HURLBERT CPA
regulatory audit services

Trenton Telephone Company

Agreed-Upon Procedures Applied to the Universal Access Fund Application for the period ending 6/30/2022

May 3, 2023

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Independent Accountant's Report on Applying Agreed-Upon Procedures

TRENTON TELEPHONE COMPANY

To the Georgia Public Service Commission:

We have performed the procedures enumerated below on the application for funding from the Georgia Universal Access Fund provided to us by management of Trenton Telephone Company (or the "Company"). The responsible party Trenton Telephone Company is responsible for the application.

The engaging party, Georgia Public Service Commission ("GPSC") has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate to meet the intended purpose of assessing the application's reasonableness prior to funds being distributed to Trenton Telephone Company as of June 30, 2022. This report may not be suitable for any other purpose. The procedures performed may not address all the items of interest to a user of this report and may not meet the needs of all users of this report and, as such, users are responsible for determining whether the procedures performed are appropriate for their purposes.

The procedures are listed below with associated findings listed on the following pages.

AUP	Agreed-Upon Procedures
1	Obtain UAF company pre-filed information and schedules filed with the GPSC
2	Issue specific Contractor data requests to the UAF Companies and schedule field work
3	Audit the Company's UAF model (printed version as well as spreadsheet testing)
4	Trace amounts on the Applicant's Form M back to Company prepared schedules matching their General Ledger
5	Trace Form M data to the UAF Model column entitled Balance Per Books
6	Trace amounts in the "subject to separations" adjustment column of the UAF Model to Net Operating Income (NOI) and Rate of Return (ROR) on rate base calculations
7	Trace amounts in the "non-regulated" adjustment column of UAF Model to supporting journal entries of cost study. Selected supporting work papers are reviewed for reasonableness, accuracy, and conformance.
8	Test the FCC Part 36 study and review allocation/traffic factors
9	Test and recalculate the Revenue Requirement Section on the UAF Model
10	Review each invoice over $250 and select those invoices that appear unreasonable
11	Review corporate allocations and the Company's Cost Allocation Manual

12 Verify fixed asset amounts in the Company's Continuing Property Record and identify those assets that are inappropriately included in rate base in the UAF application. If applicant is a recipient of Federal or state Broadband Grants, determine whether the grants were to be used as revenue, expense offsets, or for capital acquisitions. To the extent such grants are/were used for capital acquisition, review books to ensure that such purchased assets are excluded from the rate base for UAF purposes

13 Verify the amounts of Federal universal service fund support reported in the UAF Application. Review UAF Applicant work

14 Verify that any long-term debt interest costs treated as AFUDC (Allowance for Funds Used During Construction) were treated either as current year income or as a reduction to interest rates

15 Verify that any Patronage Dividends credited (not necessarily received in cash) from long term lenders are treated as a reduction to the cost of debt

16 Review the outside auditor's report on the financial statements and report any adverse findings or qualified opinions

17 Review and test the requested amount for Executive Compensation and Corporate Operations Expense and compared the amount shown in the UAF application to the GPSC caps

18 Review depreciation rates used for the UAF application and compare to the rates adopted by the GPSC

19 Review cost allocation manual, verify that it is being used, test a sample of allocations and report when the manual was last updated

20 Incorporate revised factors or methods adopted by GPSC, such as cost of equity, into the UAF model

21 Prepare exhibits of financial results and support mechanisms. Analyze as to why increases/decreases occurred

22 Identify Construction Work in Progress and Retirement amounts for the test year

23 Identify the Company's affiliates and non-regulated services

24 Identify the total costs charged to the regulated company by the affiliate or parent company. Quantified costs by FCC USOA Account and determined the per access line amount over the past 3 years. If the costs appear unreasonable, propose adjustments or informed GPSC staff and recommend an affiliated transactions engagement be performed

25 For ACAM UAF companies only, obtain the Company spreadsheet depicting calculated amounts, review Company prepared adjustments, trace adjustments in the UAF application model to the spreadsheet and identify impact of the adjustment

26 Test and review the Approved Cost of Equity and Cost of Capital Rates of Tier II local exchange carriers for the purpose of evaluating applications for reimbursement from the UAF. The rate of return on rate base will be limited to the lesser of 8.0% or the level computed based on a 9.25% return on equity, using the applicant's actual cost of debt and the applicant's actual debt/equity structure. Verify that the above calculation was used in the respective UAF Model

27 Finalize work papers and prepare final report

28 Prepare testimony if requested.

We were engaged by the GPSC to perform this agreed-upon procedures engagement and conducted our engagement in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We were not engaged to and did not conduct and examination or review engagement, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion or conclusion, respectively, on the application. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion or conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

We are required to be independent of Trenton Telephone Company and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with relevant ethical requirements related to our agreed-upon procedures engagement. This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Georgia Public Service Commission and Trenton Telephone Company and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Vic Hurlbert, CPA
Hurlbert CPA LLC
Liberty, Missouri
May 3, 2023

Current Request for UAF Disbursements – Summary of Findings

Trenton Telephone Company's final revenue deficiency is $4,051,255. We propose an adjustment of $2,050 with a separated amount of $2,060 pertaining to expenses that we did not believe were reasonable.

