because it is not only that, there is a lot of people that live in rural Missouri. They live in the country and maybe they don't have access to Internet still or it is -- it has been an on-going issue. And for emergency purposes, what if, you know, there is no relay service and, you know, some people don't have video relay service, and they are having problems getting emergency services to their home. And who is liable in that situation if something were to happen and they couldn't make a phone call in an emergency situation?

And then also, the ADA emphasizes that accommodations for those who have a disability and have to be prepared and follow-up plan, we have to follow what they have to say. So that's some concerns that I have.

And then also, I didn't hear anything about T-Mobile considering stop using CapTel.

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And then my next question is: Are you experiencing outside sources that are considering stopping relay? I just wanted to ask that out to the PSC. And then the fact is some of the artificial intelligence, AI, speech recognition and things like that, those things are still considered dangerous right now. So we have to prepare for that in the future too.

So I just have some concerns, you know, emergency situation, rural areas, and are you experiencing pressure from outside sources to stop CapTel and the relay fund. And, yes, yeah, you have to have legislation approval to stop and phase out Relay Missouri. That's all.

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Yeah. The answer to are we getting pressure from outside sources to phase out the Relay Missouri fund, I would have to say no. When we did the review just prior to this and that was over a year ago, there was, oh, negative feedback about increasing the surcharge level. And that was primarily from the cable TV industry that offers -- service. You know, their subscribers do pay the 10 cents per month surcharge per line, and they would prefer not to pay that.

But the reason why I am bringing it up with the committee -- and this really is the first time we have had any discussion about the topic -- is the usage has declined quite a bit. The

number of users statewide is frankly you could probably fit them in a large room, you know. For relay service, it was 53 unique relay users in January and 60 in February. And for CapTel it is less than 30 users a month.

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And so I think the Missouri PSC, who has the responsibility for setting the surcharge level, I think a logical question is: Well, if you are seeing usage and users for the services that Relay Missouri, that the Relay Missouri Fund pays for continue to decline, when do you start thinking about phasing it out or don't you? I mean, I really haven't heard that any other states in the country are talking about it. And frankly, I am surprised at that. But in any event, I feel some responsibility to see what the committee has to say about this topic and what to do, if anything, going forward. And we can continue going forward the way we have been. You know, we have concerns about -- or questions I should say -- about outreach. You know, we continue to spend money for outreach. Is that something that needs to be relooked at or not? And so far we just continue to go on.

And I see some hands up, so I will be quiet.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: So I would like Stacy, she was the first one to hold her hand up and then James, and then it can go to me. Anyway, I will let Stacy begin. She wanted to say something.

STACY BRADY: Thank you. So there is a couple of thoughts

here. One is relay users are not actually decreasing, just through the Missouri fund. They are using relay through other avenues and that's because of the change of technology. So it is not a decrease; it is just not being seen through the relay funds. So I just want to be clear on that.

Two, Chairman Rosenworcel of the FCC, says one individual that cannot access relay is one individual that is not getting their needs met. She finds -- she has said this repeatedly on her monthly meetings.

And there is actually a couple of things getting ready to happen. Next week the disability accessibility committee meeting is happening next week. You can watch it live. There is nobody representing relay administrators right now or the equipment programs right now on that committee which is really sad because all of these decisions at a federal level are taking place by the -- by a number of non-profit groups but also by the manufacturers or the providers. So that's something also that kind of plays into all of this.

And then there is also a lot of things going on with digital equity which again, this sounds like I am out in left field from the conversation, but the digital equity is how we are accessing the relay. And with all of these happening, comments are due on May 1st for the NTIA if anybody is interested in that. The reason I bring all of this up is, we in Missouri -- April said it earlier we are a rural state. Most of my

individuals who are using relay are cancer survivors who have had a laryngectomy. They are having to use TTY because they are not getting access to Internet. It is too cost prohibitive to get access to Internet, and ACP supposedly is supposed to be going away. I don't know when the deadline is. It started as the EBB, emergency broadband. It was temporary but they are supposed to be replacing that with something new which is part of what the NTIA is working with. So there is a lot of things happening.

