

State of Rhode Island

Public Utilities Commission

Minutes of Open Meeting Held on November 5, 2021

An Open Meeting of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission or PUC) was held Friday, November 5, 2021 at 11:30 A.M. in Hearing Room A, 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island to discuss, deliberate, and/or vote on the following dockets.

In attendance: Chairman Ronald Gerwadowski, Commissioner Abigail Anthony, Commissioner John Revens, Cynthia Wilson-Frias, Alan Nault, Todd Bianco and Lily Massaro.

- I. Chairman Gerwadowski called the Open Meeting to order at 11:30 A.M. A quorum was present.
- II. Minutes of Open Meetings held on October 14, 2021, October 28, 2021 & November 1, 2021 – Chairman Gerwadowski moved to approve the minutes with edits. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**
- III. **Docket No. 5022 – Suspension of Service Terminations and Certain Collections Activities During the COVID-19 Emergency** - In this docket, the Commission issued an emergency order related to the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 15, 2020, the Commission extended the prohibition of the assessment of certain fees. Such fees included late fees, interest charges, credit card fees, debit card fees, and ACH fees. At this meeting, the Commission considered whether to lift the prohibition on the assessment of these fees. After review of the comments received and deliberation, the following motions were made:

Chairman Gerwadowski moved to allow reinstatement of the late fees and interest charges on bills issued no less than 30 days from today. The interest will be applied to the total arrearage starting with the first bill received after the 30-day period even if the arrearage has been accruing for several months. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.** It was noted that National Grid does not charge these fees to residential customers

Chairman Gerwadowski moved to require the utilities to provide direct customer notification of the reinstatement of the fees no less than 30 days prior to the first bill on which those fees would appear. For residential customers receiving the notice, the utility shall include links to the Rhode Island Housing website and the telephone number for assistance specific to the rent and utility relief program. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to require the utilities to continue to absorb any online payment transaction fees and to allow the utilities who do not have those costs included in their cost of service the opportunity to file for rate recovery on a going forward basis through a specific ratemaking mechanism that would be in effect through the utility's next rate case. It should be designed to recover no more than actually expended by the utility to absorb the fees. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to require National Grid to file the current weekly arrearage reports on a monthly basis in Docket No. 5026. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to close the docket. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

- IV. **Docket No. 5042 – Central Falls Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan**
Docket No. 5047 – Barrington Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan
Docket No. 5061 - Providence Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan
Docket No. 5062 – South Kingstown Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan
Docket No. 5169 – Portsmouth Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plan

In these dockets, the PUC approved Municipal Electricity Aggregation Plans submitted by the municipals and their municipal aggregator Good Energy, L.P. On August 6, 2021, Good Energy submitted proposed annual reporting requirements for the program pursuant to Commission Open Meeting decision on May 26, 2021. The Commission solicited comments on Good Energy's proposal from the parties due October 21, 2021. No comment was received. After review, Chairman Gerwatowski moved to adopt the reporting requirements proposed by Good Energy on August 6, 2021. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

- V. **Docket No. 4800 – Suez Water Rhode Island** – In this docket, the Commission approved Suez Water's request to implement a Distribution System Improvement Charge (DSIC) to recover costs associated with completed transmission and distribution system replacement and rehabilitation projects between base rate proceedings. On September 21, 2021, the Company submitted a filing reporting on the Company's DSIC program and associated DSIC surcharge pursuant to Commission Order No. 23825. The Division submitted a memorandum recommending approval of the DSIC surcharge. After review, the following motions were made:

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to find that a hearing for an investigation is not required because it was filing in compliance with the methodology approved in a prior Commission Order on this docket. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to find that Suez' DSIC is in compliance with PUC Order No. 23825. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to require Suez to provide customer notification to explain the DSIC on or before the first bills where the DSIC appears. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to require Suez to make its next DSIC filing for the period ending December 30, 2021 no later than January 18, 2022. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to require Suez to provide customer notification when it files any future DSIC filing if there is a rate change. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to require Suez to include the mechanics of the DSIC calculation in the Tariff Sheet 25. This can be done as part of the January 18, 2022 filing. Commissioner Revens seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

- VI. There being no further business to discuss, the Open Meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.