Table 1
Trenton Telephone Company

Georgia UAF Summary	Amounts
Original Company Requested Amount from Georgia Universal Access Fund	$4,053,315
Adjustment One – See Procedure 10 Proposed Staff Adjustments Separated into Intrastate Amounts – Expenses	$2,060
Total Adjustments	$2,060
Revised Deficiency for the Company	$4,051,255

As presented in Table 1, we propose Trenton Telephone Company receive a UAF disbursement of $4,051,255 based upon the test year for the twelve months ending June 30, 2022.

Profile of Trenton Telephone Company

Trenton Telephone Company is a regulated telephone company with business and maintenance offices located in Trenton, Georgia. The Company serves approximately 2,965 access lines in north Georgia. An organizational chart of Trenton is provided in Exhibit No. 1. The Development of the Test Year Rate Base and Net Operating Income as submitted by the Company in support of its request is provided in Exhibit No. 2. The Company's calculation of the claimed revenue deficiency is presented in Exhibit No. 3.

Agreed-Upon Procedures

Procedure 1: Obtained UAF company pre-filed information and schedules filed with the GPSC.

Conclusion – We reviewed pre-filed files downloaded from the GPSC web site. There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 2: Issued specific Contractor data requests to the UAF Companies and scheduled field work

Conclusion – Data requests were sent to the Company and the Company responded to all data requests.

Procedure 3: Audited the Company's UAF model (printed version as well as spreadsheet testing).

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 4: Traced amounts on the Applicant's Form M back to Company prepared schedules matching their General Ledger.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 5: Traced Form M data to the UAF Model column entitled Balance Per Books

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 6: Traced amounts in the "subject to separations" adjustment column of the UAF Model to Net Operating Income (NOI) and Rate of Return (ROR) on rate base calculations.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 7: Traced amounts in the "non-regulated" adjustment column of UAF Model to supporting journal entries of cost study. Selected supporting work papers are reviewed for reasonableness, accuracy, and conformance.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 8 Tested the FCC Part 36 study and review allocation/traffic factors.

Conclusion – Trenton is an average schedule company and this procedure was not applicable.

Procedure 9: Tested and recalculate the Revenue Requirement Section on the UAF Model.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 10: Reviewed each invoice over $250 and select those invoices that appear unreasonable.

Conclusion – Of the selected invoices, we found a total amount of invoices that were unreasonable to us totaling $2,050 and had a separated impact of $2,060. Proposed Adjustment - We propose a total separated adjustment of $2,060 to eliminate the following expenses that we did not believe were reasonable:

Account	Description of Item	Cause for adjustment	Amount
6722	Dade County Academic & Tennessee Telephone Association	Not telephone related	$850
6725	Communications Advisory Counsel	Not telephone related	1,200
Total			$2,050

Procedure 11: Reviewed corporate allocations and the Company's Cost Allocation Manual

Conclusion – The Company does not employ a cost allocation manual. The Company directly assigns costs to cost functions.

Procedure 12 Verified fixed asset amounts in the Company's Continuing Property Record and identify those assets that are inappropriately included in rate base in the UAF application. If applicant is a recipient of Federal or state Broadband Grants, determined whether the grants were to be used as revenue, expense offsets, or for capital acquisitions. To the extent such grants are/were used for capital acquisition, review books to ensure that such purchased assets are excluded from the rate base for UAF purposes.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 13 Verified the amounts of Federal universal service fund support reported in the UAF Application. Review UAF Applicant work.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 14: Verified that any long-term debt interest costs treated as AFUDC (Allowance for Funds Used During Construction) were treated either as current year income or as a reduction to interest rates.

Conclusion – Not applicable.

Procedure 15: Verified that any Patronage Dividends credited (not necessarily received in cash) from long term lenders are treated as a reduction to the cost of debt.

Conclusion – Not applicable.

Procedure 16: Reviewed the outside auditor's report on the financial statements and report any adverse findings or qualified opinions.

