

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Application for rate increase in Pinellas County

DOCKET NO. 971065-SU

Filed: April 19, 1999

Certificate of Service

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of Direct Testimonies and Exhibits of Robert J. Crouch, Barry F. Davis, Charleston J. Winston, and Hillary Y. Sweeney have been furnished by U.S. Mail this 19th day of April, 1999 to:

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ORIGINAL

 $\it DOCKET~NO.: 971065-SU$ - Application for rate increase in Pinellas County by Mid-County Services, Inc.

WITNESS: Direct Testimony of Barry F. Davis, Appearing On Behalf of Florida Public Service Commission

DATE FILED: April 19, 1999

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FPSC-RECORDS/REPORTING

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF BARRY F. DAVIS

- Q. Would you please state your name and business address?
- A. My name is Barry F. Davis and my business address is 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard. Tallahassee. Florida 32399-0850.
- 5 Q. By whom are you employed?

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- 6 A. The Florida Public Service Commission.
- 7 | Q. How long have you been so employed?
- 8 A. I have been employed with the Commission since September 4, 1979.
 - Q. Would you state your educational background and experience?
 - I received a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Florida State University in May 1964. I served on active duty with the United States Air Force from 1964 to 1976 when I left active duty to pursue graduate studies at Florida State University. I received a Master of Accounting degree in August 1980. I was employed by the Florida Public Service Commission as a Public Utilities Auditor from September 1979. In December 1980 I accepted the position of what is now called a Regulatory Analyst with the Accounting Bureau of the Division of Water and Sewer. I transferred to the Accounting Bureau of the Communications Division in 1987. The Bureau was later transferred to the Division of Auditing and Financial Analysis and was retitled Communications Revenue Requirement Section. After the initial deregulation of communications utilities, I was assigned temporarily back to the Division of Water and Wastewater in January 1996. My position was permanently reassigned to the Accounting Section of the Bureau of Economic Regulation in the Division of Water and Wastewater in July 1996. I am currently a Professional Accountant Specialist.

- Would you explain what your general responsibilities are as a 1 l 0. Professional Accountant Specialist with the Bureau of Economic Regulation in the Division of Water and Wastewater?
- 4 Α. I am responsible for reviewing and conducting in-depth cost analysis of applications assigned to me by my supervisor. I am responsible for developing alternative proposals, preparing expert testimony, exhibits or financial 7 statements for regulatory proceedings, testifying and writing crossexamination questions for hearings involving complex accounting, finance and rate issues affecting utility revenue requirements. My duties also involve preparing and analyzing special studies related to the water and wastewater industry.
- Have you testified in any other cases before this commission? 12
- 13 I have testified in several cases between 1980 and the present Α.
- 14 before this Commission and the Division of Administrative Hearings. The most
- recent case was Docket No. 880069-TL, Southern Bell, in 1992. The most recent 15
- water and wastewater case was Docket No. 850062-WS, Meadowbrook Utilities, 16
- Inc. in 1987. Before that I have testified in Docket No. 870166-WS, Palm 17
- Coast Utilities, Docket No. 850051-WS, Park Manor Waterworks, Inc., Docket No. 18
- 840419-SU. Florida Cities Water Company. Docket No. 800621-WS. Gulfstream 19
- 20 Utility Company.

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- 21 What is the purpose of your testimony in this case?
- 22 My testimony will address the following issues from Order No. PSC-89-
- 23 0524-FOF-SU which were protested by Mid-County Services, Inc. (Mid-County or
- 24 utility) on May 7, 1998: The proper amount of Contributions In Aid of
- Construction, or CIAC, Accumulated Amortization and annual amortization of

CIAC that should be imputed in rate base and net operating income for the test year based on the margin reserve granted in this case. I will address the amount of intracompany allocations of common costs which should be included in operating income. I will testify to the proper rates for Mid-County Services.

