

**Vermont Telecommunications Relay Service
Advisory Council Meeting
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Department of Public Service, Zoom Virtual Meeting Space
July 10th, 2024, 10:00a.m. to 12:00p.m.

Attendees:

Aaron Brassard, PSD Telecom (Acting Vice Chair)
Rene Pellerin – Chair
Michelle Vicino, Account Manager at T-Mobile for VT Relay Services
Melissa McMahan, Account Manager for Hamilton Relay (VT CapTel)
Nick Parker, Deputy Director at VCIL and oversee EDP Program
Laura Siegel, Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Services
Scott Brooks – Consolidated Communications
Harlie Quero, PSD, Telecommunications Coordinator, (Notetaker)

Observers:

Andrew Brenaman, T Mobile Accessibility

Interpreters:

Virginia Cark, ASL
Alicia Youngman, ASL
Nicole Comtois, ASL
Stephanie Cramer, ASL

Action Item	Person Responsible	Deadline
E911 Meeting Scheduling	Hunter Thompson/Harlie Quero	7/10/2024
RCC Usage	Hunter Thompson	7/10/2024
Follow up on Vermont Representation in NASRA	Hunter Thompson/Rene Pellerin	7/10/2024
T-Mobile Report	Jorika Stockwell	7/10/2024
Hamilton Relay Report	Melissa McMahan	7/10/2024
EDP Report	Nick Parker	7/10/2024

Introductions

Call to order by Rene Pellerin. Meeting begins at 10am

Old Business

Revisions to Meeting Agenda and Previous Meeting Minutes

No Revisions to agenda proposed.

Motion to accept meeting minutes proposed by Aaron Brassard

Seconded by Nick Parker

Accepted by council.

E911 Meeting Scheduling Information.

Harlie requests that all council members send summer vacation schedules over, so meeting between Enhanced 911 Board and the VTRS Advisory Council can be scheduled.

RCC Usage Analysis

Item tabled for October for further information and elaboration.

Aaron: "PSD determined it only pays for what it uses"

NASRA Representation by the Department

Item tabled for October, as Hunter Thompson was unable to attend July 10th meeting.

New Business

T-Mobile Report presented by Jorika Stockwell

Social Media and Outreach - Shared information on Deaf/Blind awareness week, RCC, Better Hearing & Speech, and RCC trainings. Has done digital advertising on the VT Biz Magazine. In person outreach includes, HLAA Chapter Meeting. RCC Trainings. T-Mobile is always looking for more suggestions for in-person events.

Usage - RCC Usage was all over the place, but there was a spike in February. Most calls are TTY users with 61% of usage.

Relay Website - Visitors and hits have remained the same for the last year. There was a little spike in March.

Discussion - No questions

Hamilton Relay presented by Melissa McMahan

Internal Update – Melissa is the interitem Account manager for the Vermont CapTel Program.

Customer Service Report - Answered 100% of calls within 10 Seconds. Session to Conversation Minute Ratio remains pretty good. No significant increases or decreases. Slight decline in April. In May, that volume has come back up. Quality scores include, words per minute are at 165.33, with an average rate of accuracy 99.63%, and error rate at 0.37%.

Hamilton Community Leader Award Information - Statewide recognition Award for those in administration or advocacy roles. Award recognizes those that serve and advocate for this community. 2024 Nomination is due August 2nd, more information can be found on their website.

Discussion – CapTel Users

Laura: “How many people use this relay service?”

Melissa: “I don’t have that, but I can get that information and share it with the Department who can pass it along to you.”

Laura: “Great thank you, I have been doing some research and want to follow up and help those that may need the CapTel Service.”

Melissa: “I will generate this report and send it to Aaron and Harlie.”

Harlie: “Thank you, I will pass that along once I receive it.”

Rene: “Do you have CapTel Captioning for Brail users?”

Melissa: “I do not have that level of detail, but I can investigate that and follow up.”

