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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20210050-TP

Commission approval of Florida
Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s
fiscal year 2021/2022 proposed budget.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: COMMISSION CONFERENCE AGENDA
ITEM NO. 2

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

DATE: Tuesday, June 15, 2021

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

REPORTED BY: DANA W. REEVES
Court Reporter and
Notary Public in and for
the State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING
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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next up is Item No. 2,
3 approval of Florida Telecommunications Relay fiscal
4 years 2021-22 proposed budget. Mr. Futrell, will
5 you introduce the item?

6 MR. FUTRELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
7 morning, Commissioners. Item No. 2 is staff's
8 recommendation on the Florida Telecommunications
9 Relay, Incorporated 2021-2022 proposed budget. In
10 issue one, staff recommends that the commission
11 approve FTRI's proposed budget expenses of
12 \$4,450,727, and that the surcharge be maintained at
13 ten cents per access line. Staff also recommends
14 that the Commission require FTRI conduct a
15 financial break-even analysis of the regional
16 distribution center fee structure and present the
17 results to the Commission with its fiscal year
18 2022-2023 proposed budget. A representative of
19 FTRI are available for questions, as is staff.

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Futrell.
21 Commissioners, any questions? Commissioner Fay.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
23 got to remember the buttons are here to let you
24 knew.

25 Just a quick question. Well, first, I guess,

1 Mr. Chairman, if it's okay, I believe Mr. Keller is
2 on the line and might have an interpreter with him.
3 He's the new executive director for FTRI and just
4 want to give him a quick second maybe to introduce
5 himself and then I'll throw a somewhat friendly
6 question his way.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Keller, are you on the
8 line? Mr. Keller, are you available?

9 COMMISSIONER FAY: If he's not available,
10 that's okay. Make sure Mr. Bascom's on the line
11 maybe.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Bascom, are you
13 available?

14 MR. BASCOM: Good morning, this is Brett
15 Bascom, FTRI.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Mr. Bascom, just a
17 quick question for you on the budget item, and it
18 might be something that our -- is somebody else
19 there?

20 MR. KELLER: Yes, I'm here this morning. Go
21 ahead.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: Is this Mr. Keller? Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Keller, are you
24 available? Is that Mr. Keller on the line? Mr.
25 Keller, can you hear us?

1 MR. KELLER: Yes, go ahead.

2 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Keller -- go ahead, Mr.
3 Chairman. I didn't meant to interrupt. Mr.
4 Keller, I was just giving you a chance to introduce
5 yourself to the Commission if you wanted to before
6 I sent a question your way. But if it's all right
7 with you, maybe I'll ask my question, of course,
8 either you or Mr. Bascom could respond
9 appropriately.

10 My question was just regarding the funds
11 that -- the budget in front of us. We don't have a
12 request for transfer for funds from the reserve for
13 this year and I know Mr. Keller is just getting
14 settled in, but I just wanted to see if in recent
15 years we have granted transfers for those funds, or
16 if this is one of the first years in a while that
17 we haven't needed to touch that reserve, or at that
18 least give authority to touch that reserve. It's
19 something our staff could answer, too, if Mr.
20 Bascom or Mr. Keller can't answer.

21 MR. BASCOM: This is Brett Bascom. I'd be
22 happy to answer that.

23 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Go ahead.

24 MR. BASCOM: The actual surplus funds although
25 in previous years staff has recommended, and the

1 Commissioners have all approved transfer of a
2 certain amount of funds between -- to cover any
3 shortfall in previous years, logistically, that
4 really never happens from a practical standpoint.
5 I've never really had to transfer, you know,
6 physically transfer funds from one account to
7 another, just due to timing effects of how our
8 revenues come in and expenses are paid. So we
9 sincerely appreciate the Commission's approval of
10 those funds when we have the approval to transfer
11 them if needed. So we kind of add that if needed
12 factor in there. And luckily over the years, you
13 know, timing effects and whatnot have not required
14 us to actually transfer funds between our two bank
15 accounts, one is a fund that was created, actually,
16 by the PSC by allowing us to build up a surplus
17 fund for IPCTS. And that's it, about 15.5 million
18 dollars. Then our operating account is about three
19 million dollars and that allows us to pay our bills
20 and keep things moving. So that's logistically how
21 it happens. From a Commission standpoint, those
22 two funds are added together and that's our
23 18-million-dollar amount in surplus funds. I hope
24 that answers your question. If you have more, I'd
25 be happy to try and explain it further.

1 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah, just a quick
2 follow-up, Mr. Chairman, if that's all right. I do
3 appreciate your answers. That surplus component, I
4 think to your point, hasn't been used. So when I
5 look at this year's budget and look at the reality
6 that were between the revenues and expenses, we're
7 about \$50,000 off from being at a break-even. I'm
8 inclined to want to look at that budget and see
9 where we could make that up, but I do think to your
10 point it's better to have it there at this point,
11 to allow it if necessary to be spent down, even if
12 you don't need to do so. But I guess just going
13 forward, Mr. Bascom, would you anticipate any
14 problems with what the recommendation includes as
15 it relates to doing a break-even analysis and
16 coming back with some of the information regard
17 access to your website and information for your
18 customers?