But one person who can't access relay because of a lack of resource is one person who may be in a dire situation, and that's not formidable, and April mentioned it too.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Thank you, Stacy. Now on to James.

JAMES FROST: I have been listening to all of you speak. And I was thinking, you are focusing on one side of the equation, the number of users. However, one thought that comes to mind is the funding is coming down -- decreasing in part maybe because of the number of people who own land lines is going down too. Is that right?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: That is correct.

JAMES FROST: Okay. So what can we do then to fix that piece of the equation?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: In my opinion, that would require a legislative -- a change in the Missouri statutes because the Missouri statutes currently state how the Relay Missouri Fund

is to be funded, and we would need a change in Missouri statutes if we were to fund the Relay Missouri fund differently.

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JAMES FROST: So in theory it could be possible then for us to add a surcharge on cell phones?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Again, the Missouri statutes would need to change in order to allow that.

JAMES FROST: But there is nothing in federal law that prohibits that; am I correct?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: No. Our Missouri legislature would need to pass a bill that would revise these statutes to provide the authority to fund Relay Missouri Fund differently than it is currently funded.

JAMES FROST: Okay, but I just mean the federal law, there is nothing in federal law right now that prevents states from doing -- putting surcharges on cell phones or is that wrong?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: I am not aware of anything that would prevent that.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I just want to give you a better picture. So Missouri is a rural state, like we mentioned, and I know that Missouri is like the third largest farming state in the US. Just think about that. I mean funny to imagine that.

And then my question then is to Cady or maybe to Paul (sic): Has there been any discussion about stopping -- the CapTel?

CADY MACFEE: The CapTel. Yes, this is Cady. So last year

during this meeting I did share with you all about CapTel IP CTS. The Internet-based captioning is by Hamilton; that's who currently is the company that is doing that. Okay. And then we tried to provide CapTel for Missouri and the bottom line, there was no Internet phone -- okay? -- if that makes sense.

So there is two different types of phone. There is CapTel digital and then there is non-digital that is paid for by the Missouri Relay. So that's what John was mentioning is about the unique users. So we are not getting the people who are using digital CapTel. So, yes, we are not continuing the partnership with them. We have an agreement until the end of the state contract, if that makes sense. Okay.

So T-Mobile and the other are not working together as a provider. So we do have to provide until the end of the Missouri contract which is in 2025. So therefore, in the future, we are gonna have to ask for either state to either separate TRS and this other contract or to consider just the TRS contract or --

INTERPRETER: What's the other?

CADY MACFEE: Just have the TRS contract alone. So there are two options: To separate TRS and CapTel contract, like T-Mobile and Hamilton, or we could do one provider only for TRS and CapTel would go away because there are other options for CapTel. So there is many different other captioning providers out there who could do that.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: For James and all the new people, TRS is traditional relay services. So just want to make sure you are aware what that acronym stands for.

CADY MACFEE: Yes.

Did that help answer your question about CapTel? I know it was kind of vague.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yes, now I understand it better. I am trying to think globally, I was trying to think about all of that. Okay, yeah. We also have to think about not just deaf consumers, but deafblind, hearing with speech disabilities, you know, the list goes on. And that's what is so scary. That's what scares me right now and that's what I wanted to put out there. So Cady, would you like to say something?

CADY MACFEE: Yes, I would like to share with everybody on the committee that the ADA was written back in 1990, before we had the Internet, before we had cell phones, before we even had mentioned anything like that. So we are talking about -- John was talking about changing statute. You know we will have to do that because there is nowhere mentioned in the state administered funding for the CapTel phones. You know, with the ADA, you know, it is Title IV and the states are required to provide relay services, unless they have a -- have a -- (clarification) -- a statute -- unless they have a statute in place.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I understand all of that. I just want

to make sure that everybody is aware of that. There has been a 38
lot of amendments to the ADA and some changes. So just know
that the ADA has been around since 1990 but there have been a
lot of amendments to it and that as time has changed things.