Discussion – Equipment Contact Information

Nick: “Regarding CapTel phones, is there a local Vermont number that I should be using instead of the National Phone number when reaching out for equipment information?”

Melissa: “Are you calling WCI?”

Nick: “Yes. I can still do it that way, I wasn’t sure if there was another way to do it. We are still getting quite a few requests for those CapTel phone with the larger screen. We are trying to get the word out on that.”

Discussion – ACP Closure Impact

Nick: “Now that the ACP is gone, and bills are going up in price. Have you noticed any impact on your customers?”

Melissa: “We haven’t seen that impact just yet. We have some providers that are offering a partial discount. Time will tell on this front. If that is something that you are interested in, I can make note of that and put this in the next meeting.”

Nick: “Yes please. We want to see if our application numbers are being affected by the people’s ability to afford internet. Thank you.”

New Business: EDP Report presented by Nick Parker

Applications - For the quarter, 12 applications, 3 new applications received. VCIL is still getting a fair number of inquiries.

Outreach - In person - Attended the VANCRO Hearing Day and Pride in Montpelier. Doing a lot of virtual outreach efforts. VCIL is still trying to do more in-person events. The virtual ones are a good way to add onto that. TEDPA Conference, Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program conference. Going in 2026, not able to attend this year. Conference is held every two years.

Partnerships - Still partnering with VT Assistive Technology Project. They receive a lot more requests for phones to help those with cognitive disabilities. Example provided, the RAZ mobile phone. Some of those phones have been returned because of the backend user situation. This phone requires assistance from another person, primarily a family member or caregiver and the user may not favor that situation.

Discussion –Referral Process

Laura: “When people are filling out their EDP application, does it state where they can get a referral from? Or where are they being referred from?”

Nick: “I am not sure if that's on the application. But Peter is working with someone to make the application to make it more accessible. That's an interest of mine.”

Laura: “Might help us with outreach and getting the program information out there. What are your outreach strategies?”

Nick: “We have had an ad on WCAX TV, and word of mouth have been helpful, such as other agencies, and family and friends. A lot of them are coming from places like doctor's offices too.”

Laura: “I have been doing the outreach too, and letting people know about this program.”

Discussion - TEDPA Conference

Jorika: “The TEDPA Conference is at the national level. I used to run the EDP in Vermont and went to that conference every single year.”

Nick: “Things did not work out this year. But I will be going in 2026. Excited to hopefully go.”

Discussion – Beyond Deaf and Deafblind services

Rene: “I am also on the FCC Dimena Disability Council Committee. We are often trying to solve the issues around best practices for relay service, amongst many different groups, such as how do we work with people who have dementia and use the relay services? We are voting on some of that process on October 18th, and that should get out to you in the future.”

Nick: “That's great information. I look forward to seeing that. The Brain Injury alliance in VT ended, which is devastating. Some individuals may not have hearing issues, but they may have cognition and memory issues which effects how they process and hear the information.

Rene: “There are a lot of disabled groups. We must think outside of the box, there are a lot of different equipment types out there. We have used remote Amazon assistance in the past.”

Open Discussion

All contracts for the Vermont TRS Program are signed and PSD is set for the next two years.

Next meeting on October 9th

Meeting adjourned 10:44am.

For October 9th – Action Items for Council Members

Action Item	Person Responsible	Deadline
CapTel Usership Breakdown	Melissa McMahan	10/9/2024
ACP Impact on CapTel users	Melissa McMahan	10/9/2024
EDP Application Information: Referral process	Nick Parker	10/9/2024
E911 Meeting Scheduled	Harlie Quero	7/10/2024
FCC Dementia Disability Council Update*	Rene Pellerin	2025
NASRA Update	Rene Pellerin/Hunter Thompson	10/9/2024
T-Mobile Report	Michelle Vicino	10/9/2024
EDP Report	Peter Johnke	10/9/2024
Hamilton Relay Report	Melissa McMahan	10/9/2024
Scheduling 2025 Meetings	Harlie Quero	10/9/2024