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STATE OF MISSOURI  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
Local Public Hearing  
October 2, 2017  
Fox C-6 School District  
Fox Service Center  
Roy Wilde Conference Room  
849 Jeffco Boulevard  
Arnold, MO 63010

Volume VI

In the Matter of Laclede )  
Gas Company's Request to )  
Increase Its Revenues ) File No. GR-2017-0215  
for Gas Service )

In the Matter of Laclede )  
Gas Company d/b/a )  
Missouri Gas Energy's ) File No. GR-2017-0216  
Request to Increase Its )  
Revenues for Gas Service )

NANCY DIPPELL, Presiding  
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

STEPHEN M. STOLL,  
SCOTT T. RUPP,  
MAIDA J. COLEMAN,  
Commissioners.

Court Reporter:  
Georgia B. Long, CSR/CCR  
Missouri CCR #622  
Illinois CSR #084-004742  
Midwest Litigation Services  
711 North Eleventh Street  
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

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A P P E A R A N C E S

For Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission:  
Ms. Nicole Mers  
Public Service Commission  
200 Madison Street  
P.O. Box 360  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

For Office of Public Counsel and the Public:  
Lera Shemwell  
Office of Public Counsel  
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Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

For Laclede Gas, d/b/a Missouri Gas Energy:  
Mr. Rick Zucker  
720 Olive Street  
St. Louis, Missouri 63101

1 PROCEEDINGS

2

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Good evening. I appreciate you  
4 all being here this evening. And I'm going to stand up  
5 while I do this because I can't see you all. We can go  
6 ahead and go on the record.

7 Today is October 2nd, 2017. And the Missouri  
8 Public Service Commission has set this time for a local  
9 public hearing in files numbered GR-2017-0215 and  
10 GR-2017-0216, which are captioned as: In the Matter of  
11 Laclede Gas Company's Request to Increase Its Revenues  
12 For Gas Service; and In the Matter of Laclede Gas  
13 Company, doing business as Missouri Gas Energy's Request  
14 to Increase Its Revenues For Gas Service.

15 The companies have since gone through a name  
16 change, which most of you are probably aware. So  
17 Laclede Gas Company is now known and Spire.

18 My name is Nancy Dippell. I'm the Regulatory Law  
19 Judge presiding over this matter tonight. I have two of  
20 our commissioners I would like to introduce.  
21 Commissioner Stoll, would you like to say something?

22 MR. STOLL: I'll also stand. I wanted to welcome  
23 everybody and thank you all for coming out tonight.  
24 This is the beginning of the process in this case. We  
25 hold local public hearings, and then later there will be

1 evidentiary hearings in Jefferson City. You can attend  
2 those in person, or you can tune in on the internet and  
3 watch. Exactly how to do that, I can't tell you, but  
4 our staff can.

5 And again, we're here to listen to your comments.  
6 I'm sure you've already been told, we commissioners  
7 cannot answer questions. We will eventually sit in  
8 judgment of the case and can be disqualified for  
9 prejudging. But we want to hear what you have to say.  
10 It's the beginning of the process, and I look forward to  
11 hearing your comments.

12 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. And then on my left is  
13 Commissioner Coleman.

14 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. Good evening. Thank  
15 you so much for coming out. And I just would like to  
16 add that any comments that you provide this evening will  
17 be part of the official record, and we'll be considering  
18 that in our decision making. So thank you very much for  
19 any comments you may have tonight.

20 MS. DIPPELL: And along those lines, we have a  
21 court reporter to my right. And she'll be taking down  
22 your statements, and I'll have you give those statements  
23 under oath.

24 The way this is going to work is those of you  
25 that signed up, I will call you one by one in the order

1 you're listed here and ask if you can to come up to the  
2 podium and speak into the microphone. I'll ask you to  
3 give us your name and spell it. And then I'll just have  
4 you give us your comments.

5 After you've given your comments, there may be a  
6 few clarifying questions, either from myself or the  
7 commissioners, or some of the attorneys present. And I  
8 would ask you to stay at the podium until you're  
9 excused.

10 And I originally set time limits in this case for  
11 the local public hearings. Given that there's not that  
12 many people signed up to testify, we won't worry about  
13 time limits tonight. But I will ask you to be conscious  
14 of your neighbor's time this evening.

