BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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In re: Petition of Florida Public Utilities Company for rate increase in Fernandina Beach Division.

DOCKET NO. 881056-EI ORDER NO. 21211 ISSUED: 5-9-89

The following Commissioners p disposition of this matter:

Commissioners participated in the

THOMAS M. BEARD BETTY EASLEY GERALD L. GUNTER JOHN T. HERNDON

ORDER SUSPENDING PROPOSED PERMANENT RATES AND AUTHORIZING INTERIM INCREASE

BY THE COMMISSION:

On February 20, 1989, Florida Public Utilitien Company (FPUC or utility) filed a petition for an increase in its rates and charges in its Fernandina Beach Division, designed to produce additional annual revenues of \$908,662. This amount is based on a claimed test-year deficiency of \$499,902 and an attrition-year deficiency of \$408,760. The historic test year is the twelve-month period ended September 30, 1987, and the attrition year is the twelve-month period ending September 30, 1990.

Section 366.06(3), Florida Statutes, imposes an affirmative obligation upon this Commission to decide within sixty (60) days of filing whether to withhold consent to all or part of a utility's proposed permanent rate increase. If the Commission withholds consent to the implementation of the new rate schedules, it must deliver to the utility a reason or written statement of good cause for withholding consent.

Upon review of FPUC's petition and the rate increases proposed in it, we find that the proposed rate schedules must be suspended pending the outcome of a formal hearing. We deem it necessary to withhold consent to the operation of the new rate schedules, to require further review of the underlying data and calculations and to require additional support and information in proceedings to be held in this docket.

INTERIM RELIEF

In the same petition as its request for a permanent rate increase, FPUC asked for an interim rate increase of \$561,600. The utility bases its request on a 13-month average rate base for the test year of \$11,191,576 with an adjusted net operating income of \$752,643. The petition states that the achieved rate of return for the utility was 6.67%, whereas the required rate of return for interim purposes as defined in Section 366.071(5)(b)2, Florida Statutes, is 9.80%.

Cost of Capital

Section 366.071, Florida Statutes, provides that a utility is entitled to interim relief if it establishes that it is

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE 04642 MAY-9 1969 FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

earning below the minimum of the range of the last authorized rate of return on equity established in its most recent rate case. To determine the need for interim relief, we compare the achieved rate of return for the interim test-year with the required rate of return calculated using the last allowed return on equity and the current cost of other capital.

FPUC's last authorized rate of return on common equity was set in 1974, based upon a test year ended September 30, 1973. The rate of return on common equity set in that case falls within the range of 14.25% to 14.75%, with a midpoint of 14.50%. The utility's proposed overall rate of return reflects the use of 14.25%, the bottom of the last authorized range, as the required rate of return on common equity. We applied the 14.25% return on common equity, along with the current cost of the utility's other sources of capital, to the capital structure to determine the appropriate overall rate of return.

The difference between the overall rate of return requested by FPUC, and that which we approve, arose through two adjustments to the utility's proposed capital structure. Absent the provision of the actual interest expense accrued by the utility related to customer deposits, we will apply the current rate of 8% to customer deposits rather than the 9% rate proposed by the utility. In addition we will remove the Company's investment in Flo-Gas, an unregulated subsidiary, directly from equity, because there was no evidence to do otherwise. Therefore, we find the appropriate weighted average cost of capital for interim purposes is 9.63%. A cost of capital calculation is attached to this Order as Schedule f3.

Rate Base

For interim purposes, FPUC made several adjustments to its test-year rate base:

Adjustment 1: Allocation of Local Common Plant To Water Operations

FPUC, in addition to providing electric service in Fernandina Beach, also provides water service to the area. Since certain of the plant investment in Fernandina is jointly used by the two regulated operations, the utility made the following adjustment: reduce plant in service \$171,153, accumulated depreciation \$55,630, depreciation expense \$5,314, and property taxes \$743. These adjustments are consistent with adjustments made in prior water rate cases and we accept them.

Adjustment 2: Common Plant Allocation-General Office

The utility allocated a portion of its general office plant facilities located in West Palm beach to the Fernandina Beach operations. This adjustment increased plant in service \$166,696, accumulated depreciation \$65,058, depreciation expense \$11,131 and property taxes \$4,482. These adjustments are consistent with adjustments made in prior rate cases with other operating divisions of the utility, and we accept them.

Adjustment 3: Customer Advances

The utility made an adjustment reducing this amount by \$30,878 to correct an error in the classification of a water deposit as an electric deposit. We accept it for interim purposes.

