

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Next up is Item
3 No. 3, consideration of the settlement agreement.
4 This item, Mr. Futrell is going to introduce it.

5 MR. FUTRELL: Item 3 addresses the joint
6 motion of HC Waterworks, Inc., and the Office of
7 Public Counsel for approval of a stipulation and
8 settlement agreement.

9 The utility applied for an increase in its
10 water rates on October 15th, 2019. In May 2020,
11 the Commission found the utility's quality of
12 service to be unsatisfactory due to the high volume
13 of customer complaints, and therefore, reduced the
14 utility's return on equity by 50 basis points.

15 The Commission also ordered the utility to
16 work with its customers and the Office of Public
17 Counsel to resolve customer service issues.

18 OPC protested portions of the PAA order that
19 related to the Commission's decision on the
20 utility's quality of service. The utility filed a
21 cross-petition requesting the Commission dismiss
22 OPC's protest.

23 In August 2020, the utility and OPC filed a
24 joint motion for approval of a stipulation and
25 settlement agreement that addresses issues

1 associated with the utility's quality of service.

2 Troy Rendell representing HC Waterworks and
3 Stephanie Morse with the Office of Public Counsel
4 would like to address the Commission.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Again, Mr.
6 Rendell, would you like to address?

7 MR. RENDELL: Yes. Good morning,
8 Commissioners. Troy Rendell on behalf of HC
9 Waterworks.

10 I am here mainly to answer questions, but I
11 did want to bring to the Commission's attention the
12 Office of Public Counsel, with the assistance of
13 Highlands County, coordinated a virtual customer
14 meeting two weeks ago. We had three customers call
15 in. Again, that's three out of a thousand water
16 customers called in. Of those, one of them did
17 state on the record his -- his quality has
18 improved.

19 We did send a customer rep -- I mean, a
20 customer representative from the utility to the
21 other two the next day, and they were satisfied,
22 very impressed with our response.

23 I believe the Commission can move forward and
24 approve the settlement agreement and proceed
25 forward.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.
3 Rendell.

4 Ms. Morse.

5 MS. MORSE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good
6 morning, Mr. Chair and Commissioners. I am
7 Stephanie Morse with the Office of Public Counsel
8 which represents the customers of HC Waterworks.

9 We just want to offer a brief explanation of
10 the settlement entered into by the parties as
11 proposed to you and the parties' joint motion filed
12 August 11, 2020, and an explanation of why we
13 believe the settlement serves the public interest.

14 First, the settlement does not propose to
15 change the rates recommended by staff. What the
16 settlement does is respond to customers' concerns
17 and request for enhanced communication with the
18 utility, and an assurance that certain customer
19 engagement referenced in the PAA would occur, and
20 this relates to improving the quality of service
21 which was an issue in the proceeding.

22 So the two main components of the settlement
23 are, one, participation by objective parties, and
24 some engagement between the utilities and customers
25 by the end of February 2021. And, two, quarterly

1 status reports to be filed in the docket regarding
2 customer complaints and their resolution.

3 And regarding the -- the engagement component,
4 as Mr. Rendell mentioned, OPC did host a virtual
5 meeting for customers in January, and we were
6 appreciative -- appreciative that members of the
7 Commission's staff attended, along with the
8 President of HC Waterworks and several members. It
9 was a fruitful meeting which provided information
10 the customers indicated they wanted. So, you know,
11 in closing, as such, OPC believes the settlement is
12 in the public interest, and we urge you to approve
13 the settlement.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
16 Morse.

17 All right. Commissioners, do you have any
18 questions?

19 Commissioner Brown.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Quick question, thank
21 you, Mr. Chairman, for Mr. Rendell on the
22 settlement agreement on the boil water notices. It
23 says, in section four -- and thank you, by the way,
24 to the utility and Public Counsel for working
25 together on this item, I should say, and working

1 with the customers. Really good faith effort here,
2 so I appreciate it, but I just wanted a little more
3 clarification on what HC Waterworks is going to be
4 doing.

5 It says that you are going to be complying
6 with prescribed noticing for the precautionary boil
7 water notices. Is there anything else you are
8 going to be doing, and how are you going to be
9 rolling that out?

10 MR. RENDELL: Yes, thanks, Commissioners.

11 Yeah, we have always met the requirements of
12 DEP which requires a 24-hour notice after an event
13 of either a loss of pressure or a main break.
14 Typically, in the past, we have done that primarily
15 through door hangers. We have recently used the
16 radio stations and the TV stations. And then most
17 recently, when -- when possible for an area, we
18 used a -- it's kind of a reverse 911, it's called
19 DialMyCalls, and that one is effective because it
20 can trace, you know, if the call was answered, if a
21 message was left, and we can kind of trace it.

22 You know, no one method is 100 percent, you
23 know, foolproof. We have some customers that don't
24 like door hangers. We have some customers that
25 don't want a phone call. We have some customers

1 say they don't watch the TV or listen to the radio,
2 so no one method satisfies all customers, but we
3 are trying to look for more innovative means of
4 doing so when possible.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN: That's great, and, you
6 know, personally we just had a boil water notice in
7 the City of Tampa, and we didn't -- none of us got
8 notices for 48 hours, so no fliers or anything like
9 that, so I appreciate all the efforts that you are
10 doing.

11 And with that, if there are no questions, I
12 would move approval of this item.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. We have a motion
14 from Commissioner Brown, if I heard her right, to
15 find this in the public interest and to approve.

16 Is there a second?

17 COMMISSIONER FAY: I will second.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I have a motion and a second.

19 Any discussion?

20 On the motion, all in favor say aye.

21 (Chorus of ayes.)

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Motion carries.

25 And again, thank you. As Commissioner Brown

1 stated, thank you to OPC and to the water company
2 for the hard work they did and to bring this
3 settlement in. Our -- our great appreciation for
4 all of your efforts.

5 All right. Is there anything else that needs
6 to come before the Commission before we adjourn?

7 All right. Seeing none, we are going to
8 adjourn, and we are going to reconvene in 15
9 minutes. Is 15 minutes an adequate amount of time?
10 15 minutes we are going to reconvene.

11 If you are a participant in the upcoming
12 hearing, please go ahead and log in so we can test
13 everyone's audio and video for the upcoming
14 meeting. Reconvene 10:15.

15 We stand adjourned.

16 (Agenda item concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 15th day of February, 2021.



DEBRA R. KRICK
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #HH31926
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024