15 So with that, I will ask for the attorneys to  
16 make their entries of appearance. I'll start with  
17 staff.

18 MS. MERS: Nicole Mers, appearing on behalf of  
19 Staff. And my information has been provided to the  
20 court reporter. I would like to take the time this  
21 evening to hear your testimony.

22 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. For the company.

23 MR. ZUCKER: Thank you. Rick Zucker here on  
24 behalf of Laclede Gas Company, now known as Spire  
25 Missouri, Inc.

1 MS. DIPPELL: For the Office of Public Counsel.

2 MS. SHEMWELL: Good evening. Lera Shemwell on  
3 behalf of the office of public counsel. And I have  
4 given my information to the court reporter.

5 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. Any interveners present  
6 that wanted to make an entry? Seeing none, we'll go  
7 ahead and begin with our first witness. Harry Wood.

8 MR. WOOD: I pass. I got my answers. Thank you.

9 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. Cynthia Peterson.

10 MS. PETERSON: Do you want me to come up there?

11 MS. DIPPELL: If you would, please. If you would  
12 start out by giving us your name and I'll swear you in.

13 MS. PETERSON: Cynthia Peterson. C-Y-N-T-H-I-A,  
14 P-E-T-E-R-S-O-N.

15 MS. DIPPELL: Okay. Let me swear you in.

16 (Witness sworn)

17 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. Please give us your  
18 comments.

19 MS. PETERSON: Okay. I oppose the rate increase  
20 for a number of reasons. First, I believe that the  
21 executive level people of companies, such as utilities  
22 and other companies, profit too greatly for the cost  
23 that we pay as individual middle class people. I can't  
24 speak for all classes, but the middle class is paying  
25 for lower class, which is a social responsibility. The

1 upper class seems to have all the tax loopholes, so they  
2 don't have to pay for anything.

3 I had Laclede Gas for the almost 30 years I've  
4 lived in St. Louis. I've seen things that I find very  
5 disturbing. One, they can tear up your streets to fix  
6 the lines, which I appreciate them fixing the lines.  
7 Yet we still have no street repair.

8 In any business -- second, in any business, you  
9 have to put aside money for maintaining and repairing  
10 your infrastructure. That cost does get passed on, but  
11 it shouldn't be every time we turn around, there's a  
12 rate increase for this and a rate increase for that.  
13 They obviously don't plan well for a rainy day.

14 Three, nothing that has been said today has  
15 convinced me to change my mind otherwise, and in my  
16 questioning, that I do not believe that they need this  
17 rate increase.

18 And I am very much against monopolies, were they  
19 can creatively find ways to bill us under different  
20 titles. It should be a rate fee for the amount of use  
21 of your gas. And if it's \$3.00 per therm, or however  
22 you want to charge, then that's what you charge and you  
23 figure out how to manage your business on that basis.

24 It should be equal to all; meaning if you're a  
25 two therm user and it's \$6.00 a therm, you're \$12.00.

1 If you're a 15 therm user and it's \$6.00, then you get  
2 the gist.

3 So I'm against the rate increase. And I might  
4 add for the person that's next on the list, they're  
5 probably going to decline.

6 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. Were there any other  
7 questions for Ms. Peterson? Thank you. And I'll just  
8 ask, Carolyn Martin?

9 MS. MARTIN: Decline.

10 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you. Ruth Houser.

11 MS. HOUSER: Decline.

12 MS. DIPPELL: Rob Sonneville?

13 MR. SONNEVILLE: Yeah. I'll take that. Rob  
14 Sonneville, S-O-N-N-E-V-I-L-L-E.

15 (Witness sworn)

16 MS. DIPPELL: Go ahead. Thank you.

17 MR. SONNEVILLE: Basically I'm here just to  
18 confirm and thank Cynthia Peterson for what she just  
19 said. I agree with it wholeheartedly. I just wanted to  
20 be on record for that.

21 MS. DIPPELL: Very well. Thank you, sir. Jim  
22 Madden.

23 MR. MADDEN: Jim Madden. M-A-D-D-E-N.

24 MS. DIPPELL: Could I swear you in, please.

25 MR. MADDEN: Yes.



1 (Witness sworn)

2 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you.