- 6 Q. Should the Commission include an imputation of CIAC on the margin 7 reserve?
- A. Yes. The Commission should include an imputation of CIAC as a matching provision to the margin reserve calculation. However, as an averaging method, only 50 percent of the imputed CIAC should be recognized since the imputed amount will be collected over the life of the margin reserve period rather than all at the beginning of the period. In addition, the imputation should be limited to the amount of net plant included in the margin reserve.
- Q. Please explain your interpretation of the margin reserve and why that interpretation leads you to your conclusions?
 - A. The margin reserve reflects the utility's obligation to serve potential customers, and the utility invests in central plant to meet this service obligation. If a margin reserve is included in the used and useful calculations, then, to achieve proper matching, an amount of CIAC equivalent to the number of equivalent residential connections (ERCs) represented by the margin reserve should be reflected in rate base. When determining the amount of imputed CIAC, the Commission should use the existing or new capacity charges, since this is a forward-looking adjustment. Also, the amount of CIAC recognized in rate base should be no greater that the amount of net plant included in the margin reserve. My testimony on the imputation of CIAC on the

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margin reserve is consistent with Order No. 20434, issued on December 8, 1988 2 in Docket No. 871134-WS: Order No. 20272, issued on November 7, 1988 in Docket No. 880308-SU: Order No. 24735, issued on July 1, 1991 in Docket No. 900718-WU: and Order No. PSC-93-0301-F0F-WS, issued on February 25, 1993 in Docket No. 911188-WS, where the lesser of the amount of the margin reserve or the number of ERC in the margin reserve was multiplied by the current connection charge.

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- Why have you only included 50 percent of the CIAC estimated to be 8 0. collected?
 - During the margin reserve period, CIAC will not be collected on day-one of the period, but evenly over the period. Since the actual collections are unknown, it is impossible to predict at what rate the growth will occur. I believe it is a reasonable assumption to spread growth ratably across the period. Staff witness Crouch has testified that 18 months is the appropriate margin reserve period. The Commission has approved this allocation in Order No. PSC-97-0388-F0F-WS. issued on April 7, 1997; Order No. PSC-96-1320-F0F-WS. issued on October 30, 1996; and Order No. PSC-96-1338-FOF-WS, issued on November 7, 1996. The gross CIAC for the wastewater system is 109.49 ERCs, 26,825 gallons per day (gpd) divided by 245 gpd per ERC, multiplied by the \$1,235 connection charge. This results in \$135,220, 50 percent of which is \$67.610.
- 22 0. Why have you limited the amount of CIAC to be included in rate base?
 - Since net plant included in the margin reserve is only \$50,733, the amount of CIAC recognized in rate base should be no greater. Allowing the full \$67,610 would reduce used and useful plant serving current customers.

For the wastewater system, it is appropriate to impute additional CIAC of \$50,733. Adjustments should also be made to increase accumulated amortization of CIAC by \$943 and test year amortization expense by \$1,887.

As discussed by staff witness Crouch, DOAH has issued a final order which invalidated the PSC's proposed rule on the computation of margin reserve and imputation of CIAC. For the same reasons stated by staff witness Crouch, I do not believe that DOAH's invalidation of the proposed rule has a direct effect on the instant case, or my position in this issue. I believe that the Commission should include an imputation of CIAC on the margin reserve. For the wastewater facilities this equates to \$135,220, based on the 109.49 ERCs included in the margin reserve times the current \$1,235 plant capacity charge. As stated previously, this amount should be an average amount, therefore CIAC of \$67,610 is appropriate for inclusion in rate base. Since the amount of plant in the margin reserve is only \$50,733, 2.98 percent multiplied by adjusted treatment and disposal plant of \$2,281,624, the adjustment should be limited to that amount.

- Q. Are the allocations from Utilities, Inc. a reasonable distribution of the cost of the services provided to Mid-County?
- A. No, the allocation methods employed by Utilities, Inc. at the time of this filing overstate costs to Mid-County. Utilities, Inc., Mid-County's parent company, through its subsidiary Water Service Corporation (WSC), allocates common costs, including billing costs, to all of its subsidiary utilities, including Mid-County. Upon review of the minimum filing requirements (MFRs), I was concerned with the large increase in operating and maintenance expenses since the last rate case, as shown on MFR Schedule B-8,

the benchmark analysis. This schedule compares the operation and maintenance expenses allowed in the last rate case with those requested in the current case. Allowances are made for customer growth and inflation. The majority of the increases above customer growth and inflation are from the WSC allocations, in particular those allocations based on customer equivalents. For instance, office salaries and wages increased by 1,652.2 percent and miscellaneous expenses increased by 1,327.5 percent. Customer growth during this period only accounted for a 10.9 percent increase. The difference in these allocated costs is very close to the requested revenue increase. The utility explained this increase in costs on MFR B-8, page 1 of 2:

The increase in expenses from the last case to the test year is primarily due to our change in method of allocating indirect costs. Indirect costs are based on customer equivalents. In prior years, customer equivalents were calculated by multiplying the number of customers by approximately one-third. In 1996, customer equivalents correspond to the number of customers served.