Okay, I guess are there any other comments, thoughts, or
questions from anybody on the committee?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: I wanted to --

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: John, did you want to say something?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Yeah. And, you know, if people want some
more time to think about what we talked about today, that's
totally understandable. And after you have had some time to
think about the prospect of phasing out the Relay Missouri
Fund, feel free to reach out to Kari or myself or both of us.
We really are interested in your feedback and thoughts.

And I have to say, I am not sure what we are gonna do at
this point. We do have to make a recommendation with the
Missouri Commission sometime before February of next year. And
I anticipate we will probably point out a number of users for
these services and how usage has declined. We will share with
the committee our recommendation and I anticipate, you know, if
the committee wants to collectively as a group provide feedback
or maybe members want to individually provide the Missouri
Commissioners with feedback, that would be welcome because this
would be filed in a case I anticipate the Missouri Commission
will solicit input from the general public. But the Relay

Missouri Advisory Committee is the one body that I think they, 39
the Commissioners would pay close attention to, to whatever the
committee members would have to say and you just need to be
aware of that. So I welcome any feedback after the meeting.
We are under no real timeline to get a recommendation together
like within the next month. But I wanted to talk about it
today and we had some good feedback so far. But I wanted to
continue -- I want it to continue and get additional input down
the road.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: I have to close this out. Hold on one
moment.

First of all, like I mentioned, I really value those people
with all different disabilities. But I also highly value
T-Mobile's services and also Missouri Assistive Technology.
You know, both of them are wonderful in collaborating and I
don't want to lose either one of them. We all -- I mean I have
always believed in collaboration and so we are just one big --
we are in one big boat together and we are working on this to
serve people with different disabilities together.

And also I don't know if, John, if you remember or not, back
before Governor Parson took over, there was discussion all
around the state for about -- about Internet for the state.
But now that's kind of been gone away. Is there any more
discussion about the discussion about all of Missouri having
Internet access?

JOHN VAN ESCHEN: Yes. There has been quite a bit of discussion. A lot of funding has been provided to expand broadband service in Missouri, and it is going to continue over the next several years.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Thank you. So like John was saying, if anybody thinks of anything later, feel free to reach out and bother John and Kari. Let them know your thoughts and everything. We can bombard them with that. So, yeah. And I will do that even though, you know, you know, I am no longer a Commissioner. I just love to keep in touch with the two of you and the same for everybody else as well.

Now it is time to set some dates for the next meeting. Typically what we have done before, we meet two times a year. So this is April, so probably October would be the next.

KARI SALSMAN: If we stick with a Tuesday, what about October 17th at 10:00 a.m.?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Did you say 17th?

KARI SALSMAN: The 17th -- I believe that is a Tuesday -- at 10:00 a.m. if that time works for everybody?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Yes.

STACY BRADY: Yes.

CADY MACFEE: Yes.

KARI SALSMAN: You are still going to join us -- right? -- April?

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Well, for -- for Deaf members. Okay,

and again don't forget too to watch for Kari's e-mail with James Frost with his resume, so we can like vote on his position as a Chairperson. So I just want to remind -- and also about the Chairperson position, and if you can think of anybody else that would want to fill those vacancies, please get them to send the resumes to Kari. Okay?

Becky, did you want to say something?

Becky Davis, did you want to say something?

BECKY DAVIS: I am sorry. No. I just accidentally -- I just wanted to make sure. Did we say October 17th? Or I thought maybe it was October 10th. It looks like --

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: October 17th, yes.

BECKY DAVIS: Right, the 17th. Just wanted to make sure. I will put that in my calendar.

APRIL MASON DONOVAN: Okay. Thank you all so much for giving up your time and everything. Hope you have a wonderful day. And go out there and enjoy the beautiful weather. Bye-bye!