

BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 090424-WS

In the Matter of:

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATES TO  
PROVIDE WATER AND WASTEWATER  
SERVICE IN POLK COUNTY BY BIMINI  
BAY UTILITIES CORPORATION, AND  
FOUR POINTS UTILITY CORPORATION  
(UNDOCKETED).



PROCEEDINGS: CUSTOMER MEETING  
(Audio File Transcription)

TAKEN AT THE  
INSTANCE OF: The Staff of the Florida  
Public Service Commission

DATE: Thursday, November 18, 2010

TIME: Commenced at 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Island Club West Clubhouse  
3100 Sand Mine Road  
Davenport, Florida 33897

TRANSCRIBED BY: LINDA BOLES, RPR, CRR  
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## P R O C E E D I N G S

**MS. DANIEL:** Good evening. I'd like to call this customer meeting to order. If I could have the Staff counsel read the notice, please.

**MS. BENNETT:** Good evening. This -- my name is Lisa Bennett. This is a meeting of the Public Service Commission. And by notice duly given, this time and place was set for the, for both Bimini Bay and Four Points customer meeting. Thank you all for coming.

**MS. DANIEL:** Sorry. We're working with just two microphones. If you'll bear with us. And I apologize for starting just a few minutes late, but I wanted everyone to have time to come in and be seated and to get pamphlets. So I think we're ready now.

If you are a customer of Bimini Bay, I hope you have the yellow handout. If you don't, we can get one for you. If you're a customer of Four Points, I hope you have the blue handout. If not, we can get one for you.

I'm Patti Daniel. I'm with the Staff of the Florida Public Service Commission. I, I have with me our Staff Counsel, this is Lisa Bennett, and Lydia Roberts, who's a Staff Analyst. And I have a Staff Engineer, Tom Walden. There are several other Staff people out in the audience who are observing

1       tonight and will be available later this evening if  
2       you have some particular questions. Let's see.  
3       Lisa Bennett is with Staff Counsel. You met Justin  
4       Burton at the door. He is giving out the handouts.  
5       He's with our Office of Public Information. Kevin  
6       Carpenter is in the audience. He's one of our  
7       Commission Staff people. I'm Patti Daniel. Jerry  
8       Hallenstein and Lisa Harvey are in the audience.  
9       And, let's see, Lydia is up here. Carl Vinson is in  
10      the back, and Tom, our Staff Engineer. So I  
11      apologize for getting everything twisted up.

12               I am going to make a brief presentation  
13      for you tonight to give you a little bit of  
14      information about why we're here, and then I'm going  
15      to give you an opportunity, if you'd like to, to  
16      come forward and ask us some questions or give us  
17      some information. (Technical difficulties with  
18      microphones.) Too much equipment too close  
19      together. And if you would like to speak, I hope  
20      you let Justin know so that he could sign you up.

21               If you have some questions that you'd  
22      like -- if you have some questions that you'd like  
23      to address with some individual Staff members, we'll  
24      be here when the meeting is concluded if you want to  
25      come and talk to some of us individually, and we'll

1 be glad to help you with that.

2 As I said, we're the Staff of the Florida  
3 Public Service Commission. And I want you to know  
4 that there are *Florida Statutes* and *Florida*  
5 *Administrative Code* rules that govern what we do and  
6 how we do it.

7 Tonight we're here to talk to you about  
8 two utilities, Bimini Bay and Four Points. In  
9 particular, what I want to tell you about Bimini Bay  
10 is that Bimini Bay has applied with the Public  
11 Service Commission for a certificate from the  
12 Commission to provide water service to the Bimini  
13 Bay development. Bimini Bay buys bulk water from  
14 the County and then resells it to its customers.  
15 Right now Bimini Bay is exempt from Commission  
16 regulation because they are charging for that water  
17 at a rate of charge that doesn't exceed what they  
18 pay for it. And the Commission does not have the  
19 jurisdiction to set those rates right now, but they  
20 have requested authority to change those rates, and  
21 that is something that would have to come before the  
22 Public Service Commission. So that's one of the  
23 issues that we're dealing with is what those monthly  
24 rates and charges should be.

25 With Four Points, Four Points already has



1 a certificate from the Florida Public Service  
2 Commission that was granted in 2007 and they already  
3 have approved rates and charges. We have received  
4 some letters and phone calls from some of you about  
5 some questions that you have about the bills that  
6 you're receiving or some of the service issues that  
7 you were having, so we thought now would be a good  
8 time to take your input on those matters as well.

9 A lot of numbers, you have them in your  
10 handout. Okay? What I want you to know is when  
11 Four Points charges you for water and wastewater  
12 service, they charge you a base facility charge.  
13 And you can see, for water it's \$11.68 and for  
14 wastewater it's \$18.61. And those help the company  
15 cover some of the fixed costs that they incur  
16 regardless of the amount of water you might use.  
17 And then you have a meter at your home, and the, the  
18 water usage is also billed based on the amount of  
19 usage that you have.

20 And what I want you to see is that, for  
21 example, if you use maybe 5,000 gallons a month, you  
22 would pay a water bill of \$25.43 and a wastewater  
23 bill of \$41.76. And that just kind of gives you an  
24 idea of how Four Points right now is allowed to bill  
25 for that service. Just so you see, that little

1 footnote down there that tells you that for  
2 wastewater, even if you use 20,000 gallons of water  
3 in a particular month, you would never pay for more  
4 than 10,000 gallons of water -- I'm sorry, of  
5 wastewater.

6 Here is what we at the Commission are  
7 going to do with respect to the Bimini Bay  
8 application and the Four Points issues that have  
9 come up. We are performing an investigation right  
10 now. We're looking at Bimini Bay's application,  
11 we're looking at the revenues that they believe that  
12 they're entitled to recover and the expenses that  
13 they have associated with providing water and  
14 wastewater service. And we're also evaluating both  
15 Bimini Bay and Four Points' quality of service and  
16 how are they doing with respect to following the  
17 Commission's rules and regulations and providing you  
18 good quality service.

19 Tonight's customer meeting is an  
20 opportunity for, for you to hear from the Public  
21 Service Commission those things that we do have the  
22 ability to help you with, and then for you to ask  
23 questions and let us see if we can help you resolve  
24 some particular questions and concerns that you may  
25 have.

1           When Staff concludes its investigation  
2       with respect to both Bimini Bay and Four Points,  
3       we're going to prepare a Staff recommendation, and  
4       we will file that so that the Commissioners will  
5       then be able to take a look at the Staff  
6       recommendation and decide whether to grant Bimini  
7       Bay a certificate to provide water and wastewater  
8       service and, if they do, what those monthly rates  
9       and charges should be. And we will also describe  
10      for the Commissioners some of the customer concerns  
11      that you all have had and let them decide what, if  
12      anything, might be done about that.

13           The Commissioners will vote on the Staff  
14      recommendation at an Agenda Conference in  
15      Tallahassee, and the Commissioners -- the Utility  
16      and the customers, if customers wanted to come to  
17      Tallahassee, you would be allowed to speak at that  
18      agenda. And the Commissioners may either approve,  
19      deny or modify the Staff recommendation.

20           As a result of the Commission vote, there  
21      will be an order that will codify what the  
22      Commissioners have decided to do with respect to  
23      Bimini Bay and Four Points. That order is issued  
24      within 20 days after the Agenda Conference.

25           PAA order, it's called a proposed agency

1     action process, and that means that Staff has done  
2     its investigation, we've made a recommendation to  
3     the Commissioners, the Commissioners have considered  
4     Staff's recommendation and have voted. You as  
5     customers may decide that you don't like what the  
6     Commissioners have voted on, and so there is an  
7     informal process called the proposed agency action  
8     process. If you don't like the Commission's  
9     decision, you can object to that. If you do that,  
10    and you will receive a notice of what that  
11    Commission decision is, if you don't like their  
12    decision or receive a notice -- and we will talk you  
13    through the one, two, threes of what you might need  
14    to do if you did not like the Commission's vote.

15           And let me stop right there. I realize  
16    that I forgot to mention that we do have someone  
17    here today from the Office of Public Counsel. The  
18    Legislature has appointed a particular agency, the  
19    Office of Public Counsel, and they are legal  
20    representatives for you, the customers. So should  
21    you not like the Commission's decision, and I'll  
22    give you a little bit more information in just a  
23    couple of slides, you would have access to the  
24    Office of Public Counsel, and they do have a  
25    representative here tonight.

1           If -- just a couple of more slides. Is  
2           that okay? Okay. What can you do? Today, if you'd  
3           like to speak, we're going to have you come to the  
4           podium one at a time and tell us your name and make  
5           your comments. You can also -- there's a place in  
6           the report you can provide written comments if  
7           you're not comfortable talking in public. If you  
8           think of something after we leave, you'll be able to  
9           provide the Commission with written comments.

10           You can obtain a copy of the Staff  
11           recommendation. There's information in these  
12           bulletins about how to go to the Commission's  
13           website and look online, and you will be able to see  
14           what the Staff recommendation looks like and monitor  
15           what is happening in this case. I see some of you  
16           signed up to speak tonight. I'm going to call on  
17           you in the order in which you signed up. If I do  
18           call your name, I'd ask you to come to the podium  
19           and give us your name, and if you don't mind  
20           spelling that last name just so we're clear on who  
21           is speaking.

22           Because we've got two utilities that we're  
23           talking about tonight, maybe you can remind us if  
24           you're a Four Points or a Bimini Bay customer. Make  
25           sure you use the microphone. We want to be able to

1 hear you. We're hopefully recording it, hopefully.

2 This is the reports, the Four Points and  
3 the Bimini Bay reports. Towards the back is the  
4 place where you have the customer comment letter.

5 If you go to the Commission's website,  
6 this is what our home page looks like. We have five  
7 Commissioners. We're short one right now. We're  
8 working with four, but that will change in January.

9 You can even view our Agenda Conference,  
10 the Agenda Conferences. You can go to the  
11 Commission's website and you can monitor the Agenda  
12 Conferences as they're going on.

13 The Office of Public Counsel, as I said,  
14 has a representative with us here tonight serving.  
15 Mike Jenkins is in the back, and there's a phone  
16 number for the Office of Public Counsel,  
17 Mr. Jenkins.

18 We have a 1-800 number if you have any  
19 questions; the website. Please remember today's  
20 meeting is being recorded. Come forward to the  
21 microphone when your name is called and give us your  
22 name and address and spell your last name. Okay. I  
23 flew through that as quickly as I could.

24 If I can, I'm going to begin by calling on  
25 the folks who have asked to speak, and if you'll

1       come to the microphone.

2               **MS. BENNETT:** Rafael Baquero. Baquero.

3               **MR. BAQUERO:** (Inaudible.)

4               **MS. DANIEL:** Would you care to speak? You're  
5       okay? All right. Come and talk to us afterwards if you  
6       have a question. All right? Thank you.

7               **MR. BAQUERO:** (Inaudible).

8               **MS. DANIEL:** You'll write it down. That's  
9       fine.

10              **MS. BENNETT:** Manuel Veletzcy.

11              **MS. DANIEL:** Manuel? No?

12              **MS. BENNETT:** Shari, Shari Nieves.

13              **MS. NIEVAS:** That was a hard one.

14              **MS. DANIEL:** Huh?

15              **MS. NIEVAS:** I said that was a hard one. It's  
16       Nievas, the last name is Nieves.

17              **MS. DANIEL:** Nieves. Thank you.

18              **MS. NIEVAS:** And I live in Four Points.

19              **MS. DANIEL:** In Four Points. Okay.

20              **MS. NIEVAS:** Okay. I don't even know why this  
21       meeting was called, but, so I have confirmed hopefully  
22       there relevant to what we're here for today.

23                       We want to, I wanted to know, my husband  
24       and I wanted to know how you base the water, how  
25       much water you pay versus other counties (phonetic).

1 Because I've lived in Polk County for 30 years and  
2 I've never paid this much for my water bill. And my  
3 husband and I are rarely ever home and we were  
4 charged for 15,000 gallons of water, which there's,  
5 I just don't see how we could use that much. And  
6 then my husband said he actually had to uncover the  
7 meter, and he waited all day for them to come  
8 because they said that they would come and they  
9 never did. So I'm assuming that they just estimated  
10 how much water we use. And there's two people --  
11 there's three people in my home and my husband's  
12 grandmother lives there. She might flush the toilet  
13 maybe two times a day; she's 89 years old. We have  
14 efficient, you know, washing machine and dryer.  
15 Like I said, we're rarely ever home, and we don't  
16 get home until 8:00 at night, we're off on the  
17 weekends, and those bills look pretty high. So  
18 we're, we're a little disillusioned as to our cost  
19 of our water bill.

20 MS. DANIEL: Okay. Let, I'll, I'll try to  
21 broadly answer some of that. It would take specifics to  
22 give you specific answers.

23 Four Points buys its water from the  
24 County, so part of the rates that Four Points  
25 charges is embedded, that bulk cost for those rates.



1 On top of that, Four Points then has to render  
2 bills, they have to read meters, they have to  
3 maintain the lines and so forth. So at some point  
4 those rates were set recognizing that there are  
5 overhead costs and some internal costs associated  
6 with providing that service.

7 **MS. NIEVAS:** Are there any more costs than it  
8 would cost like, say, if you lived in Lakeland?

9 **MS. DANIEL:** The rates for Four Points -- when  
10 the Commission sets rates -- and let me say this, I  
11 think this is going to be a question that we're going to  
12 hear from a lot of people. When the Commission sets  
13 rates, we really don't rate compare. We look at the  
14 particular cost of the utility that's providing the  
15 service. How much has Four, does Four Points have to  
16 pay to the County for the water and wastewater service?  
17 We physically get a copy of those bills and those  
18 initial rates are set in that way.

19 We, we look at the, the owner of the  
20 utility is entitled to a salary for managing the  
21 utility. They're -- let's see, when you have bulk  
22 service, there's not a lot going on over and above  
23 that. There's, there's the mailing of the bill,  
24 there's the meter reading and those kinds of things.  
25 But we actually look at the cost the utility has of

1 providing that service. And it's not just if, if  
2 the president wanted to make \$200,000 a year, that  
3 might be a business decision, but the Commission  
4 would then look at, well, is that a prudent salary  
5 for the president of the company? Is that a prudent  
6 salary for the meter readers? So we take all of  
7 those factors into consideration when we set the  
8 rates for the utilities.