At the customer meeting conducted by Commission staff, the customers' main concern surrounded the large increase in operation and maintenance expenses. Further, the last rate case was only four years ago and Mid-County was granted a 52.69 percent increase. The requested rates in the current case represent a 34 percent increase and according to the customers there had been no corresponding change in service.

- Q. What factors used for these allocations did you examine?
- A. One of the primary allocation factors used by WSC is what WSC refers to as a customer equivalent. A customer equivalent is any household or entity

that receives water or wastewater service. This definition of customer equivalent is used in the allocations that depend on relative utility size and the utility argues that it is applied uniformly and consistently throughout all jurisdictions in which Utilities, Inc. has subsidiary utilities. The customer equivalent goes behind the meter and attempts to count the total number of dwelling units that the utility serves. An example would be that a master-metered apartment complex with one meter would generate as many customer equivalents as there are apartments in the complex.

- Q. Why is it appropriate to use some form of customer measurement in these allocations?
- A. The use of some kind of customer measurement is appropriate and commonly used when the size of the utility drives the demand for indirect services from the parent. Many of the services are allocated directly to the subsidiaries where it is economically feasible to do so. Costs allocated directly include rate case expenses and billing costs, to name a few. These costs can be directly identified with a specific subsidiary and can be easily allocated directly to that subsidiary. Indirect allocations arise when a cost can not be directly attributed to a specific subsidiary or the costs benefit all the subsidiaries. In this case, an allocation method must be developed to allocate these costs on a reasonable basis.

Normally, this Commission has seen equivalent residential connections, customers factored based on their usage, factored bills, applying the American Waterworks Association (AWWA) or some other established factor for the meter size to the number of bills issued to that size meter, used to indicate relative utility size. As stated in Order No. 17043, Docket No. 860325-WS.

- Southern States Utilities, Inc., the Commission favored a customer measurement for allocation of common administrative and general expenses. This treatment was consistent with past measurements for these allocations. This position is also supported by Order No. 18367, Docket No. 861201-WS, Hydratech Utilities, Inc., where the Commission favored allocating administrative and general expenses based on average customers.
 - Q. Do the Commission Rules provide a definition of "customers"?

- A. Yes. Rule 25-30.210(1), Florida Administrative Code, defines a customer as: "any person, firm, association, corporation, governmental agency, or similar organization who has an agreement to receive service from the utility."
- 12 Q. What did you find as the cause of the increases you have previously 13 referred to?
 - A. Prior to 1995, Mid-County was receiving allocations for the costs of billing services from WSC even though Pinellas County provides all the water service for Mid-County customers, does all the billing, and charges Mid-County directly. Therefore, Mid-County does not receive billing services from WSC and it is improper to have those costs allocated to Mid-County. WSC, at the time, was unable to separate billing costs from other administrative expenses and allocated the billing costs for all their other systems to all the systems as part of the administrative allocations. Prior to the test year in this case, to avoid a double charge of billing costs to Mid-County, WSC reduced Mid-County's customer equivalents by one third when making cost allocations. In 1995, WSC was able to identify the billing costs separately from other administrative costs and began billing them directly to the subsidiary

- utilities. WSC eliminated all allocations of billing expense to Mid-County and used Mid-County's customer equivalents at full value for other allocations. Although staff would expect this to be a break-even change, trading the billing costs for a greater share in the other common costs, the allocations to Mid-County increased dramatically, one of the major reasons that Mid-County filed the present case.
- Q. Why is this a problem for Mid-County?

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- In the other Utilities, Inc. Florida systems, using customer equivalents does not differ much from the standard measuring units seen by the Commission. Mid-County, however, has several master-metered apartment complexes and mobile As an example, an apartment complex with 354 home parks as customers. dwelling units, served by a six-inch master-meter, would be 354 customer equivalents. Using standard meter ratings, this customer would be equivalent to only 50 single family dwellings and since it is master-metered, it would only represent one customer. The average Mid-County single family residence consumed 16,408 gallons of water per billing period. The average multiresidential customer with a six inch meter consumed 1,740,888 gallons of water per billing period, the equivalent of 106 single family residences, not 354 as the customer equivalent would indicate. By counting apartments as one full customer, the utility's number of customers equivalents for Mid-County is greatly inflated and indicates that the Mid-County operation is much larger than it is, and as such, appears to require more services from the parent than it actually does.
- 24 Q. How does the customer equivalent measurement affect Mid-County?
- 25 A. Using Utilities, Inc.'s customer equivalent calculation, Mid-County has