Conclusion – The Company's outside auditor's 2022 report provided an unqualified opinion.

Procedure 17: Reviewed and tested the requested amount for Executive Compensation and Corporate Operations Expense and compared the amount shown in the UAF application to the GPSC caps.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 18: Reviewed depreciation rates used for the UAF application and compared to the rates adopted by the GPSC.

Conclusion – The Company's depreciation rates matched or were less than the rates prescribed by the GPSC. Regulated Depreciation Expense was REDACTED in the UAF application. Per the UAF model, Total Plant in Service was REDACTED. Composite depreciation rate equals depreciation per year divided by total historical cost. The composite rate is shown below.

Depreciation Expense	REDACTED
Total Plant in Service	REDACTED
Composite Rate	REDACTED

Procedure 19: Reviewed cost allocation manual, verify that it is being used, test a sample of allocations and report when the manual was last updated.

Conclusion – The Company does not employ a cost allocation manual. The Company directly assigns costs to cost functions.

Procedure 20: Incorporated revised factors or methods adopted by GPSC, such as cost of equity, into the UAF model.

Conclusion - The current cost of equity approved by the GPSC is 9.25%. Using the Company's actual debt/equity ratio and actual cost of debt, the Company's weighted average cost of capital ("WACC") is 9.25%. Because the Company's WACC did exceed the GPSC's 8% cap, the allowed return on rate base was the 8%.

Procedure 21: Prepared exhibits of financial results and support mechanisms. Analyzed as to why increases/decreases occurred.

Financial Results
2018 – 2022

Description	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Net Property, Plant and Equipment	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED
Operating Revenues	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED
Operating Expenses	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED
Operating income/(loss)	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED
Total access lines	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED

Conclusion – Trenton increased net plant due to significant new construction activities improving plant. Revenues and expenses increased resulting in a net loss.

Receipt of Federal Universal Service Support
2018 – 2022

Support	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
HCLS	$0	$0	$21,051	$43,152	$99,012
ICLS	1,140,906	1,337,354	778,230	812,574	1,104,790
LSS	0	0	0	0	0
SNA	0	0	0	0	0
SVS	0	0	0	0	0
Lifeline	0	0	0	0	0
Total	$1,140,906	$1,337,354	$799,281	$855,726	$1,203,802

Procedure 22: Identified Construction Work in Progress and Retirement amounts for the test year.

Conclusion – The Company had Construction Work in Progress and Plant Retirements at 6/30/2022 of $84,270 and $0, respectively.

Procedure 23 Identified the Company's affiliates and non-regulated services.

REDACTED

Procedure 24 Identified the total costs charged to the regulated company by the affiliate or parent company.

Conclusion - Total cost charged to the regulated company by the affiliate(s) or parent company was REDACTED for the year ending 6/30/2022 as costs are directly assigned to affiliates, deregulated or unregulated entities. The costs do not appear unreasonable and therefore, no affiliate audit is recommended.

Cost per Access Line

Quantified costs by FCC USOA Account and determined the per access line amount over the past 3 years. If the costs appeared unreasonable, proposed adjustments or informed GPSC staff and recommended an affiliated transactions engagement be performed.

For the year 6/30/2022, the Access Expense Account 6540 was the highest average in costs per access line in all UAF companies. However, account 6610 – Marketing Expense had the lowest average cost of all UAF companies.

Procedure 25 For ACAM UAF companies only, obtain the Company spreadsheet depicting calculated amounts, Reviewed Company prepared adjustments, trace adjustments in the UAF application model to the spreadsheet and identify impact of the adjustment.

Conclusion – Not applicable

Procedure 26 Tested and Reviewed the Approved Cost of Equity and Cost of Capital Rates of Tier II local exchange carriers for the purpose of evaluating applications for reimbursement from the UAF. The rate of return on rate base will be limited to the lesser of 8.0% or the level computed based on a 9.25% return on equity, using the applicant's actual cost of debt and the applicant's actual debt/equity structure. Verify that the above calculation was used in the respective UAF Model.

Conclusion – There were no discrepancies noted.

Procedure 27 Finalize work papers and prepare final report.

Procedure 28 Prepare testimony if requested.

Exhibit Nos. 1 – 3

1. Trenton Telephone Company Organization Chart
2. Trenton Telephone Company UAF Net Operating Income and Rate of Return on Rate Base Calculation
3. Trenton Telephone Company UAF Cost of Capital Structure and Return on Equity Calculation

REDACTED

REDACTED

REDACTED