

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Public Utilities Commission

Minutes of Open Meeting Held April 13, 2007

Attendees: Chairman Elia Germani, Commissioner Robert Holbrook, Commissioner Mary Bray, Steve Frias, Patricia Lucarelli. Alan Nault, Douglas Hartley and Luly Massaro.

Chairman Germani called the open meeting to order at 10:00 AM. in the first-floor hearing room of the Public Utilities Commission. A quorum was present.

1725 – George Wiley Center’s Request For Extension of the Winter Moratorium: The Commission discussed the Wiley’s request to extend the winter moratorium for an additional two weeks, from April 15 until May 1, 2007. The Wiley Center requested that no customer’s (protected and non-protected) service be terminated for non-payment until May 1.

Chairman Germani stated that it is his understanding that because of operational procedures and scheduling, National Grid will not be able to terminate service this year to persons who are classified as protected customer (such as low-income) at least until May 1. Chairman Germani noted that there are several initiatives taking place to address low-income households at this time. He discussed Docket No. 3804 and stated that the A-60 rate provides low-income people with a 50% discount on the distribution rates, and further funds have increased the discount to 80%. In light of Docket No. 3804, the discounts currently in place and also in light of the fact that National Grid will not terminate service to protected customers until May 1, he favored denying Wiley’s request.

Based on his review of the utilities’ monthly statistical reports on service terminations, Commissioner Holbrook noted that the current approach appears to be not working in that it reflects increased negotiated payment agreements being broken and the level of utilities’ write-offs continue to increase. He summarized the several sources of funds available and noted that there is significant amount of energy funds (approximately \$23 million) available to low-income households. Commissioner Holbrook agreed with the Chairman to deny the Wiley’s request.

While Commissioner Bray agreed with Commissioner Holbrook’s comments, it appears to be a large amount of funds available to low-income households; however, she opined that it is not enough because there are people who could not afford a basic need. She noted that a two-week extension will not increase the utilities’ write-offs significantly, and given the unusual current weather pattern for this time of year, she favored granting the Wiley’s request.

Chairman Germani moved to deny the George Wiley’s request. Commissioner Holbrook seconded the motion. Commissioner Bray dissented. **Vote 2-1.**

The open meeting adjourned at 10:30 A.M.