6,112 wastewater customer equivalents for allocation purposes. In Mid-County's last rate case, the utility reported 1,237 customers. The bills issued show that Mid-County had an average of 1,507 customers for the test year. The factored or weighted bills, applying the AWWA factor for the meter size to the number of bills issued to that size meter, only show 2,255 equivalent customers, about a third of the customer equivalents. The wastewater customer equivalents is 4,637 for Alafaya Utilities, Inc. and 1,812 for Utilities, Inc. of Longwood, both Utilities, Inc. subsidiaries. County, therefore, is absorbing one and one-third more of the common costs as Alafaya and three and one-third more than Longwood. The 1996 Annual Report shows that Alafaya treated 295,535,000 gallons of wastewater, which is two and one quarter more than the 130,627,000 gallons treated by Mid-County. Longwood shows 151.133.000 gallons treated. Based on the volume treated as an indicator of plant size and, therefore, demand on common services, Alafaya should have absorbed two and one-quarter the costs as Mid-County, not one and one-third less, and Longwood should have absorbed slightly more of the costs, not three and one-third less. This greatly inflates Mid-County's apparent use of the common services.

Q. Has this system been used consistently in the past?

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A. In a reply to a staff data request regarding this calculation, the utility noted that the customer equivalent allocation system has been in place for 32 years and has been found reasonable in Illinois and North Carolina as well as at least five rate cases here in Florida, including Mid-County's last rate case. In the Florida cases, my research indicates that the allocation method itself has not been an issue and has not been litigated. Thus, while

the Commission may have accepted the expenses of Mid-County. Docket No. 921293-SU; Utilities, Inc. of Florida, Dockets Nos. 910020-WS, 930826-WS and 940917-WS; Miles Grant, Docket No. 891017-WS; and Lake Placid, Docket No. 951027-WS and found them to be reasonable, no further action was taken nor was the issue of allocation method raised. This leads me to the conclusion that, contrary to the utility's position that there have been under-allocations to Mid-County in the past, under-allocations are currently affecting Utilities. Inc.'s other systems. In other words, instead of fixing the problem, it seems that Utilities, Inc. Has created another problem.

The problem appears to me to arise from the multi-family units and other master-metered customers. Most of the other Florida customers of the Utilities, Inc., systems are predominantly single family dwellings and commercial customers and the expense allocation problem, for all practical purposes, did not exist. It is only on inspection of a utility with a customer base as diverse as Mid-County's that the problem shows up. Utilities, Inc. could compensate by reducing the weighting of the master-metered customers to approximate the demand they have on the system and give a more reasonable approximation of Mid-County's size and, therefore, its demand on common services or simply use customers.

As an example, I have compared the allocation of salaries from the Florida office, showing the allocation by customer equivalents and by gallons of wastewater treated, as shown on Exhibit BFD-1, attached as an Exhibit to my testimony.

The utility further contended, in noticed meetings with staff, that Mid-County has responsibility for maintenance of lines behind the meter on the

customers' premises, contrary to the normal situation of the utility's 1 responsibility ending at the meter. This cost is normally not allowed for rate setting, as shown in Order No. PSC-92-0807-FOF-WS, Docket No. 910560-WS, Tamiami Village Utilities, Inc. If this is a problem as far as assigning costs, it should be removed from regulated expenses, as in the Tamiami case and recovered through maintenance fees charged to the property owner/customer. No evidence has been presented in this case nor has this item been litigated in prior cases, probably based on the minor effect on revenue requirement. I believe that this additional expense has little to do with the demand for common services.

Based on your analysis, what is your recommendation?

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- I recommend that the Commission reject the utility's use of customer equivalents as an appropriate allocation basis for distribution of common costs to Mid-County, even though it may produce reasonable allocations I recommend recalculating those cost allocations which use customer equivalents based on equivalent residential connections, as calculated by Staff Witness Crouch. This measurement is based on the actual amounts treated by Mid-County. This is closer to the distribution of the base facility charge in the rate design in both the last rate case and the current rate case. Recalculated using equivalent residential connections, I find that allocated operation and maintenance expenses should be reduced by \$96,821, allocated depreciation expense should be reduced by \$11,063 and allocated payroll taxes generated by the allocated salaries should be reduced by \$1,832 for a total reduction in expense of \$109,717.
- 25 Since you are recommending an adjustment to the utility's allocation 0.