19 MR. BASCOM: Correct. Yes. Thank you for
20 that. The -- I'll break those down into the two
21 different components there of the recommendation,
22 and that is the break-even analysis, you know, we
23 rely on the regional distribution center's to
24 supply us with the information in order to conduct
25 any sort of -- and we've called it a break-even

1 analysis and it's really more accurately, at least
2 from FTRI's standpoint, it's more accurately a
3 adequate funding model to allow the regional
4 distribution centers to operate the FTRI program.
5 So I guess we can call it a break-even analysis,
6 but in that respect, you know, we're relying on the
7 RDC's to provide, you know, some specific data to
8 us. And that was not done in a very complete or
9 efficient manner when we requested it in past
10 years, and this goes back to FTRI has requested
11 this type of information from the regional
12 distribution centers as far back as 20 years ago.
13 Every few years we try and get them to give us some
14 specific information on how to -- how we can look
15 at their funding that we provide to do the FTRI
16 program, and they're just particularly, you know,
17 for whatever reason, reluctant to provide very
18 specific information. So I think maybe if we
19 provide more of a survey type of request going
20 forward, maybe we can get more information.

21 Aside from that, FTRI originally came up with
22 the funding model that we currently have by doing
23 an in-house, using our own facility as an RDC and
24 figure out, well, how long does it take for
25 somebody to serve a client and how long does it

1 take to, you know, process paper work. And that's
2 really how we came up with the original funding
3 model that we're currently operating under for the
4 regional distribution centers. And we would like
5 to update that, and I think going forward we can do
6 that with the support of the regional distribution
7 centers giving us more information. So we're going
8 to work on that over this year and I look forward
9 to, you know, providing a more-complete report for
10 you next year.

11 As far as the chat function or the website
12 functionality goes, we do have a vendor who is
13 currently working on providing some details. And
14 as far as cost and what it would take to do that.
15 They've been given the information that,
16 Commissioner Fay, you provided to us, as far as --
17 I believe that was the Florida Children's and
18 Families' website, I believe, Access Florida, I
19 think it was called, that actually had the chat
20 function on there, and I provided that to them.
21 And they're looking into it and hopefully we'll
22 have some information in the future to see how we
23 can increase that functionality of our website.
24 Hope that answers your question.

25 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah, it does. It answers

1 all my questions, Mr. Bascom. I appreciate it. I
2 know the Chair was gracious enough to allow us to
3 do an internal affairs meeting where we had a lot
4 of discussion about the program itself and, of
5 course, you're in a time of transition with the new
6 executive director, and so it's important to me
7 just to make sure that when we approve the budget
8 that's presented to us here that there aren't any
9 hurdles in your way to, at least making an
10 analysis, on things that you could do to improve
11 your operation going forward, and that the
12 Commission could then see those things with some
13 numbers attached to them so we can make an
14 assessment within the budget what you need, and I
15 think you've addressed all those and we've had a
16 pretty good conversation in that IA meeting about
17 those, so I appreciate you continuing to work on
18 it. And, once again, if we -- you know, there's
19 something that you need the Commission to revisit,
20 please let us know to do so, but otherwise I
21 thought the budget looked very good and I thought
22 staff did a good job pointing out the things that
23 were relevant and the changes, knowing that we had
24 a really tough 2020, which made it challenging
25 within COVID -- the COVID world, to make a

1 determination as to what numbers should be used and
2 how we make that determination. So, with that, I'm
3 comfortable approving staff's recommendation and
4 motioning to do so, but I'll make sure, Mr.
5 Chairman, nobody else has any comments.

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Any other Commissioner's have
7 comments or questions?

8 MR. BASCOM: If I could just make an
9 additional comment, Commissioner?

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes.

11 MR. BASCOM: This is Brett Bascom. I just
12 want to also -- you know, really sincerely thank
13 the Commission for allowing us the time during the
14 internal affairs, as well as the communication and
15 time that staff spent with us over the past several
16 months working on the budget. And appreciate, you
17 know, all the Commission is doing to try and help
18 us move that along. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Bascom, and
20 thank you, Mr. Keller, for the hard work and
21 outstanding work that you guys do for Florida
22 Telecommunications Relay. I also want to thank
23 Commissioner Fay for the leadership role he has
24 taken in working with FTR and the leadership role
25 he's taken, even on a national level in the

1 telecomm area. Appreciate the hard work and effort
2 that you've put in there, as well.

3 All right. Any other questions from any
4 Commissioners? Commissioner Fay, you're recognized
5 for a motion.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd
7 move approval for item -- all issues on Item 2,
8 staff recommendation on Item 2.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I have a motion and a second.
10 Is there any discussion?

11 (No comments made.)

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: On the motion, all in favor
13 say, aye.

14 (Chorus of ayes.)

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Opposed?

16 (No comments made.)

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Motion carries. Thank you
18 very much.

19 (Agenda item concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DANA W. REEVES, Professional 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 29th day of June, 2021.



DANA W. REEVES
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #GG970595
EXPIRES MARCH 22, 2024