

State of Florida



Public Service Commission

CAPITAL CIRCLE OFFICE CENTER • 2540 SHUMARD OAK BOULEVARD
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-

DATE: February 21, 2019

TO: Office of Commission Clerk (Teitzman)

FROM: Office of Industry Development and Market Analysis (Williams) *CW* *HT* *CH*
Office of the General Counsel (Cowdery) *W S.M.C.*

RE: Docket No. 20190039-TP – Appointment of Margaret Lynn Duggar and Debbe Hagner to the Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991 (TASA) Advisory Committee.

AGENDA: 03/05/19 – Regular Agenda – Interested Persons May Participate

COMMISSIONERS ASSIGNED: All Commissioners

PREHEARING OFFICER: Brown

CRITICAL DATES: None

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: None

RECEIVED-FPSC
2019 FEB 21 AM 10:00
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

Case Background

The Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991 (TASA) established a statewide telecommunications relay system effective May 24, 1991. Section 427.704, Florida Statutes (F.S.), provides that the Florida Public Service Commission (Commission) shall establish, implement, promote, and oversee the administration of a statewide telecommunications access system to provide access to telecommunications relay services by persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired, and those who communicate with them. This system provides telecommunications service for deaf or hard of hearing persons that is functionally equivalent to the service provided to hearing persons.

The Florida Relay System provides deaf or hard of hearing persons access to basic telecommunications services by using a specialized Communication Assistant that relays information between the deaf or hard of hearing person and the other party to the call. The deaf

or hard of hearing person utilizes a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) to type a message to the Communication Assistant, who in turn voices the message to the other party or types the message to a Captioned Telephone (CapTel) which displays real-time captions of the conversation.

Pursuant to Section 427.706, F.S., the Commission shall appoint an advisory committee of no more than 10 members to assist the Commission with Florida's relay system. There are currently seven representatives serving on the advisory committee.

By statute, the advisory committee provides the expertise, experience, and perspective of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired to the Commission and to the administrator, Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI), during all phases of the development and operation of the telecommunications access system. The advisory committee advises the Commission and FTRI on the quality and cost-effectiveness of the telecommunications relay service and the specialized telecommunications devices distribution system. Members of the advisory committee are not compensated for their services but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses provided through the Florida Public Service Commission's Regulatory Trust Fund.

Discussion of Issues

Issue 1: Should the Commission approve the appointment of Margaret Lynn Duggar to the TASA advisory committee effective immediately?

Recommendation: Yes. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the appointment of Margaret Lynn Duggar to the TASA advisory committee effective immediately. (Williams, Cowdery)

Staff Analysis: Ms. Duggar was recommended by FTRI for appointment to the TASA advisory committee. Ms. Duggar has extensive experience and expertise addressing issues facing senior citizens, and her appointment will fill a current void on the committee representing the perspective of seniors. Section 427.706, F.S., mandates that, to the extent practicable, the TASA advisory committee have representation from the senior community, as well as other impacted groups.

In 1989, Ms. Duggar established Margaret Lynn Duggar & Associates, an independent consulting firm specializing in developing products and services for seniors. The firm also offers strategic planning, association management, and organizational leadership services.

Ms. Duggar will represent the interest of the Florida Council on Aging (FCOA)¹ and the Florida Association of Aging Services Providers (FASP).² FCOA is a statewide membership organization providing a host of services to Florida seniors. FASP members are also FCOA members, and focus more on community-based and in-home direct services to Florida's elderly. FCOA members include local councils on aging, senior centers, insurance companies, senior housing communities, and health care providers, among others.

Ms. Duggar has served as the Executive Director of the Senior Society Planning Council for the United Way, Executive Director of the Area Agency on Aging for North Florida, Inc., and State Director on Aging and Adult Services for the State of Florida. Ms. Duggar was inducted into the Florida Council on Aging Hall of Fame in 1989, and was recognized as the Gerontologist of the Year for 1989-1990, by the Gerontological Society of Florida. Ms. Duggar received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Florida State University.

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Duggar was recommended by FTRI and has the background and expertise to advise the Commission and FTRI on issues involving relay service and its impact on the senior community. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the appointment of Margaret Lynn Duggar to the TASA Advisory Committee effective immediately.

¹ <https://fcoa.org/index.php>

² <http://fasp.net/>

Issue 2: Should the Commission approve the appointment of Debbe Hagner to the TASA advisory committee effective immediately?

Recommendation: Yes. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the appointment of Debbe Hagner to the TASA advisory committee effective immediately. (Williams, Cowdery)

Staff Analysis: Ms. Hagner was recommended by the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCCDHH or Coordinating Council) for appointment to the TASA advisory committee.³ Ms. Hagner was born hard of hearing and has been an advocate for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing for many years.

Ms. Hagner is President of the Hearing Loss Association of America-Gulf Coast Chapter.⁴ Ms. Hagner has also previously served as Vice-Chair of FCCDHH.

FCCDHH is mandated by Section 413.271, F.S., to serve as an advisory and coordinating body which recommends policies that address the needs of Florida's deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind community. The Coordinating Council is composed of 17 members.⁵ The appointment of individual members not representing state agencies is made by the Governor. The appointment of members representing organizations is made by the Governor in consultation with the respective organization.

The Hearing Loss Association of America-Gulf Coast Chapter serves the needs of people with hearing loss by providing information and educational support, public awareness and both legislative and public policy advocacy. It is a local chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America.

As mentioned earlier, Ms. Hagner was recommended by the FCCDHH and has the background and expertise to advise the Commission and FTRI on relay service. Staff recommends that the Commission approve the appointment of Debbe Hagner to the TASA advisory committee effective immediately.

³ <http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/fccdhh/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.hlagulfcoast.com/>

⁵ <http://www.floridahealth.gov/provider-and-partner-resources/fccdhh/membership.html>

Issue 3: Should this docket be closed?

Recommendation: Yes. The docket should be closed. (Cowdery)

Staff Analysis: The docket should be closed.