1 | method for common expenses, do you recommend using a different factor for the 2 | base facility charge?

A. Yes. As I said in my discussion of the common cost allocations, some of the water meters installed by Pinellas County may be undersized and, therefore, those customers may not be contributing their fair share of the revenue requirement through the base facility charges. I have examined the billing information provided in the MFRs. I noticed that the usage characteristics were similar to United Water Florida (UWF) in Docket No. 960451-WS, as discussed in Order No. PSC-97-0618-FOF-WS, issued May 30, 1997. The UWF base facility charges were calculated using meter factors based on hydraulic factors in the Clow Pipe Economy Usage scale. This is a measurement of the contents of pipe in U.S. Gallons per foot length developed in 1975 by the Pressure Pipe Products Group of the Clow Corporation. I recommend that these factors be used for determining the base facility charges for Mid-County. Exhibit BFD-2, attached to my testimony, compares the AWWA factors with the recommended Clow Pipe factors.

Q. Does this fully address the your concerns about the factors to be used for all meter sizes?

A. No. Multi-Family customers with 1 1/2-inch, 2-inch and 3-inch meters show usage at a higher level than expected. The usage for these meter sizes is two to three times the expected level. After analyzing the usage of these customers, the number of units behind the meter, and the Clow Pipe values, I believe that the factors for these multi-family meters should be the Clow Pipe factor for the next higher meter. In other words, the multi-family 1 1/2-inch meters should use the factor for the 2-inch meter, the 2-inch meters should

the factor for the 3-inch meter and the 3-inch meters should use the factor for the 4-inch meter. The resulting factors for multi-family are shown on Exhibit BFD-2, attached to my testimony. Does this conclude your testimony? Q. Α. Yes.

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Comparison of the Allocation of Salaries from the Florida Office Showing the Allocation by Customer Equivalents and by Gallons of Wastewater Treated

	Customer	Percent	Gross	Gallons Treated	Percent	Gross	Allocation
Subsidiary	Equiv.	of Total	<u>Salaries</u>	(000)	of Total	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Alafaya	4,637	18.41%	\$35,010	295,535	32.13%	\$61,103	\$26,094
Lake Placid	313	1.24%	\$2,363	9,078	0.99%	\$1,877	\$(486)
Lake Utility	1,108	4.40%	\$8,363	0	0.00%	\$0	\$(8,363)
Longwood	1,812	7.19%	\$13,681	151,133	16.43%	\$31,247	\$17,567
Mid-County	6,112	24.26%	\$46,146	130,627	14.40%	\$27,008	\$(19,138)
Miles Grant	1,806	7.17%	\$13,635	43,795	4.76%	\$9,055	\$(4,581)
Tierra Verde	1,986	7.88%	\$14,994	139,063	15.12%	\$28,752	\$13,757
UIFL	6,294	24.98%	\$47,520	102,603	11.15%	\$21,214	\$(26,306)
Wedgefield	1,124	4.46%	\$8,486	48,103	5.23%	\$9.946	\$1,459
Total	25,182	100.00%	\$181,835	817,334	100.00%	\$181,835	

CONTENTS OF PIPE

Capacities in United States Gallons (231 Cubic Feet)

Per Foot Length

Diameter <u>Inches</u>	<u>U.S.</u> <u>Gallons</u>	Meter <u>Factor</u>	AWWA Meter <u>Factor</u>	Multi- Residential <u>Customers</u>
5/8"	0.0159	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
3/4"	0.0230	1.4465	1.5000	1.4465
1"	0.0408	2.5660	2.5000	2.5660
1 1/2"	0.0918	5.7736	5.0000	10.2642
2"	0.1632	10.2642	8.0000	23.1006
3"	0.3673	23.1006	15.0000	41.0566
4"	0.6528	41.0566	25.0000	41.0566
6"	1.4690	92.3899	50.0000	92.3899
8"	2.6110	164.2138	80.0000	164.2138
10"	4.0810	256.6667	115.0000	256.6667
12"	5.8760	369.5597	215.0000	369.5597

Clow Corporation 1975