

State of Florida



# Public Service Commission

CAPITAL CIRCLE OFFICE CENTER • 2540 SHUMARD OAK BOULEVARD  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

**-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-**

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**DATE:** October 23, 2007  
**TO:** Ann Cole, Commission Clerk - PSC, Office of Commission Clerk  
**FROM:** Rosanne Gervasi, Senior Attorney, Office of the General Counsel *RG*  
**RE:** Docket No. 060368-WS

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Please place the attached document in the above-referenced docket file. Thank you.

RG/mrd

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FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

Minutes of September 26, 2007 Informal Meeting  
With Aqua Utilities Florida, Inc. (Aqua)

Attendees

Representatives of Aqua:

Chris Franklin  
Stan Sczygiel  
Ken Hoffman  
Bill Kephart (by telephone)  
Rick Fox (by telephone)  
Lesley Dix (by telephone)  
Jack Lihvarcik (by telephone)  
Kimberly Joyce (by telephone)

Representatives of Office of Public Counsel:

Charlie Beck (by telephone)  
Steve Reilly

Representative of Office of Attorney General:

Cecilia Bradley (by telephone)

Florida Public Service Commission staff:

Marshall Willis  
Cheryl Bulecza-Banks  
Troy Rendell  
Rhonda Hicks  
Rosanne Gervasi

Customers of Aqua:

Kelly Sullivan  
Ron McKay

Purpose of Informal Meeting:

To review the Commission's complaint process and Aqua's response time performance, and any other service quality issues that may have arisen since the August 28, 2007 agenda conference.

Telephone Participation Issue:

Meeting commenced at 1:30 p.m. Kelly Sullivan voiced objection because the telephone conference participation code was incorrectly listed on the Notice of Informal Meeting, preventing full telephone participation. Those who participated by telephone had to call the PSC to find out the correct participation code. Ms. Sullivan called the state operator and got the correct code. PSC staff went forward with the meeting over the objection because by Order No.

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FPSC-COMMISSION CLERK

PSC-07-0773-FOF-WS, issued September 24, 2007, the Commission approved a settlement agreement whereby Aqua agreed to hold monthly meetings with the parties and staff for a period of six months, beginning in September 2007, to review the complaint process and Aqua's response time performance, and any other service quality issues that may arise, and the parties and staff were present. Staff will assure that all future notices of informal meetings held in this docket over the next six months reflect the correct information for telephone participation.

Agenda:

Chris Franklin handed out an agenda and other materials relative to Aqua's Call Center response time performance. A link to these handouts will be provided on the PSC's website. Aqua issued a memorandum to all employees re: Commission's complaint policy. See handout link.

Complaint Processing:

Chris Franklin explained that since the settlement, Aqua has not been late in processing a complaint filed with the Commission. Rhonda Hicks, Chief, Bureau of Complaint Resolution, questioned this; her records showed one late complaint. Could be the first and last name of customer reversed on complaint form. Aqua's records show the company responded to the complaint on September 24. Rhonda will check her complaint records for the response.

Discussion was held re: necessity for Aqua to insure that the Master Commission Directory reflects the correct e-mail address and FAX number for Aqua, in order for Aqua to receive all complaints forwarded by the Bureau of Complaint Resolution on a timely basis. Aqua will contact the Clerk's Office for this purpose. Complaints received by the Commission in hard copy only will be FAXed only to Aqua, and not e-mailed. Bureau of Complaint Resolution sends a weekly report to every company showing all complaints received by the Commission, as well as past due ones.

Ron McKay stated customers do not know how to contact Aqua directly in order to lodge a complaint. Chris Franklin explained that Aqua's Call Center is in operation 24 hours per day. After-hours calls are answered by an answering service which dispatches after-hours calls to field reps. Kelly Sullivan stated she was unable to get through to a supervisor after hours in order to have her service turned on when her service had mistakenly been turned off. Customers should be able to talk to on-call management after hours for mistaken shut-offs. Chris Franklin agreed her shut-off was a mistake and the utility will respond immediately to mistaken shut-offs. However the general policy is that Aqua does not turn service back on after hours when the service was shut off for non-payment.