Adjustment 23: Construction Work In Progress (CWIP)

The utility made an adjustment reducing CWIP by \$112,815. This adjustment removes CWIP with is eligible to earn Allowance for Funds Used During Construction (AFUDC) from rate base and is consistent with Commission policy.

Adjustments 21 and 22: Fuel and Conservation Overrecoveries

The utility excluded from its calculation of working capital \$266,950 and \$8,037 of net overrecoveries associated with the fuel and conservation cost recovery clauses, respectively. In prior rate cases, Commission policy has been to include fuel and conservation overrecoveries as a reduction to working capital. Therefore, we will reduce working capital by \$274,987.

Adjustment 4: Removal Of Fuel and Conservation Revenues and Related Expenses

FPUC made adjustment to remove fuel and conservation revenues of \$10,617,266, operating expenses \$10,464,954 and revenue related taxes \$172,666. These adjustments remove the effect of fuel and conservation expenses which are recovered through the cost recovery clauses and are consistent with Commission policy.

Adjustment 5: Unbilled Revenue

FPUC made an an adjustment increasing revenue \$2,643 to reflect unbilled revenues for the test year. This adjustment is consistent with Commission policy.

Adjustment 6: Transportation Expenses - Water

The utility made an adjustment increasing operating and maintenance expenses \$7,516 and \$5,144 respectively to correct the amount of transportation expenses allocated to the regulated electric operations. The utility allocates all vehicle expenses to the electric or water operations on an Hours Used Basis. This hourly rate is determined by dividing the total monthly transportation costs by total vehicle use hours, which would include expenses to operate large bucket trucks for the electric operation. FPUC's adjustment increases electric expenses to recognize that the costs associated with these large trucks benefit only electric operations. A similar adjustment was made by FPUC in its last water rate case (Docket No. 860662-WU) and was accepted by the Commission. We therefore accept this adjustment for interim purposes.

Adjustment 7: Accrued Payroll

The utility made an adjustment to increase operating expenses \$11,454 and reduce maintenance expenses \$5,130 for out of period payroll expense. Since this adjustment removed the effects of an out of period expense in the test year, we accept it for interim purposes.

Adjustment 8: Remove Charitable Contributions

FPUC made an adjustment reducing expenses \$1,100 to remove charitable contributions from expenses. This adjustment is consistent with Commission policy and has been accepted.

Adjustment 9: Uncollectible Account Expense

An adjustment was made by FPUC to reduce the annual accrual for Uncollectible Accounts Expense \$6,670 equal to the average charge off for the past three years. Since the utility has never had a rate case and accordingly a similar adjustment has not been made in the Company's last rate case, it would not be appropriate to allow this adjustment for purposes of calculating interim rate relief. This proposed adjustment will be addressed in the utility's full revenue requirements case.

Adjustment 10: Non-Recurring Fuel Expense

During the test year, the utility retired its diesel generating units and accordingly wrote off to expense its remaining fuel inventory. Since this was a non-recurring expense, the utility reduced expenses \$2,990 to remove the effects of this item, which we accept for interim purposes.

Adjustment 11: Power Supply Study

FPUC's Franchise Agreement with Fernandina Beach requires the utility to employ a consultant for the purpose of determining the best wholesale supplies of electricity. The maximum term of future wholesale contracts cannot exceed five years unless agreed to by both parties.

years unless agreed to by both parties. Before a contract is entered into for the purpose of wholesale power, a copy of the consultant's report must be provided the City for review, after which the City will submit its recommendation.

During the test year, FPUC retained the services of Stone and & Webster to prepare a report as required by the agreement at a cost of \$45,395. The utility proposes to amortize this amount over four years, at \$11,349 a year, which would reduce expenses \$34,046. Since the maximum term of any future wholesale contracts if five years, we will amortize this amount over five years, which will result in an annual expense of \$9,079. This will cause an additional reduction in test year expense of \$2,270, for a total reduction of \$36,316.

Adjustment 12: Normalize Maintenance of Station Equipment

The utility made an adjustment increasing expenses \$19,610 to adjust test year expenses to a 10-year average for Maintenance of Station Equipment. Since this adjustment

assumes that test year expenses are understated and Staff has not had the opportunity to analyze this account, we disallow this adjustment for interim purposes. This proposed adjustment will be addressed in FPUC's full revenue requirements case.

Adjustment 13: Pole Relocation Costs

In 1987, the utility incurred \$23,812 in the relocation of poles due to road widening, and now wishes to amortize this item over five years, which would increase expenses \$4,762.

