

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

2001 NOV 16 10 11 AM '01

In the Matter of)
)
Request for Review of the)
Decision of the)
Universal Service Administrator by)
)
Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc.)
Brooklyn, New York)
)
Federal-State Joint Board on)
Universal Service)
)
Changes to the Board of Directors of the)
National Exchange Carrier Association, Inc.)

File No. SLD-242093

CC Docket No. 96-45 ✓

CC Docket No. 97-21

ORDER

Adopted: December 3, 2001

Released: December 4, 2001

By the Accounting Policy Division, Common Carrier Bureau:

1. The Accounting Policy Division has under consideration a Request for Review filed by Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc. (Bnos Zion), Brooklyn, New York.¹ Bnos Zion seeks review of a decision issued by the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD) of the Universal Service Administrative Company (Administrator) to reject Bnos Zion's appeal on the grounds that it was untimely filed.² For the reasons set forth below, we deny Bnos Zion's Request for Review.

2. SLD issued a Funding Commitment Decision Letter on August 7, 2001, granting Bnos Zion's request for discounted services under the schools and libraries universal service support mechanism.³ Specifically, SLD granted Bnos Zion's request for discounts for telecommunications services, Funding Request Numbers (FRNs) 578794, 578914, and 579103.⁴ On September 10, 2001, Bnos Zion filed an appeal of SLD's decision stating that one of its

¹ Letter from Rabbi Jacov Zucker, Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc., to Federal Communications Commission, filed October 31, 2001 (Request for Review).

² *Id.*

³ Letter from Schools and Libraries Division, Universal Service Administrative Company, to Pessie Weingarten, Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc., dated August 7, 2001 (Funding Commitment Decision Letter).

⁴ *Id.*

providers, Birns Telecommunications Inc, was not included in the decision letter.⁵ On September 28, 2001, SLD issued an Administrator's Decision on Appeal indicating that it would not consider Bnos Zion's appeal because it was received more than 30 days after the Funding Commitment Decision Letter was issued.⁶ Bnos Zion subsequently filed the instant Request for Review with the Commission.

3. Under section 54.720(b) of the Commission's rules, an appeal must be filed with the Commission or SLD within 30 days of the issuance of the decision that the party seeks to have reviewed.⁷ Documents are considered to be filed with the Commission or SLD only upon receipt.⁸ The 30-day deadline contained in section 54.720(b) of the Commission's rules applies to all requests for review filed by a party affected by a decision issued by the Administrator. Because Bnos Zion failed to file an appeal of the August 7, 2001 Funding Commitment Decision Letter within the requisite 30-day appeal period, we affirm SLD's decision to dismiss Bnos Zion's appeal to SLD as untimely and deny the instant Request for Review.

4. To the extent that Bnos Zion is requesting that we waive the 30-day deadline established in section 54.720(b) of the Commission's rules, we deny that request.⁹ The Commission may waive any provision of its rules, but a request for waiver must be supported by a showing of good cause.¹⁰ Bnos Zion has not shown good cause for the untimely filing of its initial appeal. Bnos Zion explains that the Funding Commitment Decision Letter was misdirected by the school itself during the summer vacation, and sent to a department that was closed when school was not in session. Bnos Zion asserts that, as a result, it did not receive the Funding Commitment Decision Letter until September 7, 2001, after the 30-day appeal period had passed.

5. We conclude that Bnos Zion has not demonstrated a sufficient basis for waiving the Commission's rules. Waiver is appropriate if special circumstances warrant a deviation from the general rule, and such deviation would better serve the public interest than strict adherence to the general rule.¹¹ In requesting funds from the schools and libraries universal service support mechanism, the applicant has certain responsibilities. The applicant bears the burden of submitting its appeal to SLD within the established deadline if the applicant wishes its appeal to be considered on the merits.

⁵ Letter from Rabbi Jacov Zucker, Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc., to Schools and Libraries Division, Universal Service Administrative Company, filed September 10, 2001 (Request for Administrator Review).

⁶ Letter from Schools and Libraries Division, Universal Service Administrative Company, to Rabbi Jacov Zucker, Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc., dated September 28, 2001 (Administrator's Decision on Appeal).

⁷ 47 C.F.R. § 54.720(b).

⁸ 47 C.F.R. § 1.7.

⁹ See 47 C.F.R. § 54.720(b).

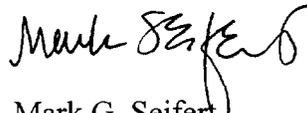
¹⁰ See 47 C.F.R. § 1.3.

¹¹ *Northeast Cellular Telephone Co. v. FCC*, 897 F.2d 1164, 1166 (D.C. Cir. 1990).

6. The particular facts of this case do not rise to the level of special circumstances required for a deviation from the general rule. In light of the thousands of applications that SLD reviews and processes each year, it is administratively necessary to place on the applicant the responsibility of adhering strictly to its filing deadlines.¹² In order for the program to work efficiently, the applicant must assume responsibility for timely submission of its appeal to SLD if it wishes its appeal to be considered on the merits. An applicant must take responsibility for the action or inaction of those employees, consultants and other representatives to whom it gives responsibility for submitting timely appeals of SLD funding decisions on its behalf. Here, Bnos Zion fails to present good cause as to why it could not timely file its appeal to SLD. We therefore find no basis for waiving the appeal filing deadline.

7. ACCORDINGLY, IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to authority delegated under sections 0.91, 0.291, 1.3 and 54.722(a) of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 0.91, 0.291, 1.3 and 54.722(a), that the Request for Review filed by Bnos Zion of Bobov, Inc., Brooklyn, New York October 31, 2001, and the request to waive the 30-day time limit in which to file an appeal ARE DENIED.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION



Mark G. Seifert
Deputy Chief, Accounting Policy Division
Common Carrier Bureau

¹² See *Request for Review by Anderson School Staatsburg, Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service, Changes to the Board of Directors of the National Exchange Carrier Association*, File No. SLD-13364, CC Docket Nos. 96-45 and 97-21, Order, DA 00-2630 (Comm. Car. Bur. Rel. November 24, 2000) at para. 8 (“In light of the thousands of applications that SLD reviews and processes each funding year, it is administratively necessary to place on the applicant the responsibility of understanding all relevant program rules and procedures.”).