9 **MS. NIEVAS:** I live in -- my, where I live, I  
10 have a four-bedroom home. Does anybody else have four  
11 bedrooms? Do you know about how large of an area space  
12 that we live in?

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

14 **MS. NIEVAS:** About 1,800. And my father  
15 lives in a 4,000 square feet home in Lakeland and  
16 his -- and our water bill is outrageous. And I know  
17 what you're saying, but I don't -- that doesn't  
18 attend to me about a bill and how much they get  
19 paid. It's amount of water, how much we use, and it  
20 is extremely, extremely high in my opinion.

21 **MS. BENNETT:** Lydia has asked if you would  
22 meet with her to look at your bills. It does seem to be  
23 on the high side. And so she's --

24 **MS. ROBERTS:** After the meeting, I have your  
25 name, and we can get together.

1                   **MS. NIEVAS:** Okay. Appreciate it.

2                   **MS. ROBERTS:** And of these 12 months, when did  
3 this high bill take place?

4                   **MS. NIEVAS:** We've only been living here five  
5 months, and they've never come out ever to look, to read  
6 our meter. My husband had to go dig it out.

7                   **MS. ROBERTS:** All right. If you could provide  
8 me with the five months' worth of bills that you have.

9                   **MS. NIEVAS:** Well, I don't have that here  
10 right now, but you probably could look it up somewhere.

11                   **MS. ROBERTS:** We could -- you can fax it to me  
12 (inaudible), and I'll go over the billing to make sure  
13 that the gallonage is --

14                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** There are a few more  
15 speakers tonight (inaudible).

16                   **MS. ROBERTS:** Okay. I'll get with you.

17                   **MS. NIEVAS:** Okay. Thank you.

18                   **MS. DANIEL:** I can tell you that for the  
19 erratic water bills, what we're probably going to need  
20 to see is copies of several months that you believe  
21 represent those erratic water bills. If we need to  
22 contact the company to get that information, if we need  
23 to help you contact the company to get copies of those  
24 bills. Okay. Okay. But that's what we'll need to look  
25 at is the documentation showing us what those bills are,

1 showing us the usage, and we'll see if we can help you  
2 get to the bottom of something. That's exactly what we  
3 want to do is if you believe they're estimated meter  
4 readings instead of actual, we want to talk to you, talk  
5 to the company and find out the answers to those  
6 questions. Okay.

7 **MS. BENNETT:** A large part of why we're here  
8 tonight is to hear the kinds of things that, I'm going  
9 to say your last name wrong again, but Ms. Nieves gave  
10 us, that kind of information. We want to hear that. If  
11 there are specific factual circumstances, that's why  
12 different Staff members are here to help you look at  
13 your bill to understand if there's a billing error or if  
14 the company billed you correctly. So we're the, we're  
15 the agency that regulates the utilities, and we want to  
16 hear your concerns and that's part of why we're here  
17 tonight.

18 With that, we want to call, I think it's  
19 Vernon Faine.

20 **MR. FAINE:** Yes.

21 **MS. DANIEL:** Tell us which utility.

22 **MR. FAINE:** Four Points. My name is Vernon  
23 Faine, and Four Points is my supplier. My question is  
24 I'm away six months out of the year, and whiles I'm in  
25 New York I get a bill for \$176. And I knew the bill was

1 cut off, the water was cut off because I cut it off  
2 myself because I'm a retired water authority employee  
3 for Long Island. So I (inaudible) shut it off myself,  
4 and they keep sending me these bills for \$171, \$176. I  
5 tell them, go and look and see if the water is shut off.  
6 There's no consumption. If there's not -- I call myself  
7 winterizing the house, so if I have a break (phonetic),  
8 I don't have to worry about it flooding. Because if  
9 it's shut off in the vault, there ain't no water going  
10 to come in. It's still showing these high bills.

11 And I called Bob, I called Four Points a  
12 couple of times. Bob is supposed to be, I guess,  
13 the head man at Four Points. And he came there and  
14 read it. He said, "Okay. We're going to give you  
15 another bill." I never received another bill.

16 This just happened -- I came here in  
17 October, read the meter. They gave me a bill for  
18 170 some dollars again. And I came and I said,  
19 "Look, the meter is, you know, something is wrong."  
20 I said, "The meter is shut off and there's no  
21 consumption."

22 The only thing I could see, what they're  
23 doing is they curb read when you go around, it's  
24 called curb readings. You sit in the car and write  
25 out consumption. You've heard of that before;

1 right? And that's the only thing that I could  
2 possibly see somebody getting readings. Because  
3 he'd go back to the house, come back to the house,  
4 "Mr. Faine, you didn't use any water. It's off of  
5 the vault." It happened three times like that over  
6 a six-month period. And I'm saying how come that's  
7 happening all the time?

8 Because where I worked from, if you  
9 falsify your records, it's cause to get fired.

10 **MS. BENNETT:** A couple of things, Mr. Faine.  
11 First of all, would you go ahead and state your address  
12 for the record?

13 **MR. FAINE:** Okay. 308 Orchid Drive.

14 **MS. BENNETT:** And was the 170 for a month or  
15 is it --

16 **MR. FAINE:** It was for one month. Yes.

17 **MS. BENNETT:** Okay. Ms. Lydia would like to  
18 see you after the meeting also.

19 **MR. FAINE:** Okay.

20 **MS. BENNETT:** Okay?

21 **MR. FAINE:** Because, since the guy that's  
22 supposed to be running Four Points over there or  
23 whatever, a short guy, nice, but he came to read the  
24 meter twice. I'm saying how is this supposed to be  
25 happening and you're supposed to give an actual reading

1 on the meter all the time? Because if you get the bill,  
2 it's supposed to be an actual reading I thought. Do  
3 they estimate or they actual read?

4 **MS. DANIEL:** Does your bill show beginning and  
5 ending meter readings on it?

6 **MR. FAINE:** Yes. It's supposed to be an  
7 actual read instead of estimating. Because I was a,  
8 like I told you, Suffolk County Water Authority, we do  
9 estimate reads every once in a while. We get into the  
10 house once or twice a year just to see if the  
11 consumption is there or not. But now it's 100 and  
12 something dollars and there is no consumption  
13 whatsoever.

14 **MS. DANIEL:** Well, let's get with you after  
15 the meeting, okay?

16 **MR. FAINE:** Okay.

17 **MS. DANIEL:** We'll get, get with you, look at  
18 some bills, see what we can do to help you.

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I have another  
20 question. How can you charge more for waste water than  
21 you do for good water?

22 **MS. DANIEL:** It has a lot to do with the cost  
23 of the water when it's purchased from Polk County, and  
24 it depends on the treatment of the water. Sometimes the  
25 quality of the water is pretty good when it comes out of

1 the ground and it really is just simply a --

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

3 MS. DANIEL: But treating wastewater --

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

5 MS. DANIEL: Treating wastewater is a very  
6 different story. There are significant environmental  
7 issues with respect to treating wastewater. It's a very  
8 costly proposition.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay. Because that's  
10 what was, was mind-boggling to me. Just about  
11 two-thirds is, you know, is up to wastewater (inaudible)  
12 regular water. A little better than half (inaudible.)

13 MS. DANIEL: It's very expensive to treat  
14 wastewater.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. I was just,  
16 that was one of my questions.

17 MS. DANIEL: Thank you for asking.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

19 MS. BENNETT: Bob Longabardi.

20 MR. LONGABARDI: Good evening. Bob  
21 Longabardi. I'll give you my address off the record.

22 MS. DANIEL: Okay. And which, which utility,  
23 Four Points, Bimini Bay?

24 MR. LONGABARDI: Four Points.

25 MS. DANIEL: Four Points. Okay.



1           **MR. LONGABARDI:** The problem I have with Four  
2 Points is, like the gentleman before me, you're not here  
3 for six, seven months at a time. One month your bill is  
4 \$30.29, the next month it's \$85, and the meter has the  
5 same reading on it as the month before. When you call  
6 to complain, you get a big runaround. Then eventually,  
7 when you threaten, they straighten it out. Then they  
8 don't -- then they charge you a turnoff fee because they  
9 turn your water off.

10           I said, "Why did you turn our water off?"  
11 "You haven't paid." I'm sitting there holding a  
12 canceled check in my hand. "Well, you know, what  
13 can we tell you?" I threaten them again, and take  
14 the fee off. It seems that he just throws these  
15 tremendous bills out there, Four Points. If you pay  
16 them, fine. If not, eventually they'll straighten  
17 it out. So I think something funny is going on  
18 right there.

19           **MS. DANIEL:** That's why we're here, sir. We  
20 appreciate you letting us know about that. And if you  
21 will, after the meeting --

22           **MR. LONGABARDI:** Yes. Thank you.

23           **MS. BENNETT:** Stephen Anyadike.

24           **MR. ANYADIKE:** Yes.

25           **MS. DANIEL:** Which utility, sir?

1                   **MR. ANYADIKE:** Bimini Bay.

2                   **MS. DANIEL:** Bimini Bay. Okay.

3                   **MR. ANYADIKE:** Bimini. (Inaudible.) My name  
4 is Steven Anyadike, A-N-Y-A-D-I-K-E. A-N-Y-A-D-I-K-E.  
5 It's Bimini Bay.

6                   I've been with Bimini Bay for about two  
7 years now, and on (inaudible) my water bill is about  
8 maybe \$45 to \$50, \$60. And about four months ago I  
9 got a bill for about \$600. Now when I saw the  
10 bill -- and I just laughed it off. I was like, you  
11 know, they made a mistake. So when I go to the  
12 office to pay at the end of the month, it'll  
13 straighten out.

14                   So at the end of the month I went to the  
15 office and I talked to the manager and he was  
16 shocked. And he was like, "Well, let's go to your,  
17 your unit and take a look at it." And we went and  
18 my meter was just whirring (phonetic), just, even  
19 though there was nobody in the house, there was  
20 nobody in the house, there was no leak, went in the  
21 house, we checked the toilets, everything, there was  
22 no leak, not even a drop. So it was not from the  
23 house. And he said, "Well, that's your bill."

24                   Well, it wasn't only that. The next month  
25 I got, I got another bill. To make a long story

1 short, I got about \$900, about \$900 extra that I'm  
2 still paying until today even though they were kind  
3 enough to give me payment arrangements.

4 But I felt like it didn't come from my  
5 house, it's from outside. It comes from  
6 construction outside. There's all kinds of stuff  
7 they're doing outside, the sprinkler people work  
8 there, the cable, they lay cable there, but I was  
9 stuck with this bill, you know. And (inaudible)  
10 stuck with the bill. I thought that was very  
11 unfair. You know, I talked to Bobby, a very good  
12 man, but he just, he never gave me the option. The  
13 only option is that a payment arrangement was made.

14 I wanted to call the Polk County Utility  
15 Board or whatever. And he said, "Well, there's no  
16 point because they buy" -- just what you got through  
17 explaining. So that's what they have to pay Polk  
18 County.

19 So, I mean, Bimini Bay has more money than  
20 myself. They can pay that. But for a small guy  
21 like me, who's there to fight for me? And I feel  
22 like it just, (inaudible) apart from just making a  
23 payment arrangement which I am still paying 'til  
24 today. I think that's really unfair. But it  
25 doesn't leave me any chance, any, no fighting chance

1 at all.

2 MS. BENNETT: Can, can I ask you a question?

3 MR. ANYADIKE: Sure.

4 MS. BENNETT: You said that he told you the  
5 meter was just spinning?

6 MR. ANYADIKE: Yes. Yeah.

7 MS. BENNETT: It was broken?

8 MR. ANYADIKE: I don't know if it was broken.

9 I don't think it was broken because I thought that there  
10 some leak somewhere but not in my house, not in my house  
11 at all. We went in there together and checked  
12 everything; it was not from my house. They have been  
13 doing some construction, I mean they do some  
14 construction back there, you know, laid some fiber  
15 optics and whatever, things that they do back there,  
16 something to that (inaudible), the, the pipes. I don't  
17 know, but it wasn't from my house.

18 MS. ROBERTS: Can you restate your address  
19 for, for the record?

20 MR. ANYADIKE: 529 Washington Palm Loop. And  
21 that's Davenport, Florida 33897.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible).

23 MS. BENNETT: If you'll meet with Mr. Walden  
24 after, after this meeting is over to discuss -- he wants  
25 to come out and check (inaudible).

1                   **MR. ANYADIKE:** All right. Thank you.

2                   **MS. DANIEL:** And, and let me, while I'm  
3                   thinking about it, as you talk to some of the individual  
4                   Staff people, it would be very helpful if you would give  
5                   the Staff person, if you don't mind, a phone number so  
6                   that if we get back to Tallahassee and find that we have  
7                   follow-up questions, we'll be able to contact you. So  
8                   if you talk to Lydia or Tom, some of the other Staff, if  
9                   you don't mind giving them a phone number, it might help  
10                  out.

11                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Excuse me. I've got a  
12                  question. There's probably no answer to this question.  
13                  If that meter is turning, there's a leak somewhere in  
14                  the house. (Inaudible) toilet bowl, the most  
15                  commonplace is the toilet bowl. That's why (inaudible).  
16                  If that meter is moving, that means water is being used  
17                  somewhere. Not in the vault, it's in the house.

18                  **MR. ANYADIKE:** Nowhere in the house.

19                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm telling you, that's  
20                  where --

21                  **MS. DANIEL:** We're going to take a look at it  
22                  though. That's, that's --

23                  **MR. ANYADIKE:** It's a leak outside.

24                  (Inaudible.)

25                  (Simultaneous conversation.)

1           **MS. DANIEL:** Okay. If we could go ahead and  
2 take the next person, and we are going to get him  
3 (inaudible.)

4           **MS. BENNETT:** The next person is Nydia Garcia.  
5 Ms. Garcia, would you like to speak?

6           Adam Austin.

7           **MR. AUSTIN:** My name is Adam Austin. I live  
8 at 517 Caribbean Drive. When I moved in a year ago --

9           **MS. DANIEL:** Which utility? I'm sorry.

10          **MR. AUSTIN:** I'm sorry. Four Points.

11          **MS. DANIEL:** Four Points. All right.