If the utility is of the opinion that this is an extraordinary expense, it should have requested a special accounting treatment when this expense was incurred. In addition, this is an out of period item. Therefore, we disallow this adjustment for the purpose of calculating interim relief.

Adjustments 14 and 15: System Grounding Project -Overhead Conductors and Underground Lines

During the test year, FPUC expensed \$21,503 for improvements to the system grounding of overhead conductors. The utility proposed to amortize this cost over five years, at \$4,301 per year. Test year expenses would be reduced \$17,202.

In 1987 and 1988, the utility expenses would be reduced \$17,202. In 1987 and 1988, the utility expensed \$20,836 and \$14,124 respectively for improvements to the system grounding of underground lines. The utility proposed the same treatment as stated above. These amounts amortized over five years would equal \$6,992 per year, for a \$7,131 reduction in test year expense.

The above expenses were incurred in order for FPUC to be in compliance with the requirements of the National Electric Safety Code adopted by the Commission in 1987. Future expenses should level off since expenditures will be incurred as routine maintenance as new customers are added to the system.

Adjustment 16: Maintenance of Line Transformers

FPUC made an adjustment reducing expenses \$15,897 to remove the non-recurring expense of switchgear rebuilding. Since the utility recognizes this as a non-recurring expense during the time interim rates are in effect, we will allow this adjustment for interim purposes.

Adjustment 17: Income Taxes - Various Adjustments

The utility increased state and federal income taxes \$24,931 related to its various adjustments discussed above. Based on the adjustments recommended by Staff, income taxes will be increased \$7,515.

Adjustment 18: Income Taxes - Out-Of-Period Adjustment

The utility made an adjustment increasing state and federal income taxes-current \$27,561; reduced deferred income taxes \$7,960 and reduced investment tax credit \$15,521. These adjustments were made to remove the effects of out-of-period adjustments to income taxes and we accept them.

Adjustment 19: Interest Reconciliation

FPUC made an adjustment reducing state and federal income tax \$31,912 related to its reconciliation of capital structure to rate base. Income taxes have been reduced an additional \$6,741 because of Commission adjustments to the utility's capital structure.

Adjustment 20: Reclassifying Investment Tax Credits

The utility reduced the Charge Equivalent to ITC by \$15,521 to remove from the test year the effects of a prior period adjustment. The \$8,000 balance remaining in 1987 was reclassified to current income tax expense due to the repeal of the investment tax credit by the federal Tax Reform Act of 1986.

Interim Rates

In its petition, FPUC proposes to distribute the interim increase among all of its customers in accordance with Commission policy.

We find that the increase should be allocated to each rate class on a uniform percentage of the class base rate revenue, as required by Rule 25-6.0435(2)(a), Florida Administrative Code.

Further, the increase should be collected within each class by increasing the test year base charges (customer, demand, non-fuel KWH charges, etc.) by this same percentage increase. This is consistent with the method used for recovering interim increases in recent electric rate cases, (including Docket No. 880558-EI, FPUC's last rate case for its Marianna Division) with the exception of the last two Tampa Electric Company rate cases (Dockets No. 830012-EU and 850050-EI). In Docket No. 830012-EU, the Commission voted to collect the interim increase within each rate class on only the non-fuel energy (KWH) charge while in Docket No. 850050-EI it was collected within rate classes by increasing all base charges except the customer charge by a uniform percentage.

Increasing all base charges by the same percentage is preferable because it results in no change in rate structure and all customers experience the same percentage increase in their base rate bills.

Dividing the approved increase of \$456,195 by base revenues of \$2,776,259 yields an increase of 16.43% to be applied uniformly (Schedule 6).

The \$456,195 interim rate increase shall be collected subject to refund, with interest, and the refund (including interest) shall be guaranteed by an appropriate corporate undertaking to be filed by the utility. The interim rate increase shall be effective for meter readings taken on or after May 18, 1989.

Based on the foregoing, it is

ORDERED by the Florida Public Service Commission that consent to the rate schedules filed by Florida Public Utilities Company for its Fernandina Beach Division on February 20, 1989, designed to generate \$908,662 in additional annual revenues, is withheld, and the rate schedules are suspended pending further order of this Commission. It is further

ORDERED that Florida Public Utilities Company is granted an interim award of \$456,195 in additional annual revenues for its Marianna Division and is authorized to file interim rate schedules consistent with this increase. It is further

ORDERED that the additional revenues approved in this Order shall be collected subject to refund, with interest, and Florida Public Utilities Company shall file a corporate undertaking guaranteeing the refund (including interest). It is further

ORDERED that the interim rates approved by this Order shall be effective for meter readings taken on or after May 18,1989. It is further

ORDERED that Florida Public Utilities Company shall provide each customer with notice of the interim award and that such notice shall first be approved by the Division of Electric and Gas of the Florida Public Service Commission and shall accompany the first bill which reflects the interim increase.

