

DT 03-146

COMMUNICATIONS SOLUTIONS PARTNERS, INC.

Petition for Authority to Provide Non-Facilities Based
Local Telecommunications Services

Order Nisi Granting Authorization

O R D E R N O. 24,274

January 30, 2004

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On August 1, 2003, Communications Solutions Partners, Inc. (CSP) filed with the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (Commission) an Application to Provide Competitive Local Exchange Carrier (CLEC) service in New Hampshire as a non-facilities based carrier, pursuant to N.H. Admin. Rule Puc 1300. The Commission is authorized to allow the provisioning of switched and non-switched local exchange telecommunications services by more than one provider in all telephone franchise areas served by a telephone utility that provides local exchange service and has more than 25,000 access lines, pursuant to RSA 374:22-g.

CSP is a Commonwealth of Massachusetts privately-held corporation. CSP has no parent company or subsidiaries but is associated with Whalley Computer Associates, Inc. CSP is authorized to provide local exchange service in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont. A request for such authority is pending in New York.

Pursuant to Puc Chapter 1300, an applicant's petition for certification as a CLEC shall be granted when the Commission finds that (1) all information listed in Puc 1304.02 has been provided to the Commission; (2) the applicant meets standards for financial resources, managerial qualifications, and technical competence; and, (3) certification for the particular geographic area requested is in the public good.

The Commission Staff (Staff) has reviewed CSP's petition for compliance with these standards. Staff reports that the Company has provided all the information required by Puc 1304.02 and that the information provided supports CSP's assertion of financial resources, managerial qualifications, and technical competence sufficient to meet the standards set out in Puc 1304.01(b)(2), (e), and (g). Staff further reports that adding CSP to the choices available to New Hampshire telecommunications consumers appears to be in the public interest.

CSP intends to require deposits from certain customers and, pursuant to Puc 1304.02(b), has submitted a surety bond in an amount CSP anticipates will cover the total of all deposits initially held.

CSP requests a waiver of Puc 1304.02(a)(6) which requires the filing of a U.S. Geological Survey-based map of the areas in which service will be offered. CSP avers that it will

offer service only in those territories served by Verizon New England d/b/a Verizon New Hampshire (Verizon). Maps of that territory are already on file with the Commission. Staff recommends granting the waiver.

II. COMMISSION ANALYSIS

We find that CSP has satisfied the requirements of Puc 1304.01(a) (1) and (2). We also find that granting CSP authority to operate as a CLEC is in the public good, thus meeting the requirement of Puc 1304.01(a) (3). In making this finding, as directed by RSA 374:22-g, we have considered the interests of competition, fairness, economic efficiency, universal service, carrier of last resort, the incumbent telephone company's opportunity to realize a reasonable return on its investment, and recovery by the incumbent of expenses incurred.

The Commission finds CSP's request for a waiver of Puc 1304.02(a) (6), which requires a CLEC applicant to file maps delineating the territory in which it intends to provide service, to be reasonable, based on CSP's representation that its service will be offered in only those territories served by Verizon. We will grant this waiver request.

As part of its petition, CSP states that it will charge access rates no higher than Verizon's effective access rates as filed in Tariff 85. The Commission will monitor access rates as the intraLATA toll and local exchange markets develop, in order

to avoid any inhibition of intraLATA toll competition in contravention of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. (Pub.L.No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56, *codified* at 47 U.S.C. §151 *et seq.*)

Pursuant to Puc 1304.02(a)(7), applicants for CLEC certification agree to adhere to all state laws and Commission policies, rules and orders. We take this opportunity to draw attention to two rules in particular. Puc 1306.01(8) and Puc 1306.01(10), respectively, describe Enhanced 911 (E911) and Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) as part of the minimum basic service that every CLEC must provide. Pursuant to Puc 1306.01(c), authorized CLECs are responsible to collect and properly remit the E911 surcharge, currently set at 42 cents per access line per month. Pursuant to Puc 1306.01(b), authorized CLECs are also responsible to collect and remit TRS charges, currently set at 4 cents per access line per month.

As new competitors enter the telecommunications market, we recognize that New Hampshire's 603 area code encounters increasing demand. Accordingly, we require that CSP request and use numbers responsibly and conservatively, and we invite CSP to explore alternative mechanisms to use existing numbers as efficiently as possible. In approving this application, we require CSP to comply with our orders on number conservation, including Order No. 23,385, issued January 7, 2000, and Order No.

23,392, issued January 27, 2000, as well as further orders issued by the Commission concerning this matter.

Based upon the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED NISI, that conditioned upon the effective date below, CSP's petition for authority to provide non-facilities based intrastate local exchange telecommunications services in the service territory of Verizon, is GRANTED, subject to all relevant Commission rules and orders; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that CSP's request for a waiver of the map filing requirement in Puc 1304.02(a)(6) is GRANTED; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that CSP maintain, and appropriately adjust the amount of a surety bond payable to the State of New Hampshire, such that it is of sufficient dollar volume to cover the total amount of deposits and/or advanced payments held by CSP at any given time; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that no less than ten days prior to commencing service, the Petitioner shall file with the Commission a rate schedule including the name, description and price of each service, in accordance with N.H. Admin. Rules, Puc 1304.03(b); and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that CSP shall cause a copy of this Order Nisi to be published once in a statewide newspaper of general circulation, such publication to be no later than

February 9, 2004, and to be documented by affidavit filed with this office on or before February 23, 2004; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that all persons interested in responding to this Order Nisi shall submit their comments or file a written request for a hearing on this matter before the Commission no later than February 16, 2004; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that this Order Nisi shall be effective March 1, 2004, unless the Petitioner fails to satisfy the publication obligation set forth above or the Commission provides otherwise in a supplemental order issued prior to the effective date; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that, should the petitioner fail to exercise the authority granted herein within two years of the date of this order, pursuant to Puc 1304.03(a), the authority granted shall be deemed withdrawn, null, and void.

By order of the Public Utilities Commission of New Hampshire this thirtieth day of January, 2004.

Thomas B. Getz
Chairman

Susan S. Geiger
Commissioner

Graham J. Morrison
Commissioner

Attested by:

Michelle A. Caraway
Assistant Executive Director