12          **MR. AUSTIN:** When I moved in a year ago, the  
13 kitchen sink in my, in my lockout (phonetic) unit didn't  
14 work. The cold water worked but the hot water didn't,  
15 so I figured it was just the mixer. I went to turn the  
16 water off and the water wouldn't shut off, so I dug up  
17 the lines. My kitchen sink was fed right off, off of  
18 the main feed line to the, to the meter. It wasn't  
19 metered at all.

20          **MS. DANIEL:** It was bypassing the meter?

21          **MR. AUSTIN:** It was bypassing the meter.

22          **MS. DANIEL:** Nice.

23          **MR. AUSTIN:** So to fix that, I had to, I had  
24 to cut in, I had to cut into the meter line after the  
25 meter, dig 45 feet of trench out to the front of my, of

1 my, my townhouse and put a, put my own water line in and  
2 an electric line to run the hot water side because the  
3 hot water was run off of my neighbor's hot water tank.  
4 I --

5 **MS. DANIEL:** Have you got it straightened out  
6 now?

7 **MR. AUSTIN:** I have it straightened out now.  
8 I cut and capped, I cut and capped the hot water return  
9 from my neighbor's hot water tank. And I cut and capped  
10 the line, the feeder line that was, that was the line  
11 before the, before the meter, I cut and capped that line  
12 that was going right into my house. There was no valve  
13 on that, by the way, so it just went directly into my  
14 house. If the sink ever leaked, there would be  
15 absolutely no way to shut that, to shut that water off.

16 So my concern is, is with all the problems  
17 like all these other people, knowing that that  
18 shortcut was taken in front of the house, how many  
19 shortcuts are taken when, when the place was plumbed  
20 after the meter? How much -- if I have a main line  
21 that's going upstairs to the bathroom, rather than  
22 taking that line, each individual unit, did they  
23 just take, did they just go from that line over from  
24 one, from one tub to the next tub or to the next  
25 shower or bath or toilet after the meter in the

1 house? And of course the only way to find that out  
2 would be to tear out all the walls. But --

3 **MS. BENNETT:** Mr. Austin, did you purchase,  
4 was it a new purchase or did you purchase it from a  
5 prior owner?

6 **MR. AUSTIN:** I purchased it from a prior  
7 owner.

8 **MS. BENNETT:** Okay.

9 **MR. AUSTIN:** But there's no, there's no  
10 way to verify that. But I, I dug up all of the  
11 lines in my hot water tank. My hot water for my,  
12 for my kitchen sink was run off my neighbor's hot  
13 water tank.

14 **MS. DANIEL:** We're aware that there were some  
15 construction issues when (inaudible). We are aware of  
16 that. The construction issues from the meter to the  
17 home are not something that we necessarily can fix for  
18 you. We may be able to talk to you about it and give  
19 you some ideas for troubleshooting, but --

20 **MR. AUSTIN:** Right. Well, I don't, I don't --  
21 all the other, the other three buildings that are in my  
22 building are all vacant right now. But for some of  
23 these other people who have all, who, where all four of  
24 these are occupied, if one, if one meter is feeding  
25 three showers, then their water bill would be higher



1 than the person who's actually taking the shower because  
2 they had less water running out of their meter. And  
3 there's really, there's no way to verify that, like I  
4 say, without tearing the walls out. But that was my,  
5 that was my problem.

6 **MS. DANIEL:** Thank you.

7 **MS. BENNETT:** Susana Lopez.

8 **MS. LOPEZ:** Hi. My name is Susana. I live in  
9 526 Caribbean. Last name Lopez. And I actually  
10 don't -- I actually have more concerns than questions.

11 **MS. DANIEL:** And which utility? I'm sorry.

12 **MS. LOPEZ:** Four Points Utility. I purchased  
13 my home in 2007. And initially when I purchased it, we  
14 paid -- one of the first things that well, I mean, well,  
15 that's concerning to me is that I paid a deposit. Come  
16 like about a year ago after we paid the initial deposit  
17 from initially connecting the water, Four Points Utility  
18 then stated that there was a mistake and that there was  
19 no deposits charged. And what they did is that after  
20 two years later they started charging now deposits that  
21 should have been done from day one. I don't know if  
22 that's okay for them to do, but that's the first  
23 concern.

24 **MS. DANIEL:** And let me just be clear. You  
25 paid an initial deposit and then they came back to you

1 two years later and wanted an additional deposit?

2 MS. LOPEZ: An additional deposit. Uh-huh.  
3 Uh-huh.

4 MS. DANIEL: We can help you with that, but  
5 unfortunately we need -- do you have some checks or  
6 receipts?

7 MS. LOPEZ: I have everything.

8 MS. DANIEL: You have everything?

9 MS. LOPEZ: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. I  
10 don't -- I, I have some stuff here with me but I don't  
11 think I have everything. But I do have it, I just have  
12 to go to the bank and get my cashed checks.

13 The other concern I had, sometime last  
14 year, and I know I contacted Ms. Roberts last year,  
15 I don't remember exactly what the concern was at  
16 that time because there have just been so many. The  
17 other concern that I had was I paid -- there's  
18 another Lopez homeowner, I don't know if it's  
19 resident, homeowner. About a year ago my water was  
20 disconnected. When I, when I contacted the company,  
21 they told me that the reason I was disconnected was  
22 due to nonpayment. And I said how can that be if I  
23 actually had paid. I actually had my checkbook on  
24 me. And when I called them, I confirmed it. And  
25 they're like, "Oh, I'm sorry. We made a mistake."

1 I have three kids at home. That doesn't explain as  
2 to why you're disconnecting my water.

3 It happened again a second time. This  
4 time I told them, you know, enough is enough. "What  
5 do you need me to do to identify my checks so that  
6 you're not crediting the other Lopez family that  
7 lives here?" The lady was nice enough. I forgot  
8 her name. She no longer works there. She came out  
9 that day. I demanded that she come out that day and  
10 reconnect my water because enough is enough with  
11 them disconnecting my water mistakenly.

12 Just last week again they, they, they did  
13 not disconnect my water but they charged me a  
14 reconnection fee of \$42. They stated, they stated  
15 that they disconnected my water. I'm like, "Who?  
16 Whose water did you disconnect?" Because I had  
17 water. I haven't had any situations. Well, an  
18 additional \$20 added to my bill to reconnect that.

19 In addition to that, I also found out --  
20 I'm trying to dispute some of the bills that I have.  
21 It turns out that, and it's a constant mistake, I  
22 don't know if anybody else is going through this,  
23 but with crediting accounts. And the problem with  
24 it is that their, their bills are not, how could I  
25 say, easy to read because they, they don't put your

1 credit. All they do is charge you an amount and  
2 then that is it, and then they give you the new  
3 bill. So if you owe, you don't see any credits.  
4 All you see is that they keep tagging on and tagging  
5 on. So in order for you to get that clarified, you  
6 have to go to the office and request and go through  
7 the whole finagle (phonetic).

8           You call them, it's always a hard time to  
9 get ahold of them. The last time I, I got ahold of  
10 the supposedly -- I thought it was a maintenance  
11 guy. It turns out it's the owner of the company.  
12 He gave me his information. But, regardless, this  
13 is stuff that has been going on for a long time. I  
14 know Mr. Blackman was the one that was there that  
15 I've had a lot of concerns with. He's no longer  
16 there. According to them, they fired him. That's  
17 beside the point. I'm still having, even though  
18 he's not there, and the other person that was there  
19 that I was, I was having all the billing issues  
20 with, I'm still having issues 'til this day.

21           The other concern I had, I addressed the  
22 high bills as well with them. And their response to  
23 me was they sent me an e-mail, "Oh, this is all,  
24 everything you have to do. Go check for leaks here,  
25 leaks for there." I did everything. There is no

1 leaks. And according to them, there's nothing that  
2 he can do because it is what it is. This is when  
3 Mr. Blackman was there. So I do have a concern.

4 I don't have the finances, I don't have  
5 the skills to fix -- I'm pretty sure that just the  
6 same way he had that issue, I'm pretty sure most  
7 likely everybody else, someone else in here has that  
8 issue. So I don't know if there's anything the  
9 Public Service [sic] can do to help us in terms of  
10 finding out what's going on, if there's any  
11 subsidies we can apply for to get this stuff  
12 corrected, looked into and corrected. It's not just  
13 a matter of, you know, I hope we don't just have  
14 this meeting and nothing comes out of it. I'm  
15 hoping that there is action taken.

16 I'm also looking to see can we request a  
17 new company? Can we just have Polk County Water  
18 Company come in and I guess take over the bills? I  
19 mean, it, I had just so many issues, I'll be here  
20 all day. But those are pretty much, like I said,  
21 the major concerns that I have. Like I said, I do  
22 have bills here.

23 And I'm trying to remember the last one  
24 that I went there last week too. Oh, this is the  
25 other concern I had. I went and I made up -- they

1 just added a new feature where you pay over the  
2 phone with your debit card or your credit card. I  
3 did -- I went ahead and did that. I think it was  
4 September 21st. And when I went last week to  
5 dispute my bill about, actually two weeks ago, the  
6 lady was like, "Well, we don't have any signs that  
7 you paid us." And I'm like, "Okay. Well, let me go  
8 home, let me research everything." I actually went  
9 home, and it turns out everything that I sent them  
10 in terms of payment, it turns out that instead of  
11 them -- actually I brought that to their attention,  
12 but as much as they -- anyway, let me just keep my  
13 comments to myself.

14 But the whole point is that they charged  
15 me, instead of debiting \$100, they credited me  
16 \$100. And I'm like, "Okay." So I'm like, "Okay. I  
17 just told you I got an extra \$100." And they did  
18 debit it, but now that's just another billing issue.

19 And these are things that if you're not,  
20 you know, looking at your bills constantly, you can  
21 overlook these things. I mean, yes, they gave me a  
22 \$100 credit. When I brought it to their attention,  
23 they did pull it back. But now the other  
24 \$50 deposit payment that I did over the phone,  
25 according to them it was never processed because the

1 young man that was there, he was only there for like  
2 two weeks, and according to them he didn't have  
3 authority to do the charges. Therefore, it was  
4 never debited either.

5 So my concern is there's a constant staff  
6 changing, which every company does have, but it  
7 needs to be -- the billing is something that can't  
8 be consistent all the time. I've been here since  
9 2007. There's always inconsistency.

10 **MS. DANIEL:** Let me address a couple of  
11 Ms. Lopez's concerns generally, and these are some  
12 things that all of you will want to hear.

13 First of all, I want you to know that I've  
14 heard a couple of times about the meter issue and  
15 the spinning or you think there's high usage, and I  
16 apologize for not thinking of this sooner. There is  
17 a test that you can request that the company do, and  
18 I'm going to let -- Tom, can you help me with that?  
19 A meter test?

20 **MS. LOPEZ:** They told me to do my own test  
21 first.

22 **MS. DANIEL:** Uh-huh.

23 **MS. LOPEZ:** Because there -- I don't even know  
24 if they told me there was a charge or something like  
25 that, but --

1                   **MS. DANIEL:** There's a deposit.

2                   **MR. WALDEN:** There's two kinds of tests the  
3 company can do. There is a bench test where the meter  
4 is physically removed from the ground and taken to a  
5 certified testing facility. That's where you would pay,  
6 I believe it's a \$25 deposit. And that deposit is  
7 paid -- if the meter turns out to be testing just fine  
8 within certain specifications, then your deposit goes on  
9 to the company. You lose that \$25 deposit.

10                   If the meter is registering fast or slow  
11 and it's, I don't have those percentages, but it's  
12 more than 5 percent fast, if it's more than I think  
13 80 percent slow, then your deposit is refunded to  
14 you because the meter is not accurately registering  
15 your water. And chances are the utility is going to  
16 give you a new meter because they don't want to put  
17 one in that's registering inaccurately.

18                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Is this an outside  
19 vendor that's doing this test?

20                   **MR. WALDEN:** Yes. Yes. They would -- it's  
21 usually one of the larger utility companies. I would  
22 imagine that Polk County Utilities has a, what's called  
23 a certified test (inaudible). Most of the small  
24 companies don't have these (inaudible).

25                   The other kind of test is, is done for



1 free, and that's where the customers will come out  
2 and they will do a five-gallon test. There's a,  
3 it's called a test tank. It's an apparatus that the  
4 company would, should have in its possession, and  
5 they'll measure five gallons into this bucket  
6 usually from an outside (inaudible) and compare that  
7 to the reading on the meter, and that's done for  
8 free. They'll do that up to one time per year for  
9 free.

10 But really I think the issue is, as Mr. --  
11 I can't pronounce the last name.

12 **MR. ANYADIKE:** Steve.

13 **MR. WALDEN:** Steve. Steve said that his meter  
14 is spinning and there's nothing being run inside his  
15 house; no faucets are dripping, no toilet is running.  
16 That's going to require a little more investigation.  
17 You might have the same kind of problem as the fellow in  
18 the back who found that he had a water line coming from  
19 a neighbor's hot water heater. So the point is --

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** There's no way -- if  
21 they're billing us for water, how can they verify that  
22 it's actually (inaudible)?

23 **MR. WALDEN:** And, see, that's exactly the  
24 point. It could be that you have a -- your interior  
25 plumbing is going on to your neighbor's structure and

1 the neighbor is using water that's coming through your  
2 meter. It sounds like there could be some plumbing  
3 issues like that.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible) hold them  
5 responsible for those fixes? (Inaudible) and he's  
6 responsible for the problem to begin with.

7 **MR. WALDEN:** We can't make the utility fix it.

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No. I'm talking about  
9 (inaudible).

10 **MR. WALDEN:** Well, David Meadows, from what we  
11 understand, is the utility company. He is also the  
12 original developer; is that correct? I think one of the  
13 avenues I would, I would look at is these homes were all  
14 inspected by a county building inspector. That's  
15 required in Florida, that's the law. Now how accurate,  
16 how carefully were those inspections done? It's hard to  
17 know. Mistakes are made, we know that. That happens  
18 periodically. But, gosh, this sounds like --

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Is there any way, is  
20 there any way that you use more water and the rates are  
21 less? Because I used to pay around, I don't know, 70 to  
22 80 bucks a month when I moved in here. Six months later  
23 I bring my kids from Puerto Rico, I've got three kids  
24 (inaudible), and use water like crazy. (Inaudible)  
25 almost all the time, take a shower, use it (inaudible.)

