

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Docket No. 6012

Generic Investigation Into the Transition)
from Regulation to Competition for Public)
Telephone Services in Vermont)

Order Entered: 12/29/2000

PROCEDURAL ORDER RE: PUBLIC INTEREST PAYPHONES
AND NOTICE OF WORKSHOP

On December 14, 2000, the Vermont Public Service Board ("Board") received a report in this docket from the Vermont Department of Public Service ("DPS") on the need for a public interest payphone program in Vermont. In this report, the DPS concludes that "there exists some level of unmet public safety, health, and welfare-related needs for payphones in Vermont" and that "it does not seem reasonable to conclude that these needs can be met by the operation of the market alone." Consequently, the DPS recommends that it is now "necessary to develop a detailed plan for meeting the unmet payphone location needs in Vermont."

To begin the process of developing such a plan, the DPS suggests that "the Board seek comment from all interested stakeholders on the most appropriate way to address this problem." Specifically, the DPS indicates that "comments may include voluntary programs, requirements that each payphone provider in Vermont support a certain number of public interest payphones, placement of public interest payphones by municipalities, funding through a special grant program, funding through a statewide general fund program, requirements that local exchange providers sponsor public interest payphones in their service territories, as well as any other ideas that stakeholders may generate."

I agree with the DPS that it is now appropriate to re-examine the need for a public interest payphone program in Vermont. Therefore, I ask all interested persons and parties to comment on the following:

1. Do you agree with the DPS's conclusion that there is now a need for a public interest payphone program in Vermont?

2. If such a program is to be implemented, how should the program be designed? (In responding to this question, please provide comments on the DPS's options as outlined above.)
3. Should the state's existing Universal Service Fund be employed for this program, notwithstanding the DPS's comments that this may be impossible because of the existing 2% cap on the telecommunications surcharge? If not, are there any other possible funding sources not suggested by the DPS above?
4. Should the Board examine the costs of public access lines ("PALs") and public access smart lines ("PASLs") to payphone providers to determine if the goals of a public interest payphone program could be met through a non-regulatory approach?

Parties and interested persons should file any comments on these questions with the Board and all parties by January 15, 2001. A workshop will be held on Thursday, January 25, 2001, at the Public Service Board Hearing Room, Third Floor, Chittenden Bank Building, 112 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont, at 10:00 A.M., to discuss these issues and determine the schedule for further consideration of these issues by the Board.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont this 29th day of December, 2000.

s/Peter B. Meyer

Peter B. Meyer
Hearing Officer

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: December 29, 2000

Attest: s/Susan M. Hudson

Clerk of the Board

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corrections may be made. (E-mail address: Clerk@psb.state.vt.us)