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BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20240056-TP

Commission approval of Florida  
Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s  
fiscal year 2024-2025 proposed  
budget.

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PROCEEDINGS: COMMISSION CONFERENCE AGENDA  
ITEM NO. 3

COMMISSIONERS  
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN MIKE LA ROSA  
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM  
COMMISSIONER GARY F. CLARK  
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY  
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center  
Room 148  
4075 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK  
Court Reporter and  
Notary Public in and for  
the State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
(850) 894-0828

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: All right. Let's move to  
3 our discussion items, starting with Item No. 3.

4 I will allow folks to file in and take their  
5 seat.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Commissioners,  
7 Curtis Williams with the Office of Industry  
8 Development & Market Analysis.

9 Item 3 is Florida Telecommunications Relay,  
10 Incorporated's, proposed budget and the  
11 telecommunications relay surcharge for fiscal year  
12 2024-2025.

13 In Issue 1, staff recommends approval of  
14 FTRI's proposed budget expenses of 3.2 million for  
15 fiscal year 2024-2025.

16 In Issue 2, staff recommends approval of  
17 FTRI's proposal to reduce the surcharge from nine  
18 cents to eight cents, and recommends the Commission  
19 order all local exchange companies to bill the  
20 eight cents surcharge for fiscal year 2024-2025,  
21 effective September 1st 2024.

22 Mr. Cecil Bradley, FTRI's Executive Director,  
23 is present, along with Mr. Robert Walters, FTRI's  
24 legal counsel.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

2 And my understanding is that Mr. Bradley would  
3 like to address the Commission. You are  
4 recognized.

5 MR. BRADLEY: Good morning, Commissioners.  
6 Cecil Bradley.

7 I have nothing to really say, but I do  
8 appreciate the communication and the discussions on  
9 the budget, also your support for the relay report  
10 to be included in the recommendation.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you.

13 Commissioners, is there questions or  
14 discussions?

15 Commissioner Fay, you are recognized.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
17 And I appreciate you being here, Mr. Bradley. I  
18 just have a few questions for you.

19 I just want to start by acknowledging that,  
20 you know, your budget comes to us every year, and  
21 there has been a lot of discussion previously about  
22 issues that have been brought up that maybe could  
23 be improved.

24 From what I have seen in the past few years,  
25 we've seen constant improvement, and so I just want

1 to start by saying I appreciate that, and I think a  
2 lot of good has been done since you have been  
3 there, so I do appreciate all the work that you are  
4 doing.

5 I do want to talk a little bit about the  
6 continued reduction in the fee, and so I know the  
7 Commission continues to look at those numbers and  
8 work towards at least what's viable as maybe a --  
9 termed as a balance budget, or balance it with the  
10 revenues and expenses that come in every year.

11 Once again, I think you have done a great job  
12 with that this year. The budget puts you in the  
13 black, and I think that's key, and I think a large  
14 part of that is due to the decisions to put some of  
15 these funds into low risk investments, and utilize  
16 that interest to provide customers more resources  
17 without either keeping the fee where it is, or even  
18 raising it, which I think sometimes is proposed to  
19 us, and so I appreciate all the work on that.

20 I do think that the continued advancements in  
21 technology will be something that are an obvious  
22 solution or at least option maybe for the future.  
23 I know you have reiterated that to the Commission.  
24 And I really want to be clear that whatever we can  
25 do within this budget year to support that change,

1 I know there is probably a number of things that  
2 could be changed within the law, but I do think the  
3 obvious one is this limitation that we've discussed  
4 before about smart devices that could be presented  
5 to individuals with these challenges to allow them  
6 to access only the ability to communicate on that  
7 device based on either software or hardware  
8 limitations, and resolve a lot of the communication  
9 challenges that the individuals that you represent  
10 have.

11 And so my hope is that, you know, this is an  
12 issue that is bipartisan that you have expressed to  
13 us that could be resolved and really open up the  
14 opportunity. And with my conversations with other  
15 entities and other commissions seems to be  
16 something that they have either already moved  
17 towards, or there are some states that don't have a  
18 equipment program at all, as you know. They only  
19 provide the relay service.

20 So I just want to reiterate our support for  
21 that. I think our team is in the process of  
22 filling our legislative director position, and that  
23 individual obviously works throughout session to  
24 keep us apprised of things that move through the  
25 process, and so I hope you will be able to meet

1 with that person once they come on board, and just  
2 utilize maybe some of their knowledge to make sure  
3 that this change could be made.

4 So I know you are working on it. I don't mean  
5 to make it sound as a critique to you, because I  
6 know we agree that that would be a great solution,  
7 but I just -- I have begun to have a sense of  
8 frustration when I see this item and the inability,  
9 to be frank, just the government hurdle, the burden  
10 that's being placed on government to -- from  
11 government to prohibit you from doing what you  
12 believe is right for these customers even when the  
13 funds are available. So I highly support your  
14 pursuit in that, and I hope that we will see, you  
15 know, continued support from others as we move  
16 forward. So thank you for continuing to work on  
17 that.

18 The last thing I wanted to mention is just  
19 your outreach components in the budget. I think  
20 the numbers are reasonable, and I think you are  
21 working hard to adopt new technology there to  
22 customers, but I did want to ask maybe, you know,  
23 in a further update, or maybe next time you bring  
24 the budget back to the Commission, if we could have  
25 some better idea of the FTRI's ability to contact

1 the individual that needs these resources at a more  
2 direct point.