1 (Simultaneous conversation.)

2 **MR. WALDEN:** It could be that your meter is  
3 not registering properly. It could be (inaudible).

4 (Simultaneous conversation.)

5 **MS. DANIEL:** Why don't we do this. Why don't  
6 we go on and take the next speaker? I've got Ms. Lopez  
7 covered. And --

8 **MS. LOPEZ:** Just, I just want, the last  
9 comment I had --

10 **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

11 **MS. LOPEZ:** There was, there was -- we got a  
12 notice at one point that we had to boil our water. When  
13 we got that notice, it turns out when I called the  
14 County, they told me that Four Points Utility has not  
15 been following through with their, with their testing.

16 **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

17 **MS. LOPEZ:** It turns out, I think, and I have  
18 that written down, I thought I brought it with me, but  
19 it turns out that the water did have bacteria. And  
20 those are concerns that us as parents, especially if you  
21 have kids -- we actually initially thought it was  
22 actually the pool (phonetic), and it turns out that it's  
23 Four Points Utility, so.

24 **MS. DANIEL:** Okay. I'm not meaning to cut  
25 Ms. Lopez off, but I understand that there is a

1 homeowners association meeting called for 7:00, and I  
2 had someone -- Ms. Hinkerton.

3 **MS. HETHERINGTON:** Hetherington.

4 **MS. DANIEL:** Hetherington? I apologize. I'm  
5 just killing these names. I'm so sorry. We're going to  
6 get to everyone. But she asked if she could go, I hope  
7 you don't mind, so she can get to the next meeting.

8 **MS. BENNETT:** Before you start, you probably  
9 need -- Lydia would like to talk with you.

10 **MS. DANIEL:** She, she knows. I talked to her.

11 **MS. BENNETT:** Okay.

12 **MS. HETHERINGTON:** Diana Hetherington, 225  
13 Mango Drive, Davenport, Florida 33897. I've lived here  
14 --

15 **MS. DANIEL:** What utility, Four Points?

16 **MS. HETHERINGTON:** Four Points. I am so  
17 blessed. I've lived here since 2005, May 2005. I'm  
18 going to speak on the character of David Meadows first,  
19 since he is the owner of this utility.

20 As you can already tell, he probably has a  
21 more than less than reputable character. Every  
22 person that we have had to deal with in regards to  
23 Four Points, before that it was not Four Points, it  
24 was something else I can't even remember, has been  
25 there for less than a year, usually comes in, is

1 very rude, inconsiderate, unprofessional and stupid.  
2 Now I use the word stupid because I looked it up and  
3 that's exactly the word that we should use.

4 These people do not know what they're  
5 doing. They've never run a water company before,  
6 they've never run a utility, and you folks are  
7 giving him a license to steal. And that is what  
8 he's doing. We pay \$48 a month just to have water.  
9 We pay as much -- we pay more for wastewater and  
10 they're charging us for every drop; drop for drop  
11 that comes in, drop for drop that goes out.

12 Now I don't know about you, but the water  
13 I give my plants doesn't go down the drain, the  
14 water I cook with, the water that my dog drinks.  
15 You know, there's lots of water that you use that  
16 doesn't go down the drain. So why are we being  
17 charged drop for drop and more for wastewater?  
18 Wastewater costs more to clean. Well, why am I  
19 paying for every drop that comes in my house when  
20 every drop that comes in my house doesn't go out of  
21 my house?

22 **MS. DANIEL:** That's -- I'll answer that. Do  
23 you have some more questions?

24 **MS. HETHERINGTON:** Yes.

25 **MS. DANIEL:** Let me go ahead and get them all.

1           **MS. HETHERINGTON:** The thing that she was  
2 talking about, we get a notice in the mail that says our  
3 water company is not following the standards of what you  
4 folks put out. I want to know why you folks haven't  
5 addressed that with him before we got a letter. Why has  
6 he not been put on suspension? Why has he not been  
7 looked at? Why has he -- until now? And when we call  
8 that office, we get a voice mail that says, "Leave your  
9 name and phone number and we will call you back within  
10 two hours. If we don't, then call us back." Well, we  
11 call back. Well, the last time I left 22 messages. I  
12 finally got ahold of a woman named Paula, who has  
13 actually left that company because she had a nervous  
14 breakdown.

15           **MS. DANIEL:** (Inaudible) Four Points?

16           **MS. HETHERINGTON:** Yes. Every single person  
17 that takes on this water company with this man leaves in  
18 one way or another, either by, because they can't take  
19 it anymore or because they don't know what they're doing  
20 and he fires them. We have gone through more  
21 representatives. And every time there's a new one there  
22 are new -- same problems, just a different name attached  
23 to them. Why do we as consumers need to go through this  
24 on a regular basis when there is someone else who knows  
25 how to run a company in charge of this?

1           There is a water company for this county  
2           and they should be responsible for this. We should  
3           be able to live in peace and move on from this,  
4           instead of every six months putting up with having  
5           to fight for bills that are wrong and, and being  
6           told we have a leak. That is their favorite  
7           comeback, the only thing they say, "You have a  
8           leak." And it's just enough is enough.

9           I appreciate that you're here and I  
10          respect the fact that you're trying to listen to us,  
11          but now action needs to be done. If you guys give  
12          this man a license, understand he's stealing. When  
13          they, when I, when I go in to -- (applause) -- and  
14          put \$200 and I buy this house, to David Meadows, I  
15          showed them my title with that \$200. That deposit  
16          they were asking for was removed. But if you didn't  
17          know about that and if you didn't do that and you  
18          paid it, they took it. Even though we told the head  
19          person, I told Paula, "Paula, every single person  
20          that buys here paid David Meadows personally before  
21          it became Four Points or even after it did through  
22          their titles \$200."

23               **MS. DANIEL:** Was that a deposit?

24               **MS. HETHERINGTON:** That was the deposit. And  
25          she said, "You're absolutely right." I made a copy of

1 my title, I gave it to her. She took it off. But she  
2 didn't take it off of everybody's and she didn't  
3 volunteer that information to everybody. That's what  
4 I'm talking about. These people don't know what they're  
5 doing. Please don't allow this to continue. That's all  
6 I have to say.

7 (Applause.)

8 (Inaudible.)

9 **MS. HETHERINGTON:** Yes.

10 **MS. DANIEL:** Or you can stay. Would you leave  
11 us a phone number if we need to check with you?

12 I wanted to speak because she had a couple  
13 of questions; you're all going to want to know. Why  
14 is your wastewater based on your water usage?

15 They don't meter the wastewater usage.  
16 The way they know how much wastewater to bill you  
17 for is based on your water usage. And, yes, we do  
18 understand that not all of the water that you use is  
19 returned to the wastewater system. And without  
20 going into the mechanics of how wastewater rates are  
21 calculated, we do recognize that watering your  
22 plants or perhaps washing a car, we recognize that  
23 not all of the water is returned to the wastewater  
24 system, and those rates are set to accommodate that.

25 One of the things we do is that you'll



1       remember when I showed you the Four Points  
2       wastewater rates and there was an asterisk, and I  
3       said if you use more than 10,000 gallons of water  
4       per month, you won't be billed for more than that.  
5       That's one of the mechanisms that we use to  
6       recognize that not all of your water is returned to  
7       the wastewater system.

8               But let me -- I'm going to come back to  
9       you. Okay? Why so long? We've received your  
10      individual complaints and we've tried to address  
11      those as best we could over the phone and through  
12      letter writing and so forth. And we found that we  
13      were getting such a volume of complaints that it  
14      necessitated us coming here tonight and noticing --  
15      we noticed both property owners and residents of  
16      this meeting, and I'm glad that you're here. And I  
17      hope you will take, take the opportunity to let us  
18      help you.

19             But as I said earlier, we're going to need  
20      some documentation. We can't go with allegations.  
21      We've got to have some facts. But there are enough  
22      of you represented here, I believe that we can get  
23      the information we need to help you, so.

24             **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

25             (Laughter.)

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'd just like an  
2 explanation. When I contacted the Public Service  
3 Commission a year ago, when I spoke back to them in  
4 regards to my bill, Mr. Blackman actually said, "Well,  
5 you contacted" -- he was very snobby because he was  
6 upset that I had contacted the Public Service  
7 Commission. So another thing is I don't know if they  
8 were treating us like we were biased because of our  
9 sending the complaint. And I know that it has to be  
10 disclosed to him so it could be addressed. But at the  
11 same time, just so you know, which I forgot to bring  
12 that up, whenever you do a complaint, they do treat you  
13 differently at the office. Whenever -- when I did my  
14 complaint, Four Points Utility treats you differently.

15                   **MS. BENNETT:** What do you mean by differently?

16                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He was just very  
17 snobby. I mean, he didn't even want to take my call. I  
18 was constantly e-mailing him. The same thing, you call  
19 them, they don't return your calls.

20                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They treat you like  
21 dirt.

22                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I mean, it's all kinds  
23 of things.

24                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

25                   **MS. DANIEL:** Was there a question or did we

1 get you resolved?

2 MR. SMITH: I have to go into another meeting  
3 that we're having --

4 MS. DANIEL: Okay.

5 MR. SMITH: -- with the homeowners  
6 association. I don't know if you've called me yet  
7 because I signed up.

8 MS. DANIEL: Okay. Tell me your name.

9 MR. SMITH: Jason Smith.

10 MS. DANIEL: Jason, you have to go to the next  
11 meeting? Is it -- go ahead.

12 MS. BENNETT: Yeah. He's almost there.

13 MS. DANIEL: Go ahead. We're very close.

14 MR. SMITH: My name is Jason Smith. I own  
15 Unit 161 Coco Plum, Four Points.

16 MS. DANIEL: Four Points?

17 MR. SMITH: Yes. I've been dealing with this  
18 company since 2005 when I purchased my home. And it is,  
19 it is a shame this man is allowed to continue to operate  
20 as a water utility.

21 I'm going to share something very  
22 personal. I have a person in my home who's very  
23 close to me who has a terminal disease that affects  
24 the immune system. This man sent us a notice that  
25 he has failed to test for six months for coliform

1 bacteria after a positive test. What do you think  
2 happens to someone's viral load when you don't test  
3 for that after a positive result? This man is  
4 threatening people's lives. It's not about money;  
5 it's someone's life in danger. And it's not just my  
6 home. There's other homes where people could die if  
7 this man does not do what he's supposed to do.

8 Billing wise, you guys handled this and  
9 you did a wonderful job and I appreciate it. He  
10 billed me for nine months incorrectly with my meter  
11 completely frozen. Now you guys managed to get it  
12 to where it was an estimate and I got credited back.  
13 But that doesn't make it okay for him to, to do what  
14 he's done.

15 There was sand in the water afterwards.  
16 "Just run your water. It'll be fine." Sand isn't  
17 clean. You can't tell me just run the water and it  
18 will be fine. That's not acceptable. This man -- I  
19 don't know what the definition of criminal  
20 negligence is, but I'm telling you, this man could  
21 kill somebody. And it is embarrassing -- it should  
22 be embarrassing for you all to allow him to continue  
23 to do this. It's not fair.

24 As far as the deposit situation is  
25 concerned, I had to take my title as well. And the,

1 the deposit is still being billed to me to this day.  
2 It is still on my bill. It won't go away, they  
3 won't let it go away. They haven't even credited my  
4 account for the past six months of payments. I have  
5 all my receipts, I have all my check copies online,  
6 the whole nine yards. They have failed to credit.

7 There's an open investigation with you  
8 guys. There is an open complaint right now that  
9 they have failed to even respond to. I haven't  
10 received a phone call, a letter, anything. The bill  
11 still reads overdue in the amount of over \$200. So  
12 when are they going to turn my water off? It could  
13 be any day because they never give me a notice. My  
14 first year here they turned my water off with no  
15 notice. I had to contact the Polk County Sheriff's  
16 Department, and I almost went to jail because I  
17 tried to turn my own water back on because they  
18 failed to provide a notice. I have a neighbor who  
19 almost had a felony conviction on his record because  
20 he turned his water back on when they turned it off  
21 without any notice, without sending bills for six  
22 months.

23 This is, this is, this is horrible. What  
24 the owners of this community have gone through  
25 without even taking into account the water situation

1 is bad enough. But when you add a necessity of life  
2 like water and he's holding it over our heads,  
3 holding us hostage, it's unfair and it should not be  
4 allowed to continue. That's all I have to say.

5 **MS. DANIEL:** Thank you for your input.

6 Tom, do you want to speak about the  
7 testing (phonetic) and the environmental issues?

8 **MR. WALDEN:** Yeah. I'll -- we'll do some  
9 follow-up with Polk County and see, you know, what -- I  
10 want to verify what Polk County is saying. It sounds to  
11 me like there was at least a water main break inside the  
12 subdivision, and as a result of that water main break  
13 and the diminishment in pressure there was apparently  
14 some (inaudible) coliform, some contamination of water.  
15 I'll follow up with Polk County and see what they have  
16 on that.

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** For those folks that,  
18 that say that it's a constant issue, would that be  
19 (inaudible)?

20 **MR. WALDEN:** If this is -- because the Bimini  
21 Bay and Four Points buy water from the County, they  
22 don't have any water plant themselves. They're not  
23 producing their own water. They're called a consecutive  
24 system. As a consecutive system, they don't have to do  
25 as much testing as, for instance, the County does since

1 the County pumps water. I'll have to check with the  
2 County and the health department and check the testing  
3 rules to see if there is some special test that the  
4 consecutive systems do. Because to my knowledge,  
5 consecutive systems do not have to do the coliform  
6 tests.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** So why can't, why can't  
8 they cut out the middleman? Why can't they just get rid  
9 of him altogether and then we just pay the County for  
10 our water?

11 **MR. WALDEN:** That's a real good question, and  
12 here, here's the answer to that. The utility companies,  
13 Bimini Bay, Four Points, owned by Mr. Meadows, he is  
14 asserting I own these water lines inside these  
15 subdivisions. And because they are mine, I will be a  
16 middleman and resell the water.

