

Telecommunications Relay Service Council of Maine

John Post, Chair

Benjamin Frech, Executive Director



Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2025

9:30 AM EST -11:30 AM EST (via [zoom](#))

Call to Order (Benjamin Frech) at 9:32

Welcome & Introductions

Present: John Post, Chair (Maine Association for the Deaf); Riley Albair (Disability Rights Maine); Michael Johnson (Maine Public Utilities Commission); Terry Morrell (Director of the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened); Eric Conrad (Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened); Megan Garrity (Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing).

Absent: Simon Thorne (Consolidated Communications); Sylvia Most (Maine Office of the Public Advocate) & Jessica Perez (Maine Connectivity Authority)

Also in attendance: Allison LaBrie (Hamilton Relay); Andrew Brenneman (T-Mobile); Mary Beth Mothersell (T-Mobile).

Review of the Minutes of the Council Meeting – December 6, 2024

Description of process of drafting meeting minutes. December minutes shared on screen.

Motion to accept the minutes by Michael Johnson, seconded by Eric Conrad. Unanimous.

Presentation & Report on TRS Outreach Program/Disability Rights Maine (Riley Albair)

Slides, which were distributed to the Council prior to the meeting, were shared via Ben's screen.

Riley provided a brief overview of DRM's Relay Outreach Program. DRM's mission, organizational info, and duties were covered before describing Maine's Telecommunications Equipment Program. Riley then continued on to present the history and details of the relay outreach program.

After the presentation, Eric asked about the impact of federal funding uncertainty on DRM and other organizations associated with the Council. Riley and Ben responded with how the programs are funded, Michael clarified the funding sources and process. Also reminded Ben of the Council's budget report due in June. Terry clarified Dept. of Labor's role and funding for the Equipment Distribution Program.

Before moving on, John offered to assist Ben with the Budget. Ben recapped presenting the Council's budget during the public hearing.

Report from Executive Director

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Ben provided a brief overview of the document he shared with the Council prior to the meeting. Updating membership, submitted reports since the previous meeting, RFP summary, formation of Future of CTS subcommittee, & updates from national organizations.

Riley added support for the CTS Subcommittee and provided some additional thoughts.

Motion to form CTS Subcommittee by Riley Albair, seconded by John Post. Unanimous.

Ben continued with summary of ED Report. Discounted internet program discussion pushed back to June meeting since MCA not at meeting.

Reports from Officers

- Report from John Post, Council Chair

Thanked everyone for their participation in this meeting, thanked folks from the subcommittee for their work on the RFP and the entire process involved with that. Highlighted working closely with Ben, a lot of back and forth with the approval for the budget and payments made, and it's been going pretty well.

Ben came to the Maine Association of the Deaf general meeting, which was held in December, which is generally for the Deaf community to be there, but it was really nice for them to put a face to the name and know who Ben was and what he was doing for TRS. John also made a request if members would consider joining as an officer in any of those positions, would love to have a Vice President, Treasurer.

Ben echoed the request for Council officers.

Reports from Committees:

- Report from the RFP Subcommittee (Ben)
Covered earlier in meeting.
- Update re: Council Seats (Riley & Ben)
Discussed status of letters for Eric, Terry, & Michael as well as seats waiting on Gubernatorial appointments.

Other Reports:

- Report from the Maine Public Utilities Commission (Michael Johnson)
None.
- Report from Office of the Public Advocate (Sylvia Most)
None (absent).
- Report from T-Mobile Relay Communications (Mary Beth Mothersell, Senior Customer Relations Manager for Maine Relay)
No complaints from users since last meeting. Complimented Riley for her presentation and offered T-Mobile as a resource if needed.

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- Report from Hamilton Relay/CapTel (Allison LaBrie)
Since last meeting, the minutes did increase, which is holiday season so it was expected, declining back down in January. Began working on compiling some data for the (CTS) subcommittee.
In January, we had nine phones used. The last time we were above 20 was in April of '23. So just some fun numbers to put in your heads to start with. Offered to compile anything else Council needs to help with decision making. Otherwise, quality has been good, no complaints, just a couple of calls to customer care in the last quarter.

Old Business:

- Approval of final draft of Council By-laws
Ben described need to finalize by-laws at June meeting and will address hybrid meeting policy before then.
Michael added that statute trumps rules and by-laws, and that as long as the Council is following statute, there shouldn't be an issue.
Continued discussion about the recording of votes.
- Approval of Website Update
Ben, Michael, and Riley provided a summary of their meeting with InforME re: updating the Council's website and what services they would provide. John asked for clarity around the cost and the process, what other states are doing, and accessibility.
Motion to approve \$7,300 for upgrades and updates to the Council's website via contract with InforME by Michael Johnson, seconded by Terry Morrell. Unanimous.

New Business:

- Formation of subcommittee to discuss future of CapTel Services
Discussed earlier in meeting.
- Approval to begin RFP process for Outreach services
Ben laid out timeline and that he had already discussed serving on RFP Evaluation team with Jessica, Simon, and Eric.
Permit the Council to begin the request for proposal process for Outreach Services for the TRS Council by Michael Johnson, seconded by Eric Conrad. Unanimous (Riley Albair abstains).
- Discounted Internet Legislation/Pilot Project
Postponed to June Meeting.

Next Meeting: June 6, 2025

Adjourn @ 11:02 AM

Motion by John Post, seconded by Terry Morrell. Unanimous.

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