3 And what I am getting at is I don't know when  
4 individuals are diagnosed -- medically diagnosed as  
5 deaf, or speech or hearing impaired, if at that  
6 time they are given information about the resources  
7 that are available. Right now it seems to be that  
8 we take a large shot and kind of hope that the  
9 individuals that need these services see that and  
10 grab on to that. But if you have any ideas, or  
11 your team has any ideas as to ways that we could  
12 target those individuals better, bringing forward  
13 your budget and communication in the future. I  
14 don't want you to feel limited just because that  
15 budget has been previously set at the amount that  
16 it's at. I think, you know, you should give  
17 consideration to maybe ways to improve that.

18 So I know that's a lot thrown at you. If you  
19 want to comment on any of it, you are welcome to do  
20 so. Otherwise, I just really appreciate you being  
21 in the role that you are in, and I just hope nobody  
22 steals you from this position in the future,  
23 because the Florida really needs somebody with this  
24 type fine of leadership to move us forward, so  
25 thank you again.

1 MR. BRADLEY: Thank you, Commissioner Fay.

2 I would like to add to your point and clarify  
3 that we also always take into consideration that we  
4 are pursuing newer kinds of services as well on how  
5 to do that outreach and to different audiologists,  
6 speech therapists and all other providers that  
7 could help us reach these people and give us  
8 referrals. So that's a big part of that  
9 relationship when we offer equipment for people who  
10 are speech impaired, and we also, we are trying to  
11 reach those people who are speech impaired  
12 specifically for that purpose.

13 Other services we need are to be able to  
14 contact hearing aid specialists, audiologists. We  
15 want to offer referrals for them, and to focus  
16 toward that way, and then hopefully next year we  
17 will be able to recommend some improvements on  
18 referrals and for all of those different  
19 professionals in those areas.

20 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Chairman, just one  
21 quick follow-up.

22 Mr. Bradley, could you provide any sort of  
23 update maybe where your thoughts are with the  
24 legislative process and what you might be looking  
25 at or pursuing?



1           MR. BRADLEY: Thank you, Commissioner Fay, and  
2 all the Commissioners.

3           I am very appreciative, very, very  
4 appreciative, very please to say that I am working  
5 very closely with a state senator, the state  
6 senators, their legislative aides and the PSC  
7 legislative liaison.

8           We are moving along and merging two different  
9 drafts. We have two different drafts. At the  
10 current time, we are cleaning up a bill for the  
11 next step, and we are trying to find what to do as  
12 far as the state senators and what they will do  
13 next. We know that we need to look at the House to  
14 find a sponsorship there.

15           So we are moving along. We are working the  
16 process this summer. And I am very optimistic for  
17 this coming fall that we will get a bill number  
18 that we can -- so that we can propose that to the  
19 legislative committee. So we are making movement  
20 -- we are making some movement on that.

21           Thank you.

22           COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.

23           And, you know, thank you to our Chairman.

24           We -- I might know somebody who has some knowledge  
25 about the House, and maybe, you know, could help

1 with that process. So if we can do anything as a  
2 commission to support, that please let us know, but  
3 thank you again for your time and effort.

4 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Thank you, Commissioner  
5 Fay. And, you know, I echo the same remarks, very  
6 well said. And I, of course, would be happy to  
7 help as we get prepared for the incoming  
8 legislative session. I think similar comments to  
9 what I had last year was that, you know, I  
10 appreciate the outreach and understand the need.  
11 And if we make this a priority as we move into the  
12 legislative session, I know we did last year, but I  
13 want to make sure that we continue to do that.

14 And, you know again, Mr. Bradley, thank you  
15 for your continued advocacy and your hard work and  
16 your push, and I look forward to seeing the end  
17 result of the legislation that you are ready to  
18 file. But we will make sure we keep that close,  
19 and you have certainly got entitled a head start as  
20 that process is just starting to unfold, but thank  
21 you very much.

22 MR. BRADLEY: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Commissioners, any other  
24 questions or thoughts?

25 COMMISSIONER FAY: I would just be prepared to

1 make a motion, Mr. Chairman, as your discretion.

2 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Okay. I think we are  
3 ready.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. With that, Mr.  
5 Chairman, I would prove to all -- staff  
6 recommendation of all issues on Item 3.

7 COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Hearing a motion and  
9 hearing a second.

10 All those in favor signify by saying yay.

11 (Chorus of yays.)

12 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Yay.

13 Opposed no.

14 (No response.)

15 CHAIRMAN LA ROSA: Show Item No. 3 passes.

16 Thank you.

17 (Agenda item concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

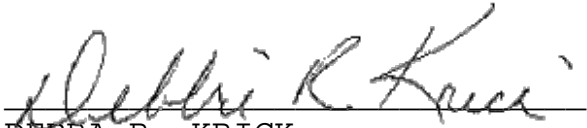
STATE OF FLORIDA )  
COUNTY OF LEON )

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby  
certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the  
time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I  
stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the  
same has been transcribed under my direct supervision;  
and that this transcript constitutes a true  
transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative,  
employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor  
am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'  
attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I  
financially interested in the action.

DATED this 2nd day of July, 2024.

  
DEBRA R. KRICK  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
COMMISSION #HH31926  
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024