17 Now he could arrange a, a sale or an  
18 acquisition by Polk County. The point is Polk  
19 County could arrange a, have a business, a business  
20 arrangement with Mr. Meadows where the County would  
21 own the internal piping and bill you guys as  
22 customers directly. That hasn't happened.

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** But if he's not, if  
24 he's not willing to take care of the water wells and do  
25 what he has to do to take care of those issues and all

1 the issues that we're working on here, why can't anybody  
2 force him?

3 (Simultaneous conversation.)

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Even if, even if  
5 nobody, even if nobody wants to buy it, even if the  
6 County -- somebody would have, somebody will have to  
7 come in and take over these water lines. If he's not,  
8 if he, if he's saying he owns the water lines and he's  
9 buying water from the County, what's our recourse  
10 towards him to say you're not treating, you're not  
11 treating this fairly? You know, there's got to be,  
12 there's got to be some kind of punishment in there  
13 somewhere for that.

14 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He could cut the water  
15 off because he owns the lines. So that would mean that  
16 you would have to know (inaudible).

17 **MR. WALDEN:** Well, the utility, any utility  
18 owner has got to follow the rules as prescribed by our  
19 agency. One of the reasons we're here tonight is to  
20 gather some data about the customer service you receive,  
21 some of the billing problems, not receiving a notice  
22 before he discontinues service because of an alleged  
23 delinquent bill, or whatever the issues are that you as  
24 customers are having with the utility.

25 Our agency has the ability to fine a



1 company for failure to comply with our rules. It's  
2 a bit of a lengthy process, but we can do it.

3 Characteristically what the PSC does is we  
4 are focused on compliance with the rules, get the  
5 company to do what they're supposed to do. We can  
6 fine, if we have to, but we're generally focused on  
7 compliance. And we're aware that there have been a  
8 number of issues from customers like you with the  
9 utility company, the very same things that you folks  
10 have talked about tonight. And what we're trying to  
11 do is get that (inaudible) to get the utility and  
12 its owner (phonetic) to comply with the rules.

13 **MS. DANIEL:** If I could, could we go ahead and  
14 call the other folks who haven't had a chance to speak?  
15 Is that all right? Okay.

16 Lisa, who's next?

17 **MS. BENNETT:** Mr. Smith, you had something you  
18 were --

19 **MR. SMITH:** Yes, I had one.

20 **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

21 **MR. SMITH:** I had to go. I was getting  
22 emotional. I apologize.

23 **MS. DANIEL:** I understand. It's very  
24 frustrating.

25 **MR. SMITH:** I wanted to also notify you that I

1 believe I still have an active lien pending against my  
2 home for water bills. And I have received a letter from  
3 both you and the company that all of my accounts as of  
4 the date on the notice are paid in full and there's  
5 nothing past due, but there's still a lien in place on  
6 my home.

7 In addition, I have received collection  
8 letters. I even received a letter that appeared to  
9 be a court document that was not signed indicating a  
10 lawsuit had been filed against me with regards to  
11 the collection of those funds, and it was  
12 approximately \$5,000.

13 I know that, I know that the Fair Debt  
14 Collectors Act provides that you are not allowed to  
15 make any document that appears to be an official  
16 legal document from the courthouse, you're not  
17 allowed to falsify information, you're not allowed  
18 to mislead someone into thinking that legal action  
19 is being taken against them if it is not. I  
20 believed that that man was taking me to court. It  
21 said Polk County Courthouse on it. It had numbers  
22 on it that looked like court filings. I don't have  
23 the document because it was about four years ago.

24 I know that I had discussed it with the  
25 Public Service Commission at the time. I believe I

1 had faxed some things in. It was a long time ago.  
2 But that, again, there's a lien against my home, at  
3 least there was. I haven't checked.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

5 **MS. BENNETT:** The lien against your home was  
6 by the utility company?

7 **MR. SMITH:** Correct.

8 **MS. BENNETT:** And did they explain?

9 **MR. SMITH:** For nonpayment.

10 **MS. BENNETT:** Of what?

11 **MR. SMITH:** Water and electric and cable and  
12 internet and phone and a bunch of other things that he  
13 never provided to my home.

14 **MS. BENNETT:** Are you still needing to go to  
15 the meeting?

16 **MR. SMITH:** Yes. Unfortunately we do have a  
17 homeowners association. (Inaudible.)

18 **MS. BENNETT:** If you wouldn't mind talking  
19 with me afterwards.

20 **MR. SMITH:** Absolutely. I'm going to see  
21 what's going on there, but I'm sure you guys probably  
22 have a lot to discuss.

23 **MS. DANIEL:** And you have our phone numbers.

24 **MR. SMITH:** I have everything. I would like  
25 to discuss it with you afterwards, but this meeting is

1 kind of pressing as well.

2 MS. DANIEL: I understand. Okay.

3 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

4 MS. BENNETT: Let's see. Michelllette Ramos.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's in the meeting  
6 over here.

7 MS. BENNETT: Okay.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I will let her know.

9 MS. BENNETT: We can come back to her.

10 Gina Tansill, Tansill.

11 MS. TANSILL: I really don't have anything to  
12 say that everybody else hasn't already said. The only  
13 good outcome I could see coming from this is if we went  
14 with Polk County Utilities.

15 I bought here in January, and I will tell  
16 you, had I known, I would not have because it has  
17 been nothing but a headache. The calling, never  
18 getting a returned call no matter how many calls you  
19 leave, sending e-mails, never getting replies.

20 One day I came home to find my water shut  
21 off. And of course nobody answered the phone, so I  
22 walked up there and asked them why they shut my  
23 water off. And they said, "You haven't paid your  
24 bill." And I said, "No. The way I see it, you owe  
25 me \$115." So I sat down with the girl there, told

1 her what my last amounts were. She found one that  
2 she hadn't credited to my account. The other one  
3 she couldn't find. And I said, "Well, I mailed it.  
4 When's the last time you checked your mail?" "Oh,  
5 three weeks ago." So she had to go to the box at  
6 the front of the subdivision and check the mail,  
7 and, sure enough, my payment was in there.

8 So it's ongoing these -- and that's just  
9 the water. If you had any idea -- as a matter of  
10 fact, today I got the HOA letter saying that I owe  
11 \$1,000 that I don't owe, which, you know, I've got  
12 to deal with that tomorrow. But it's, it's ongoing.  
13 I got a cable bill that I don't get cable there.  
14 And it's, it just speaks to the way David Meadows  
15 manages things, handles things. And this man should  
16 not be in business. I, I regret the day that I  
17 bought there. I regret that I have to go every  
18 single month to discuss any of my bills, whichever  
19 ones they are, because they're always wrong.  
20 Nothing is ever right.

21 And I just, like everyone else said, I, I  
22 would like a different company. I would like to go  
23 with Polk County Utilities. Our rates are high. I  
24 had a 4,000 square foot house before this. I didn't  
25 even pay this much water. I'm back in college

1 again, so I downsized to this unit, which is why in  
2 between my water and all the other hassle, it's just  
3 not worth it. It's just not worth it here.

4 I just hope that something good comes out  
5 of this. Unfortunately, as we were saying, we  
6 should have called the news and asked them to be  
7 here tonight because I didn't realize there were so  
8 many other people who are stressed out and as upset  
9 and as over it as I am. And I just want something  
10 to happen. And --

11 **MS. BENNETT:** What thousand dollar homeowner  
12 association, is that Mr. Meadows or is that --

13 **MS. TANSILL:** That is the homeowners  
14 association. That is Island Club West for Bimini Bay.  
15 That's the subdivision I'm in. They actually, after I  
16 purchased in January, tried to go back and tell me there  
17 was now a thousand dollar assessment, which it was after  
18 the fact. My title company got the information. And  
19 then when I looked at the HOA docs, I said, "You can't  
20 even do this for six months anyway." So they said they  
21 were going to take that off, but there's still two  
22 hundred some dollars on there that they consider a late  
23 fee.

24 I got an eviction notice because I hadn't  
25 paid my rent in July. The thing that's wrong with

1       that is that I actually own the property and I don't  
2       pay rent to Bimini Bay. So it's been a constant --  
3       I mean, this is just the way this man does business.

4               **MS. DANIEL:** Was it an HOA -- are you a Bimini  
5       Bay --

6               **MS. TANSILL:** Bimini Bay, yes. Uh-huh. And  
7       as far as the bill that I just got today regarding the  
8       HOA, I looked over the bill and they're just saying I  
9       haven't paid my bill. So I was actually printing off  
10      the copies of my checks at home because obviously again  
11      they didn't match them up. And everything is paid. So  
12      it's just, it's just constant frustration.

13              And for people who have no clue how to do  
14      debit and credit, I don't think they should be in  
15      business. I really just don't.

16              **MS. BENNETT:** The cable bill --

17              **MS. TANSILL:** Well, that's another, that's a  
18      whole other issue because we were told we would get  
19      60 some channels. I ended up getting 30; 15 were  
20      duplicates, four were in Spanish. I don't speak  
21      Spanish. So -- and then it would go out sometimes, so I  
22      got rid of it.

23              **MS. BENNETT:** But who's charging you for  
24      the --

25              **MS. TANSILL:** That was -- that's Bimini Bay

1 Utilities. Uh-huh.

2 **MS. BENNETT:** Bimini Bay Utilities?

3 **MS. TANSILL:** Yes. Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah.

4 They are.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Are you paying  
6 telephone too?

7 **MS. TANSILL:** I don't -- I use cell phones. I  
8 do pay internet. It doesn't work. And as I told you, I  
9 am in college. And Thursday and Friday last week I took  
10 off of work because I had a 70-page paper that I had to  
11 do. Thursday and Friday my internet didn't work. After  
12 complaining for two days I finally starting swearing,  
13 which I never do. And they came and ran a cable all the  
14 way across the back. And thank God, Bobby, he tries to,  
15 you know, do what's right and make it good for me, but  
16 it's still, I can't, I can't deal with the stress  
17 anymore. I'm just at that point. So that's the cable  
18 issue or the internet issue.

19 I had a satellite dish put in my back  
20 right behind my unit and they tried to fine me \$100  
21 a day. So I contacted FCC and they said that they  
22 can't do that legally. I didn't file a complaint.

23 **MS. BENNETT:** Who tried to fine you \$100?

24 **MS. TANSILL:** The homeowners association, \$100  
25 a day for the satellite dish. I didn't file a



1 complaint, which I could have, but I didn't at that  
2 time, so.

3 **MS. BENNETT:** Could I ask you to meet with  
4 Lydia after the meeting?

5 **MS. TANSILL:** Uh-huh. Certainly.

6 **MS. DANIEL:** I have another question for you.  
7 On your billing for the HOA --

8 **MS. TANSILL:** Yes.

9 **MS. DANIEL:** -- did it show on your Bimini Bay  
10 utility bill, or how, how does Bimini Bay Utilities  
11 bill?

12 **MS. TANSILL:** Bimini Bay Utilities sends out  
13 their monthly bills. Again, like somebody else  
14 mentioned, it doesn't ever show any credits, so you  
15 never have an idea as to whether or not they actually  
16 credited your account for anything. That's a separate  
17 bill.

18 Then you get a separate bill for your HOA,  
19 which comes sporadically and it's not -- you know,  
20 you'll get a monthly bill that doesn't say an  
21 amount, and then all the sudden you'll get this bill  
22 that says, oh, you owe \$1,000.

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And David Meadows is  
24 the HOA?

25 **MS. TANSILL:** He's everything. He runs

1 everything. He does the, the phone, the internet, the  
2 cable, the water, the HOA, everything. He needs to go  
3 away.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And how many people out  
5 here have (inaudible) service? I'm just curious.

6 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** When we first moved  
7 here we had it for everything. It took two and a half  
8 years to get my electric bill cleared (phonetic) up and  
9 paid, and we brought Progress Energy in here and we  
10 haven't had it since then. The only problems we've had  
11 are with our water bill. And he used to charge us for  
12 phone because he (inaudible). I have my own cable. It  
13 was all on the bill, all on one big bill and charging  
14 you for it.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** But at Bimini Bay we're  
16 not allowed to have a satellite dish or have your own  
17 cable.

18 **MS. TANSILL:** Oh, but you can. If you look at  
19 your HOA docs, you have a ten-foot easement on the back  
20 of your house. And according to FCC regulations, you  
21 can put a satellite dish there.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm from a management  
23 company, and we actually (inaudible) a tenant evicted  
24 because they had a satellite dish. And I think my  
25 husband knows (inaudible). He said that you were the

1 person that had the satellite dish on the easement. Is  
2 that right? Do you have a satellite dish?

3 **MS. TANSILL:** I have a satellite dish behind.  
4 Yes.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes. My husband knows  
6 you. Excuse me. But we had a problem with a tenant  
7 because she put in a satellite dish, and he  
8 eventually -- he, he actually billed the owner. It got  
9 to \$5,000 for having this satellite dish.

10 **MS. TANSILL:** Yes. Uh-huh.

11 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And who billed this?  
12 David Meadows?

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yes. Yes.

14 (Simultaneous conversation.)

15 Bimini Bay has a, you know, you've broken  
16 the law and you put up a satellite dish, and because  
17 you're not using his cable, you're using your other,  
18 which is cheaper and better. And the tenant had  
19 done it. The owner got upset because she received a  
20 \$5,000 bill. Ended up that we had to go and remove  
21 that satellite dish and then argue with David  
22 Meadows that that was not (inaudible).

23 But I don't really know what happened in  
24 the end, whether the owner is still most probably  
25 sitting with a \$5,000 bill. And (inaudible) it was

1 a \$5,000 bill outstanding, David Meadows had an  
2 eviction notice. Well, first of all, he's put the  
3 notice on the door that this tenant then has to pay,  
4 which is now the new law, that the tenant has to pay  
5 their rent to David Meadows. Okay? Because that's  
6 now the law he, he (inaudible) to pay the rent. If  
7 the owner --

8 (Simultaneous conversation.)

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I have a question. The  
10 person that owns the home did not collect their rent  
11 from the renters?

12 (Simultaneous conversation.)

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And I tell you, the one  
14 thing he told us that he had 150 eviction notices in one  
15 day.

16 **MS. BENNETT:** Can -- before -- can we have  
17 you, when you're, when you're talking, speak on the  
18 record so that we know who's talking and, and so we can  
19 get the information. Because when we start getting  
20 three and four people, I'm afraid we're going to lose  
21 who's -- we're taking notes and I want to make sure that  
22 we can get back with every person. I think Lydia would  
23 like to talk with you afterwards.