By ORDER of the Florida Public Service Commission, this <u>9th</u> day of <u>May</u>, <u>1989</u>.

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STEVE TRIBBLE, Director Division of Records and Reporting

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ORDER NO. 21211 DOCKET NO: 881056-EI PAGE 9

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ORDER NO. 21211 DOCKET NO. 881056-EI PAGE 11

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ORDER NO. 21211 Docket No. 881056-EI PAGE 12

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ORDER NO. 21211 DOCKET NO. 881056-EI PAGE 13

COMPANY: :KET NO.: .ST YEAR:

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FLORIDA PUBLIC UTILITIES CO. - FERNANDINA BEACH 881056-EI September 30,1988

SCHEDULE 4 11-Apr-89 09:24 AM

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COMPARISON OF REVENUE EXPANSION FACTORS INTERIM

LINE NO.	DESCRIPTION	COMPANY	STAFF
1	Revenue Regul rement	100.000000	100.000000
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23	Uncollectible Accounts	(0.168000)	(0.168000)
4			
5	Gross Reciepts Tax	(1.500000)	(1.500000)
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7	Regulatory Assessment Fee	(0.083300)	(0.125000)
8			
7 8 9	Net Before Income Taxes	98.248700	98.207000
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11	State Income Tax Rate	5.5000%	5.5000%
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13	State Income Tax	5.405000	5.401385
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15	Net Before Federal Income Taxes	92.843700	92.805615
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19	Federal Income Tax	31.566858	31.553909
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21	Net Operating Income	61.276842	01.231700
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24	Net Operating Income Hultiplier	1.631938	1.632608
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OMPANY:		NANDINA BEACH	SCHEDULE 5 11-Apr-89 09:24 AM
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LINE NO.	DESCRIPTION [1]	COMPANY ADJUSTED [2]	STAFF RECOMMENDATION [3]
1 2 3	Adjusted Jurisdictional Rate Base Required Rate of Return	\$11,191,576 9.80%	\$10,916,589 9.63
456	Required Net Operating Income	1,096,774	1,051,268
89 10	Adjusted Achieved Test Year Jurisdictional Net Operating Income Jurisdictional NOI Deficiency	752,643	771,84 279,42
12345678901234567	Revenue Expansion Factor Total Revenue Increase	1.631938 \$561,601	1.63260 \$456,194

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FLORIDA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMPANY MARIANNA DIVISION

Schedule of Interim Rates by Rate Class

Rate Schedule	Current Rate	Interim Rate (16.43% Increase over) Current Rate
RS-1 Customer Facilities Charge KWH Charge	\$ 2.50 1.2893¢	\$ 2.91 1.5011¢
RS-2 Customer Facilities Charge KWH Charge	\$ 2.50 .9763¢	\$ 2.91 1.1367¢
RST KWH Charge	.7343¢	.8550¢
GS Customer Facilities Charge KWH Charge	\$ 4.00 2.3623¢	\$ 4.66 2.7504¢
GSD Customer Facilities Charge KW Demand Charge KWH Charge	\$ 15.00 \$ 1.77 .6063¢	\$17.46 \$ 2.06 .7059¢
GSLD Customer Charge Transmission Charge Excess KVAR Charge	\$300.00 \$ 1.70 \$.30	\$349.29 \$ 1.98 \$.35
MS KWH Charge	1.6843¢	1.9610¢
OL 7,000 Lumen Lamp 20,000 Lumen Lamp Wood Pole	\$ 2.34 \$ 4.63 \$ 1.00	\$ 2.72 \$ 5.39 \$ 1.16
OL-2 9,500 Lumen Lamp 20,000 Lumen Lamp Wood Pole	\$ 4.72 \$ 6.47 \$ 1.40	\$ 5.50 \$ 7.53 \$ 1.63

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Rate Schedule	Curr Ra	rent ite	Interim Rate (16.43% Increase over) Current Rate
CSL 250 Watt Lamp w/pole	s	7.90	\$ 9.20
SL-2 7,000 Lumen Lamp 20,000 Lumen Lamp	s s	2.34 4.63	\$ 2.72 \$ 5.39
SL-3 9,500 Lumen Lamp 22,000 Lumen Lamp Wood Pole	s 2 5	4.56 6.14 1.40	\$ 5.31 \$ 7.15 \$ 1.63