Meter Reading Intervals:

Chris Franklin explained Aqua's target is to read meters every 30 days, and have the measurements in place to test Aqua's success in this area. There is a zero tolerance for reading meters outside the 26-35 day window. If a route or a cycle is outside the window, the bills will be mass estimated. Jasmine Lakes was mass estimated last week, resulting from the job

termination of a meter reader. Bills that are cancelled and rebilled will fall outside of the window.

#### Meter Change-Out Program:

Every meter for systems regulated by the Commission, by the end of 2008 will have a new meter and an RF device which will allow meters to be read from a remote location. Ron McKay questioned whether the customers will be required to pay for the meter change-out. Chris Franklin advised yes, as it is a capital improvement, the company will seek cost recovery. Newer meters that are compatible with the RF will not be changed-out. Total cost per meter is approximately \$200, installed. Rhonda Hicks advised the company to be prepared for a higher volume of customer complaints re: higher usage as a result of the meter change-outs. Older meters have a higher likelihood of running slower, and all bills will be actual and not estimated once RF is in place. Chris Franklin advised Aqua knows there will be some pain in the transition. Aqua plans to notify its customers in three ways when their meters are changed-out, as follows: 1) Aqua will send a letter to each customer explaining the change-out program; 2) Aqua will follow up by sending a postcard to each customer advising when the meters in that area will be changed out; and 3) customers will receive a message on their bills advising of when the meters will be changed out. New meters will be set at "zero." Discussion was held as to the brand of meters that will be used. Aqua will use Sensus meters, which have a good track record and a strong radio wave for transmitting the information. Marshall Willis explained companies in Florida use both Sensus and Neptune meters and we have no information to show whether one is more accurate than the other.

#### Customer Call Volume:

Bill Kephart explained the customer call volume graphs which were handed out. See handout link. There was an increased call volume during the months of May-July. Consolidation of mid-western accounts caused an increased number of busy outs due to the high volume of calls. Aqua's service goal is to answer 80% of calls within 90 seconds. To accomplish this goal, Aqua has hired 18 additional service reps.; ten in the first wave, in June, and eight in the second wave, in August. It will take time for the new employees to gain proficiency. Also, the mid-western calls are leveling out. Aqua believes it is moving in the right direction. The next few months will show whether improvement continues re: calls answered timely. Aqua has bilingual service reps. on the phones (Spanish/English).

#### Call Abandonment Rates:

See handouts. Shows similar results. Aqua had a higher number of call abandonments (hang ups) from May – August. The levels are going down in September. Call abandonment rates are higher on Mondays. Marshall Willis asked to see the Florida-specific statistics. Aqua will provide this information.

#### Quality Assurance Program (QA):

Aqua records all calls made to its Call Center. The QA Program is in its infancy. 600 calls per month are monitored by an independent team in the Call Center. This team monitors calls to review how the calls were handled and to identify employee training issues.

#### Town Meetings:

Aqua proposes to conduct six town meetings beginning in January 2008, with one town meeting being conducted every other month. On the off months, Aqua will do a 100% follow-up to all customer concerns voiced at the town meetings. Town meeting locations have not as yet been scheduled and will not be scheduled for a least another month. Aqua knows it needs to get closer to its customers and proposes to conduct the town meetings in an expo-type forum, in which stations are placed around the room for customers to visit. There will be a billing question station where customers can receive instant action concerning their specific billing questions. There will also be a water usage information station and a water quality information station. Senior management will circulate around the room to communicate with customers. Aqua's goal is to instantaneously solve the problems voiced in the room. Cecilia Bradley suggested that an old-fashioned town hall meeting should comprise a portion of the meetings, where customers can speak at a podium. Aqua is open to suggestions in this regard.

#### Refund Rule:

Customers inquired as to when and how interim rate refunds will be issued. Aqua and staff explained the refunds will be calculated pursuant to Rule 25-30.360, Florida Administrative Code, and that staff will verify that Aqua accurately completes the refunds. Refunds will appear as credits against customer bills and will be completed by November.

#### Next Meeting:

The next monthly meeting will be held towards the end of October, possibly on October 30.