24 **MS. TANSILL:** Sure. Absolutely.

25 **MS. BENNETT:** That was Gina. Frances

1 Wimberly.

2 **MS. WIMBERLY:** Thank you. My name is Frances  
3 Wimberly. That's Wimberly with a W, like Kimberly.  
4 I'm, I'm not the owner. I have a tenant in my unit.

5 **MS. DANIEL:** Four Points or Bimini Bay?

6 **MS. WIMBERLY:** Four Points. On May 18th I  
7 called Four Points to have my water disconnected, and  
8 she put in her own deposit to have water in the unit.  
9 Well, every month until September 24th I was getting  
10 bills and the bills were getting higher and higher on  
11 water where I had disconnected and asked them to take my  
12 deposit that I paid. And I wasn't aware about the \$200  
13 until tonight. Take my, the balance I owed on my water  
14 bill from my deposit and send me the balance. Well, I  
15 haven't gotten the balance yet.

16 And the only way I get -- I think it's  
17 straight by now, but because I have no receipt for  
18 the bill was I had to go up there. I was calling  
19 every other week to try to get my bill straight. I  
20 talked to Paula, I talked to, I think her name is  
21 Parvine, something like that.

22 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Parvine.

23 **MS. WIMBERLY:** Parvine. Parvine. And I think  
24 I finally got it straight when I actually went up there.  
25 But the day I went up there, my tenant went up there too

1 because they turned her water off and her bill was paid.  
2 How long does it take to get a deposit back is my  
3 question, my second deposit?

4 MS. DANIEL: Our rules describe that if you  
5 give the company a deposit and you have a good payment  
6 history, they're supposed to return it within 23 months,  
7 I believe it is, if you have a good payment history.

8 MS. WIMBERLY: (Inaudible).

9 MS. DANIEL: You, you're still unsettled as to  
10 whether everything is straightened out though, so --

11 MS. WIMBERLY: I haven't gotten a bill in  
12 like, since September.

13 MS. DANIEL: If you need for us to look into  
14 something for you, just let us know.

15 MS. WIMBERLY: Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. BENNETT: I'm probably going to  
17 mispronounce your name, but Zuleika Romo.

18 MS. ROMO: Close. Well, my name is Zuleika,  
19 and I purchased a home there about four months ago.  
20 Every time since I've moved there -- also I'm a real  
21 estate agent and I have a lot of homeowners purchasing  
22 there.

23 MS. DANIEL: Are you in Four Points?

24 MS. ROMO: No. I'm talking about Bimini Bay.

25 MS. DANIEL: Bimini?

1           **MS. ROMO:** I haven't got that much problems so  
2 far in reference to water bills, but I do have other  
3 issues. But here I'm including invoices for one year  
4 for one of the homeowners that according to what I saw  
5 on the PowerPoint, the slide that says about for the  
6 5,000 gallons of water (inaudible). As you see in these  
7 invoices, the last bill she has is \$182. And most of my  
8 clients are Spanish speakers and most of them don't  
9 speak very good English, so that's why I'm basically  
10 talking on behalf of all of them, and all of them are  
11 here. So --

12           **MS. DANIEL:** How many clients do you have?

13           **MS. ROMO:** That purchased there recently?  
14 About 11 in the last three months. And some of them  
15 have separate properties, two or three. And basically  
16 this is, I'm bringing this, which I want to give to you  
17 later on.

18           So I see that there's no respect for the  
19 rates according to what I saw in the PowerPoint and  
20 according to what I've seen on the bills here.

21           Other things, the bad administration,  
22 everybody mentioned it already. We do have a  
23 complaint about the same situation. We all go  
24 there, they tell us what they want to tell us to get  
25 rid of us, but nothing is being taken care of. So

1 far, the only one that always talks and tries to  
2 resolve matter is Bobby, but I don't know, we don't  
3 know who else to go with.

4 Also there's a problem that these meters,  
5 they'll have locks. And basically if you have water  
6 coming through there, there's a lot of vandalism  
7 (phonetic) for the last two years and a half because  
8 when the lights are not working, sometimes they're  
9 off and that place is very dark and, you know,  
10 people coming in and opening the water and, you  
11 know, the owner is getting (inaudible).

12 I've been told that the cameras are  
13 working, but not even two weeks ago one of my  
14 clients which is here had a robbery and nobody saw  
15 anything, until later on we found out that a person  
16 working there saw, but we don't have -- we couldn't  
17 get the person that stole and have sold (phonetic)  
18 to other homeowners there because we have no  
19 witnesses in there, you know. And if we would have  
20 cameras working there, it would have been a  
21 different story.

22 Also I don't know about the sprinkler  
23 water, but we don't know who have the record of, you  
24 know, how long they've been watering. I need to  
25 know like the sprinkler water is always on. I've



1       seen a lot of sprinklers not fixed. So that is an  
2       issue that I would like to point out because I don't  
3       know if it's affecting our water bill or not. But  
4       it's, it's doing a lot of damage to the buildings on  
5       the street. They have yellow spots on the  
6       buildings. It's -- the, the townhouses are  
7       beautiful, but they're not maintained properly.

8               What else I would like to add? And so far  
9       in that aspect is, is one big problem. We really,  
10      really, really would like somebody else to do the  
11      water, the water heaters in that place.

12             **MS. DANIEL:** I appreciate you coming, and you  
13      can really help us with some of the folks who have a  
14      hard time communicating with the company and the Public  
15      Service Commission. So, once again, her name is Lydia.

16             **MS. ROMO:** And another thing, they also always  
17      complain that the units are empty and that people are  
18      not paying their dues. But when people get in there to  
19      try to purchase or rent, they just get scared and they  
20      run away. I lost a lot of business because of that  
21      situation. I don't know if they keep track of who's  
22      renting there or not or if they have a background on  
23      these people, but there are a lot of (inaudible) in that  
24      place.

25             **MS. DANIEL:** Now I have another question for

1       you. On these bills, does it show just water and  
2       wastewater on your bills?

3               **MS. ROMO:** I don't know. I can show them to  
4       you and you can read them.

5               **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

6               **MS. ROMO:** And just the last bill shows  
7       \$182 for a four-bedroom townhouse about 1,800 square  
8       footage.

9               **MS. DANIEL:** One more question I have. Is  
10      Bimini Bay Utilities charged an HOA fee?

11              **MS. ROMO:** Yes.

12              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Well, it's actually  
13      called, I think it's called Four Points HOA for Bimini  
14      Bay.

15              (Simultaneous conversation.)

16              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** But it's on a Bimini  
17      Bay Utility invoice.

18              (Simultaneous conversation.)

19              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It's on a bill, it  
20      looks like the same one, but it says an Island Club  
21      Resort at the top.

22              (Inaudible).

23              **MS. BENNETT:** Glenn Gorman.

24              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Oh, he's at the other  
25      meeting.

1           **MS. DANIEL:** Mr. Gorman is at the other  
2 meeting? Okay. He can come back. We'll come, we'll  
3 come back. We won't, we won't leave anyone out.

4           **MS. BENNETT:** How about April?

5           **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** She, she spoke to  
6 Lydia, I think.

7           **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

8           **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** She was the first one.

9           **MS. BENNETT:** And Barbara Horton.

10          **MS. HORTON:** Yes. I'm Barbara Horton. I have  
11 my own property here in Island Club West, and we manage  
12 some properties which I pay the water utilities for in  
13 Bimini Bay.

14               Island Club West, not -- the utilities  
15 there, yes, we, I do get billed. I'm still actually  
16 being billed for properties that we used to manage,  
17 but I have stopped the water, closed the account,  
18 and I think since then, I've brought them all with  
19 me, I have had maybe six months of bills. And I  
20 keep getting letters that they're going to  
21 disconnect, and I'm like, "Go ahead, because I don't  
22 actually have the utility with you any longer." You  
23 phone and you phone, they either don't answer the  
24 phone, they never return your call. If you are  
25 lucky enough to get someone, I'm talking here about

1 Bimini Bay at the moment, I mean, sorry, Island Club  
2 West, and, you know, but those bills, they're not, I  
3 don't have too many issues with here.

4 As for Bimini Bay, that's a whole other  
5 ball game. They, I mean, it is badly, badly run.  
6 They -- it's the same people you talk to. Whether  
7 you're talking about Island Club West or Bimini Bay,  
8 you're talking to the same people.

9 Now I have had bills -- I have  
10 (inaudible). Obviously there are other people in  
11 here also. On a four-bedroom townhouse the bills  
12 are running at about near to \$200 a month. Now  
13 initially I, I got a high bill and I called in and I  
14 asked, you know, this can't possibly be right. I, I  
15 don't pay this amount of money on any other  
16 property, and I manage 100. No other property do I  
17 pay this amount of money. There must be a problem.

18 So I think his name was Robert (phonetic)  
19 went over. He said, "I'll do a check on the meter."  
20 He said, "No, it's right. The meter is running  
21 right. That's the bill." I wasn't happy with that,  
22 so I looked at my bill and I realized that the rates  
23 that they had charged and the amount of usage that I  
24 had didn't add up. When you did the usage to the  
25 rate, the amount on the other side was different, it

1 was higher. So I called him back and I said, "I  
2 found your problem. I found it. I can see what the  
3 problem is. Your rate is not right. You are  
4 charging me more than what you say your rate is."  
5 Oh, dear, yeah. "Oh, no. I don't think that's the  
6 problem." They send me another bill. All they did  
7 is they changed the rate to make sure that the total  
8 over there, my total was what it was. I have still  
9 not paid that bill. That was for July. Not paid  
10 it. I refuse -- I did get them one month, I think  
11 it was June, they changed. They changed the rate to  
12 what it was because they said they couldn't possibly  
13 send me out one bill with that rate and charge me,  
14 but they still haven't changed July's. I've been  
15 arguing and arguing about July's.

16 Since then the rates have gone up. The  
17 rates fluctuate. I don't know whether anybody else  
18 has this problem. How could rates be different from  
19 month to month? The rates change.

20 **MS. DANIEL:** Is this at Bimini Bay?

21 **MS. HORTON:** Bimini Bay.

22 (Simultaneous conversation.)

23 **MS. DANIEL:** I have an answer to that  
24 question. For Bimini Bay, I've looked at how they, how  
25 they bill and I --

1                   **MS. HORTON:** Okay.

2                   **MS. DANIEL:** Understanding all of the flows,  
3 what they do is they look at the amount of water that  
4 they purchase from the County and then they read all of  
5 their meters. Based on the amount of usage that they  
6 determine, with all the flows involved, based on the  
7 amount of usage that they have determined, they will  
8 divide that amount into what the County charged them.  
9 That means that as the usage fluctuates a little bit,  
10 the resulting charge per 1,000 gallons is going to  
11 fluctuate a bit. But what they're doing for Bimini Bay  
12 is they're turning around the cost of what the County  
13 charged them, not, not at the charge the County charges,  
14 but based on the total bill from the County, if that  
15 makes sense.

16                   **MS. HORTON:** Okay. And they're not meant,  
17 supposedly they're, they're not meant to make a huge  
18 profit, are they?

19                   **MS. DANIEL:** Correct.

20                   **MS. HORTON:** I mean, but the rates are so high  
21 I cannot believe that Polk County -- Polk County  
22 supplies the water here for Island Club West. They also  
23 supply the water for Bimini Bay. How come the rates are  
24 so, so different, so different? How, how can that be?  
25 If you, if you've got the same water coming in to Island

1 Club West as you have coming in for Bimini Bay, Bimini  
2 Bay aren't meant to be making a profit, and yet  
3 therefore a huge profit, their's is higher than Island  
4 Club West.

5 MS. DANIEL: That is one of the issues we're  
6 looking at.

7 MS. HORTON: I mean, I know a lot of people in  
8 this room are saying don't let Bimini Bay, don't  
9 regulate them. I'm saying please regulate, please,  
10 because they need to be regulated. Because hopefully if  
11 you do regulate them, we will get reasonable rates.  
12 Because at the moment the rates are ridiculous.

13 I do get letters, you know, they say  
14 they've got (inaudible) from all the rest of it but  
15 they haven't. I still, like I say, I still owe for  
16 one month's bill. I also pay the HOA obviously for  
17 this property in Bimini Bay. Now that is, the HOA,  
18 obviously it's all from David Meadows, it's all  
19 coming from the same -- the same office does  
20 everything. They are running the HOA, they're  
21 running the water. We don't have cable, but  
22 obviously there are a lot of people that have the  
23 cable and the phone and everything else.

24 Now on the HOA, I had, I had a bill this  
25 month and it doesn't even -- it actually says, I

1 think it says it's an invoice rather than a  
2 statement. It doesn't even tell me what property  
3 it's for. No invoice numbers. This is another  
4 issue. We have no invoice numbers. And like I say,  
5 no -- it comes in to my management company and I  
6 have a bill for a property that I don't even know  
7 which it is. I have to look at it and think, well,  
8 where, you know, where does it come from? They  
9 will, they say they will send them by e-mail. It is  
10 very infrequent. They, you know, they, they say  
11 they will, but they don't. You have to be on top of  
12 your game to pay your bill because you may not  
13 (inaudible). So especially for the HOA because of  
14 the new regulations they can actually evict people.

15 **MS. DANIEL:** If I could get everyone -- I know  
16 there are a lot of conversations going on and I don't  
17 want to discourage them, but I do want to respect  
18 Ms. Horton's ability to make some comments, if I could.  
19 Thank you.

20 **MS. HORTON:** Yes. So the, so the issue with  
21 the HOA is obviously because if you haven't paid that  
22 HOA bill, they can actually go and get the rent from the  
23 renter. Now this is happening to us not a great deal  
24 but it has happened and they were all wrong. They were  
25 putting eviction notices on properties. We had tenants



1 calling up saying "I have an eviction notice." And we  
2 said, "Well, everything is paid for." And when you  
3 eventually get hold of somebody, "Oh, we put it on the  
4 wrong property." You know, now that's not very fair on  
5 the tenants that are in the properties at all. I mean,  
6 you know, they don't deserve to have that, you know.

7 They -- a lot, a lot of the owners pay  
8 their utilities for their tenants, they are paying  
9 the HOA, they pay the utilities. It's, it's huge.  
10 We, you know, the owners are not really covering  
11 what their mortgages could be. That's how bad it is  
12 because the utilities and the HOA and then they slap  
13 all these (inaudible). So I'm just, you know,  
14 hopefully I (inaudible) you do regulate them because  
15 I would like to see somebody control at least on the  
16 billing (inaudible).

17 **MS. DANIEL:** You're giving us some  
18 information?

19 **MS. HORTON:** I have lots of invoices and  
20 things (inaudible).

21 **MS. DANIEL:** Invoices?

22 **MS. BENNETT:** Is Michellette Ramos here?

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** She's inside.

24 **MS. BENNETT:** Okay. All right. Is there  
25 anyone else who would like to speak at this time?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have a question.

2 MS. BENNETT: Yes.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Maybe I'm, maybe I'm  
4 misunderstanding the way that the giving him the  
5 certificate works. Right now he's regulated because  
6 he's only charging us what he's paying; correct?

7 MS. BENNETT: No.

8 MS. DANIEL: Not exactly.

9 MS. BENNETT: Let me, let me explain.  
10 You're -- he is regulated by the (inaudible) utilities  
11 (inaudible).

12 MS. DANIEL: There's so many conservations, I  
13 don't -- I think we're going to do better (inaudible)  
14 and we will.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sure there's a lot  
16 of people who want to understand though. So --

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can hear you.

18 MS. DANIEL: Can you hear us?

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

20 MS. DANIEL: Okay. I just, I'm having a  
21 terrible time hearing.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What I found out, how  
23 come Polk County water is more expensive than  
24 (inaudible)?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Well, Polk County

1 Utilities does not charge us the amount of money if you  
2 live just down the road that we're being charged at  
3 Bimini Bay. Now I guess the way I'm looking at this is  
4 if he gets the certificate, he can charge us whatever  
5 the heck he wants to more than what we're paying now.

6 **MS. DANIEL:** Let me -- okay. Okay. Once the  
7 Commission -- well, let me back up. If he is buying  
8 bulk water from the County, as he is with both  
9 companies, and, for example, if he pays a certain amount  
10 per month or per year for bulk water or wastewater from  
11 the County, there is a statute, a *Florida Statute* that  
12 says if he does not turn around and charge his customers  
13 more than what he paid for that service, then he is  
14 exempt from Commission regulation and the Commission is  
15 unable to set the rates for them again as long as he is  
16 only turning around the amount and no more than what he  
17 paid for the service.

18 And we have done some audits with respect  
19 to Bimini Bay, and it appears that that's the case.  
20 Based on some comments that I'm hearing, I'm  
21 wondering if our auditors had all of the information  
22 that they really were entitled to.

23 Let, let me explain Four Points to you.  
24 With respect to Four Points, he is no longer with  
25 Four Points just turning around that cost back to

1 the customers. He is in fact making a profit for  
2 Four Points. And the Commission has said you may  
3 charge this base charge and this charge per 1,000  
4 gallons. But what I hear with Four Points is, well,  
5 with both utilities frankly, is that there is such  
6 poor recordkeeping, such poor meter reading, the  
7 construction issues. What I'm hearing from you is  
8 there are some issues with respect to property and  
9 that's what's making it questionable to us. That's  
10 why we need to see the copies of these bills. We  
11 need to talk to you individually to begin to piece  
12 this puzzle together.

13 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** So if he gets the  
14 certificate, our water bills actually would go up is  
15 what I'm asking?

16 **MS. DANIEL:** I don't know what the ultimate  
17 rates will be. The Commissioners will --

18 (Inaudible).

19 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Right. But our water  
20 bill is going to go up.

21 **MS. DANIEL:** I don't know. It will depend  
22 on -- logically it would seem like it would. I'm having  
23 such a hard time hearing. I apologize. If what  
24 information our auditors have looked at is incorrect,  
25 that may affect what those final rates are. Logically

1       it sounds like the rates would go up. But I'm hearing  
2       so many questions, it really makes me wonder if in fact  
3       he is only turning around the cost of what he pays for  
4       that water. So I don't want to mislead you. They, they  
5       likely will go up if these facts are true. But if  
6       they're not true, we, we will certainly take a look at  
7       it. Does that make sense?

8               **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** It does make sense.  
9       But I mean it seems quite obvious that -- assuming he is  
10      doing what he's supposed to, but if he is just turning  
11      around and giving us the charge, it still seems high to  
12      me. I mean, like I said, I had a house bigger than this  
13      townhouse and I'm paying more now than I did before.

14             **MS. DANIEL:** And what is your average --

15             **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** And if he's not, and if  
16      he's not actually charging me more to make a profit,  
17      then what happens when he gets his license and he does  
18      charge me more to make a profit?

19             **MS. DANIEL:** And what is your average monthly  
20      usage like? Is it in the ten to fifteen thousand gallon  
21      range?

22             **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Yeah. It's in the,  
23      it's in the -- well, it depends on the month. Actually  
24      sometimes it goes up higher.

25             (Simultaneous conversation.)

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That's the lowest you  
2 see on your bill is 10,000. You never see anything less  
3 than 10,000.

4                   **MS. DANIEL:** And, see, I've looked at billing  
5 records that would indicate otherwise. That's very --

6                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Well, I can show you  
7 every single bill I've had since Four Points Utilities  
8 has been in existence.

9                   **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

10                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** But here's another  
11 thing, why do they charge for sewer? Where is the  
12 sewer? Is it on this property?

13                  **MS. DANIEL:** The sewer is at Polk County. We  
14 --

15                  **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** So why is he charging  
16 us a fee for that?

17                  **MS. DANIEL:** Let, let me answer that, if I  
18 could. This is a big question. Let me tell you why you  
19 pay for sewer.

20                         Polk County sends the potable water to you  
21 and you drink it and you wash your clothes and you  
22 flush the toilet and you pay a base charge and so  
23 much per 1,000 gallons for the water that you use,  
24 and then you flush the potty and run the laundry and  
25 that wastewater goes back to Polk County. That

1 wastewater has to be treated at the County. They  
2 don't run it out into rivers and lakes or --

3 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I'm not -- ma'am, I'm  
4 62 years old. I've been around long enough to know how  
5 sewage works. But that's not the question.

6 **MS. DANIEL:** I'm sorry. I misunderstood then.  
7 I thought you were just --

8 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Well, you know, I mean,  
9 come on, we all know how sewers work. You know, we  
10 don't think it goes out to the ocean or down -- you  
11 know, we know how sewers work.

12 My thing is why does he get to charge us  
13 that fee? Are you telling us because he's charging  
14 us that fee because he's turning around and paying  
15 it to you?

16 **MS. DANIEL:** No, ma'am. He's paying --

17 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He's charging us that  
18 fee so he can make a profit off of what we're doing  
19 because -- and he doesn't --

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** No. Because, because  
21 they're saying that he has to pay the County for the  
22 water that --

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** But he's -- but we're,  
24 we're being charged for the water.

25 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Understood. But he's

1       paying -- what he, what -- part of his water bill, okay,  
2       he pays for the water. Then he also has to pay for the  
3       water that leaves, and that's what we're paying for.  
4       That's what we're paying.

5               **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Right. But you pay  
6       more for the water fee and you pay for the privilege to  
7       have it leave (phonetic) in what they call sewer.

8               **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Because he pays, he  
9       pays more for the water that leaves than the water that  
10      goes in. He pays --

11              (Simultaneous conversation.)

12              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I can understand paying  
13      for the water. But why are we paying a pump fee or a --  
14      no, it's called a fuel fee or a fuel fee or a pump fee.  
15      There's a fuel fee on there. Why are we being charged a  
16      fuel fee? I want to know where this mechanism is and  
17      why we're charged? And it's more -- you pay as much for  
18      that, the water to come in as we do for the water to go  
19      out, and that's what I don't understand. What is this  
20      fee and where is this, this thing?

21              Is April here?

22              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** April is in the other  
23      room.

24              **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Can you go get me a  
25      copy of her bill?



1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I can go back in there.

2                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible) Can you get  
3 me a copy of April's bill, please? I want to show them  
4 the fee we're charged for the fuel fee for the water to  
5 go out.

6                   (Simultaneous conversation.)

7                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible) into your  
8 house and then they charge you for a fee.

9                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Okay. Well, they're  
10 telling us he can only charge us for the water. So if  
11 he can only charge us for the water that he's being  
12 billed for, why, why (inaudible).

13                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Because, because part  
14 of the water that they're charging for is reclaimed in  
15 (inaudible).

16                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Well, that's what I'm  
17 asking here. Where is this thing?

18                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Are we actually  
19 (inaudible).

20                   (Simultaneous conversation.)

21                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I want, I want to see  
22 this. It's this nice (inaudible).

23                   **MS. DANIEL:** I still want, I don't think we --  
24 and I apologize. I did not mean to -- there is a  
25 facility that the County owns. It's called the sewage

1 treatment plant. And the water goes through the sewers  
2 and to this sewage treatment facility. And I, I'm not  
3 an engineer, so I can't describe it to you.

4 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Well, my question is --

5 **MS. DANIEL:** It's the process that the County  
6 uses.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I understand. I  
8 understand.

9 **MS. DANIEL:** Okay.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** That wasn't my  
11 question. That's okay. But, but the situation is, is  
12 this man is stealing, whether you want to see it or not.  
13 You guys send auditors in. I don't know what he does  
14 with his books there. All I know is that for six years  
15 I have paid for utilities a hundred thousand times more  
16 than I would have paid if I lived in the State of  
17 California, whose utility, electric is really bad and  
18 has been for years. So I don't understand how a man can  
19 be given freedom.

20 I mean, we had Progress Energy come in.  
21 We were willing to pay more just to get the man  
22 gone. Now I would be willing to pay more to have  
23 anyone but David Meadows in charge of the utility.  
24 And I can't believe that you guys have allowed it to  
25 go on as long as you have because I know we have

1       called Tallahassee, we have sent information to  
2       Tallahassee, we have received packets from  
3       Tallahassee that tell us how to read our meters.  
4       And you know what? We need more than just that.  
5       And this is the beginning and I hope it's actually  
6       the end. I hope that you guys get to move on and go  
7       home and don't ever have to hear of Island Club West  
8       and Bimini Bay again because this is going to be  
9       handled. And I think he should be arrested, quite  
10      honestly. There is criminal activity going on here,  
11      and I don't have enough money to hire an attorney to  
12      get that done because I've got a kid at Stetson  
13      University that costs me a house every year and  
14      that's much more important to me. So I pay my  
15      \$85 water bills and I just be quiet.

16               And I'm glad I got to have the opportunity  
17      to stand in front of people who are here on their  
18      nights when they should be home. And I just really  
19      hope that something happens. I really do. I mean,  
20      you've heard everybody, we're all passionate about  
21      it. Right now in this day and age, you know, a  
22      dollar is worth a hundred. And when you're paying  
23      85 bucks for water that you shouldn't be paying to a  
24      man who's just stealing it from you and you have no  
25      recourse, and you can talk to as many people as you

1 want. You know, if we have to get an attorney, tell  
2 us we have to get an attorney. If there's an  
3 attorney in this room with all these lovely suits,  
4 tell us because we'll hire you. Because we're  
5 tired, we're done. We, you know, like she said,  
6 we're beyond done. And we were so happy when this  
7 thing came up. I don't know who pulled it together,  
8 but, you know, I am just -- I mean, you've heard me  
9 and I'm done. I can get on a soapbox and go  
10 forever, but, you know.

11 (Simultaneous conversation.)

12 **MS. BENNETT:** Why don't you talk with me  
13 afterwards.

14 **MS. DANIEL:** Tell me your name.

15 **MS. CAMPOPIANO:** April Campopiano. I've been  
16 here five years. I've been here five years. When I  
17 moved here, I went down to change my name. They tried  
18 to charge me \$200. I told them I wasn't there for that.  
19 I never got charged that.

20 I have had the wrong meter get charged to  
21 me this past year. I have my bills; I've shown my  
22 bills. There was like three different meters. Some  
23 people don't look at their meters. And I have a  
24 renter, I wish he was here, he got (inaudible)  
25 because he didn't realize that we're getting billed

1 other people's meters. We have like \$5 put on our  
2 thing with no explanation. It'll say what the bill  
3 is, there will be a difference of \$5 from here to  
4 there. The person who sends (phonetic) its bills,  
5 they don't show it. They show what they're billing,  
6 they don't show the credit.

7 I was also informed before they hit us  
8 that he was going to send us a bill for \$1,500 and  
9 told not to pay it.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** He's trying to get  
11 money.

12 **MS. CAMPOPIANO:** I also had, had to go down,  
13 my mother actually, my 80-year-old mother went down to  
14 correct these bills to make sure that they understand.  
15 And they tried to double speak her and she did not let  
16 them do that.

17 Okay. Also up on my road there was a  
18 water main break, and we had a renter moving in and  
19 he did a temporary fix. I complained and complained  
20 and it took three years to get the attention of them  
21 to actually go and fix it. Now this is where the  
22 dirt went into the street, we've got a hole in the  
23 ground, three years no one would come to fix this  
24 water. It leaked. There was nice grass over there,  
25 but you'd break your leg if you took a walk in it

1 because (inaudible). It has been a very bad  
2 experience with this company, and to me they don't,  
3 they really don't know what they're doing.

4 I've had an owner who was away that got  
5 billed money for his water. His water was shut off,  
6 his outside was shut off. I went to look at his  
7 meter. It was crusted over with dirt. There was no  
8 way it could be read. I called up Bimini Bay and I  
9 told them -- I have Four Points. I called Bimini  
10 Bay as far as the personnel to fix it. And I said  
11 to them, "I'm standing right here. I want you to  
12 show me how you read this meter that this person  
13 used water." He got very -- he came up and realized  
14 he couldn't explain it because the dirt was crusted.  
15 And they had -- he had said to someone else, "Dig  
16 that up. Dig that up."

17 So they're not doing the meters, they're  
18 guessing. When someone is totally shut off, they're  
19 getting billed. They're getting bills that are  
20 other people's. And if you don't catch it, he's not  
21 going to say nothing. He's taking the money. But  
22 if you didn't pay enough -- I had a \$30 water bill.  
23 I get 48, 52 because I water my lawn and my flowers  
24 and all of that. We knew something was wrong when  
25 we got a \$30 water bill. Right down there my mother

1       went, and, sure enough, another wrong meter. People  
2       have to watch their bill to make sure the meter is  
3       their meter. We shouldn't have to do that. They  
4       obviously are not competent enough to run this  
5       business, not in billings, not in fixing what's  
6       wrong.

7                Okay. I've got dirt in my water now  
8       because when that broke in all those years all of  
9       that sediment went to my water, and I have my  
10      faucets that shut off because the stuff shuts it  
11      off. I don't know what damage this has done to my  
12      water heater, which is my problem. He does stuff  
13      with no regret to him. He's always been someone who  
14      will try and get the money from you any way he can.  
15      But he did not get the \$1,500 and he did not get the  
16      \$200 and I -- we don't owe him anything. We are  
17      straight with him because we know his tricks. But  
18      people like renters expect the bill to be what it  
19      should be and they don't.

20               And I have one that unfortunately I could  
21      not get in contact with today to see if they could  
22      even come, and I'm going to try and stop by and see  
23      if they can come tomorrow at 10:00. Because they  
24      got shut off, and he came up to me with his bill,  
25      and he really knew my husband and I was home, and he

1 asked me and I said, "Bring me your bill." Sure  
2 enough, he had a different meter. So they did put  
3 his water back on. He's got two kids, he has to  
4 work, and instead he had to go fix the stuff with  
5 them. That's not right. They do not know what  
6 they're doing in any way, shape or form. They  
7 shouldn't have anything over us as far as water  
8 bills.

9 **MS. DANIEL:** You have our address if you need  
10 to follow up.

11 **MS. CAMPOPIANO:** Yes, I have these to give to  
12 renters. Yeah. I may volunteer for action. Okay? And  
13 I also was the, the President of Seniors Versus Crime  
14 fighting people who do wrong. So you see, I will  
15 approach the renters and say, "Do you have water  
16 problems? Have you been off? Here is the paper."  
17 Okay.

18 **MS. DANIEL:** Thank you so much for coming.

19 **MS. CAMPOPIANO:** Thank you. I'm sorry that I  
20 was out earlier.

21 **MS. DANIEL:** No. That's why we're here.

22 **MS. BENNETT:** Thank you. Are you Glenn?

23 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** What's that?

24 **MS. BENNETT:** Are you Glenn?

25 **MR. MCQUADE:** No. Do I need to add my name to



1 something?

2 MS. DANIEL: What's your name?

3 MR. MCQUADE: My name is James McQuade.

4 MS. DANIEL: All right. Now give us -- spell  
5 that last name.

6 MR. MCQUADE: M-C-Q-U-A-D-E.

7 MS. DANIEL: Four Points or Bimini Bay?

8 MR. MCQUADE: Four Points.

9 MS. DANIEL: Four Points. Do you mind giving  
10 me your street address just so we'll have a record?

11 MR. MCQUADE: Yeah, that's fine. 617 Orchid  
12 Drive. So I've been living here for about three years.  
13 This is my first home I ever bought for myself. I've  
14 seen a lot of changes going on in this location. I mean  
15 I remember when there was a point in time that there was  
16 a meth lab down the street (inaudible), but that's what  
17 happens. This place has changed quite a bit, you know.  
18 The only thing that has remained constant in this  
19 location would have to be, as April who just was up here  
20 said, is grit in the water.

21 I've had this situation since I lived  
22 here. I had to buy a monkey wrench just so I could  
23 take a shower, wash my clothes, drink water. I rent  
24 my place out to other people. So it's not just  
25 affecting me, it's not just affecting the people

1       that have come up and talked about it.

2               My one thing I ask is that I'm not  
3       entirely sure if the water bill is right or wrong,  
4       I'll be honest, but I do know that when you drink  
5       from a glass of water, take a shower, you shouldn't  
6       walk in and turn your water on and know that nothing  
7       is going to come out that shouldn't come out. It  
8       should be hot, it should be cold, however  
9       temperature you want it to be, you know. It should  
10      be (inaudible) if the water turned off. Well, if  
11      you go to another faucet and it turns on, you know  
12      you've got a problem.

13              My question is I just want the grit taken  
14      care of. I just want to be able to go and take a  
15      shower and know that the water is going to come on  
16      the same texture every time every day. That when I  
17      go to take, wash my clothes, I put my clothes in the  
18      washer, the water is going to come out, you know.

19              I've been on time with my bills. I've,  
20      I'll be honest, I was late once and that was when I  
21      first bought my place and my bill was way out of  
22      whack. I found out right off the bat because the  
23      people before me had the same problem where they  
24      were charged this amount. And they needed to put it  
25      somewhere, so they put it on me. But don't worry.

1 I caught that. I'm not worried about that. That's  
2 cool. Thank you very much for (inaudible).

3 MS. DANIEL: And so you still to this day have  
4 grit in your water (inaudible) up the lines?

5 MR. MCQUADE: I do -- I'll be honest. I'll be  
6 honest. Today I was on my way to go pick up some  
7 NyQuil, I'm not feeling that great right now, and I saw  
8 a lot of important cars up here, I noticed everybody's  
9 cars.

10 MS. DANIEL: Yeah. Yeah. State cars.

11 MR. MCQUADE: Exactly. So I pulled up and  
12 didn't really know what was going on, but I heard that  
13 Four Points Utility was happening, so I had to come over  
14 and talk. And before I came here I took a shower, and I  
15 had to take my showerhead off just to get the grit out.  
16 So, I mean, it's not like this, this -- it's not like  
17 this happens once a month. This happens probably twice  
18 a, twice a month, you know, and that should not be  
19 happening. Whether you're drinking water, whether  
20 you're taking a shower, whether you're washing clothes,  
21 you know. I'll wash my dishes. I promise you one  
22 thing, not all my dishes will be completely clean  
23 because there's that grit, that buildup. It just gets  
24 right in there and it just stains, stains your plates,  
25 your silverware, it rusts out your silverware. That,

1 that's ridiculous. You know, you (inaudible) a whole  
2 lot of silverware for a while.

3 But that's all I ask, if, if that could be  
4 fixed, you know. So thank you very much for your  
5 time. Thank you.

6 (Inaudible).

7 **MS. BENNETT:** Glenn Gorman or Michellette  
8 Ramos.

9 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Michellette? Glenn?  
10 Glenn, you're up.

11 **MR. GORMAN:** Hi. My name is Glenn Gorman, 343  
12 Caribbean, Four Points Utility. The only, the only  
13 concern I have is the way that the, the meter readers  
14 come on property. The other day it just so happened I  
15 pulled up, there was a meter reader walking around. He  
16 didn't have the right addresses, he was just randomly  
17 shutting off water, and also had no identification. The  
18 vehicle that he was in could have been anybody. He had  
19 two gentlemen sitting in a van with no shirts on in  
20 front of my house drinking beer. When I pulled up, the  
21 gentleman was literally looking in my window. For what?  
22 When I asked him, he could barely explain himself. I  
23 wanted to know why he was on my property, number one.  
24 And he told me he was shutting my water off. I said,  
25 "No, you're not shutting my water off. I live here.

1 The bill is paid." He said, "Well, yeah, the address is  
2 here." And he couldn't show me an address. And, again,  
3 the way he was just walking around the property with no  
4 identification and the two gentlemen waiting with him  
5 with no shirts on. That was my biggest concern.

6 I don't have concerns about the bills yet  
7 because the bills go to a corporation that's owned  
8 by my brother. But with all the discrepancies I've  
9 heard about the bills tonight, I'm going to check  
10 into that further.

11 But that's just my main concern is the  
12 lack of professionalism in these guys that are just  
13 coming. I don't know who they hire or who these  
14 gentlemen are, but, you know, if you're on my  
15 property, you should have some kind of  
16 identification who you are.

17 **MS. BENNETT:** Are you sure that they were  
18 the --

19 **MR. GORMAN:** Oh, yeah. He was, him and  
20 another gentleman were walking around literal, they were  
21 literally going into the boxes and shutting off water.  
22 And, again, they, they looked like they were confused,  
23 that they didn't know what address was what and what  
24 street they were on and who they were shutting off.  
25 They shut my neighbor off when somebody was living in

1 the house.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** They shut my water off  
3 at the main (inaudible) last month and I had to, I had  
4 to prove that I paid all my bills.

5 **MR. GORMAN:** That's it.

6 **MS. BENNETT:** Michелlette.

7 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** I did text her. She  
8 was at another meeting.

9 **MS. DANIEL:** Why don't we do this while we're  
10 waiting on Michелlette -- I think she's the last person  
11 signed up on here. Are there others after Michелlette?  
12 Okay. All right. We'll -- do you want to -- if I  
13 could, I have someone that -- please, would you mind,  
14 help us out here.

15 **MS. BENNETT:** We did invite the Attorney  
16 General's Office to attend and --

17 (Applause.)

18 **MR. CLEMENTS:** My name is Robert Clements, and  
19 I'm an Assistant Attorney General with the State of  
20 Florida. And part of what you guys are talking about, I  
21 guess the majority of what you're talking about tonight  
22 is a Public Service Commission issue. Unfortunately we  
23 don't have jurisdiction over that.

24 But I brought some cards that have a  
25 number that you can call with complaints to the

1 Attorney General's Office and that's what I would  
2 recommend you do. Not with respect to the utility  
3 issue; unfortunately I can't help you. You've got  
4 competent people here to take care of that for you,  
5 I'm sure. But with respect to other issues that I  
6 understand that have gone out, that have gone on out  
7 here, I would recommend you call this number. Maybe  
8 you want to -- I can't promise you anything because  
9 I don't know whether we have jurisdiction over a  
10 particular issue, but it's worth calling the number,  
11 making the complaint, and then we'll confirm whether  
12 or not we have jurisdiction and can proceed in the  
13 case (inaudible). So what I'm going to do is I'll  
14 leave some of these cards up here for you. And, you  
15 know, it is on our radar. So something (inaudible).

16 I'll leave some cards. Feel free to call  
17 the number, it's called Citizen Services (phonetic),  
18 leave a complaint, and then it gets filtered down to  
19 the appropriate people. And hopefully we'll do the  
20 same as long as we can (inaudible). So that's all I  
21 can promise you right now. (Inaudible). We'll do  
22 what we can for you. Okay?

23 So I'll leave these up here, and take one,  
24 if you'd like. I think there is also a meeting  
25 tomorrow as well, is there not? And we'll have

1 another representative here during that meeting, so.

2 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** What type of complaint  
3 should we send to you? Is it more like for those who  
4 have liens or --

5 **MR. CLEMENTS:** Yes. Yes. If it's with  
6 respect to the utilities, the water, the power, that's  
7 up to the Commission. And while (inaudible) it's not my  
8 area, so, you know, I'm not sure they'll be able to  
9 handle it for you. But apart from that, it's  
10 probably -- anything related to utilities, no. Anything  
11 else is, I'm sure there's so many, I would say those --  
12 I can't guarantee that those are (inaudible), but I  
13 don't see anything apart from those. Make a complaint  
14 and then it will get filtered to the right people and  
15 we'll see whether or not it's (inaudible). Okay?

16 So I'll leave some cards up here for you.  
17 Again, there will be another rep, it won't be me  
18 tomorrow, but there will be another representative  
19 if you'd like to follow up further.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Did you bring some  
21 handouts with regards to what kind of complaints  
22 (inaudible)?

23 **MR. CLEMENTS:** You know, I did -- I brought  
24 very little. I don't think you'd get enough specifics  
25 to do you much good because it's kind of a general



1        thing. So I think the way I try to answer, if it's not  
2        utilities, then --

3                    **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** Start there.

4                    **MR. CLEMENTS:** Start there. So there's so  
5        many areas it could cover, that it's probably not  
6        worth it to, to go through all of them. Let's just  
7        say make your complaints and let us filter it down  
8        where it should go. Because even within the  
9        Attorney General's Office we have a statewide  
10       prosecuting (inaudible) which is civil, unfair and  
11       deceptive trade practice area, we have Medicaid  
12       fraud. I mean, there's so many areas that I'm not  
13       sure it would help you to get the handout. But I'll  
14       leave them here and that's, this is certainly a  
15       place to start. Okay? So I'll be here for a little  
16       (inaudible).

17                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** (Inaudible).

18                   **MS. BENNETT:** And Michellette.

19                   **MS. DANIEL:** Michellette has asked, she has  
20       asked to be our first, she has asked to be our first  
21       speaker in the morning. She wants to go home and get  
22       her paperwork. And that's what I wanted to, to speak to  
23       you again and reiterate. We need your name and address  
24       and phone number and a piece of paper. We cannot fix  
25       these problems based on allegations. Okay?

1                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** If we (inaudible) you,  
2 you have paper from us already.

3                   **MS. DANIEL:** Yes, ma'am.

4                   **UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:** You know, you've  
5 received a lot of bills over the past six years  
6 (inaudible). And I'll be quite happy to print it out  
7 again for you, but you guys have a lot of paperwork I'm  
8 sure.

9                   **MS. DANIEL:** Yes, ma'am. As I said, we do  
10 have another meeting in the morning at 10:00, if, if you  
11 would like to come back again and be knowledgeable of  
12 what else is going on. If you know others who -- I've  
13 heard some folks who weren't aware of this meeting, and  
14 that's, that's frustrating to us because, as I said, we  
15 (inaudible) notices to both property owners and tenants.  
16 We would be glad to talk to you again tomorrow, and  
17 we're going to do everything we can to help resolve some  
18 of these issues (inaudible) taken care of.

19                   So thank you for your attendance. And if  
20 you want to come up and speak to us individually,  
21 please feel free to do so. Thank you.


22                   (Meeting concluded.)  
23  
24  
25

1 STATE OF FLORIDA )  
2 COUNTY OF LEON ) CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

3  
4 I, LINDA BOLES, RPR, CRR, Hearing Reporter  
5 Services Section, Office of Commission Clerk, do hereby  
6 certify that the foregoing proceedings were transcribed  
7 from digital recording to the best of my ability.

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

13 DATED THIS 9th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2010.

14   
15 LINDA BOLES, RPR, CRR  
16 Office of Commission Clerk  
17 (850) 413-6734  
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