3 MS. MARTIN: I'm going back several years,  
4 probably in the 80s. And I mean no ill will toward the  
5 Public Service Commission or anything like that. I feel  
6 like there's too much of a cozy relationship between  
7 Laclede and PSC. Because years ago, there was a couple  
8 supervisors that went out and went to put up signs and  
9 everything like that for a political person who happened  
10 to be Joe Frappier, who was a Senator from North County.  
11 The supervisors were Earl James and his wife, Etta  
12 James. She was head of the republican party up in North  
13 County.

14 Mr. Norm Porch was the owner of Fritz's Custard  
15 Stand up in South County. Well eventually, Senator  
16 Frappier became the public service commissioner. I just  
17 think -- I would like to see something a little more  
18 open.

19 You had another fella, Ben McReynolds. He was a  
20 supervisor in the same department. His aunt was Phyllis  
21 Swafner, who runs the eagle forum for republicans. I  
22 think there's too much coziness in there, and they were  
23 going out, putting their signs up on company time. We  
24 found their signs in the trunks of the car.

25 So this is something that's under the bridge and

1 most of them are dead at this point, but I just think  
2 that they need to clean up their act and stay out of the  
3 political arena to get all this information done. Thank  
4 you.

5 MS. DIPPELL: Hold on just a moment.

6 MR. STOLL: I might add, if you makes feel any  
7 better, nothing like that better happens today. And it  
8 doesn't happen between commissioners and the company or  
9 political people.

10 MS. MARTIN: I mean --

11 MR. STOLL: I understand. I just wanted to  
12 assure you it's not going to happen today.

13 MS. MARTIN: I just, you know, felt it was wrong.  
14 And nothing to you can do at the time. I'm retired from  
15 there. And I gratefully appreciate everything I've done  
16 and received. But I just think there's too much  
17 hanky-panky going on.

18 MR. STOLL: Thank you for your testimony.

19 MS. MARTIN: Thank you, sir. I meant no offense.

20 MR. STOLL: None taken.

21 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you, sir. Richard Amick.

22 MR. AMICK: I decline.

23 MS. DIPPELL: Fred Jones.

24 MR. JONES: I decline.

25 MS. DIPPELL: You guys might start hurting my

1 feelings here. There's no one else on my list. Is  
2 there anybody else who didn't sign up to testify and  
3 would like to testify? Just raise your hand.

4 MS. PETERSON: Can I add one more comment?

5 MS. DIPPELL: Certainty. Come on up.

6 MS. PETERSON: I probably should have stated this  
7 earlier. The other beef that I have with Laclede Gas,  
8 other than they charge us an arm and a leg, is they try  
9 to hire these outside skag workers to replace meters  
10 rather than their own loyal, local, Laclede Gas workers.  
11 And I find that appalling.

12 MS. DIPPELL: Thank you, ma'am. Is there anyone  
13 else who would like to testify?

14 Well, I hope if you're passing on your chance to  
15 testify that means you got some questions answered  
16 earlier tonight. If you still have questions,  
17 representatives from the company as well as the Office  
18 of Public Counsel and staff will still be around when  
19 we're done here tonight. So you can still ask questions  
20 of them individually if you would like.

21 Commissioners, was there anything further before  
22 we adjourn?

23 MR. STOLL: I think I would like to recognize a  
24 former student of mine. I know he's embarrassed by  
25 this. In a previous life, I was a high school teacher,

1 and Mr. Beckett -- Officer Beckett back there was one of  
2 my students. Good to see you here today.

3 MS. DIPPELL: Yes. We appreciate the services of  
4 Mr. Beckett and the Fox C6 School District for letting  
5 us use their facility. I really appreciate you all  
6 coming out this evening. It does help us in our  
7 process.

8 With that, we can go off the record. We're  
9 adjourned.

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF MISSOURI        )  
                                  ) ss.  
CITY OF ARNOLD            )

I, Georgia Beth Long, a Certified Court Reporter (MO),  
Certified Shorthand Reporter (IL), do hereby certify  
that the meeting aforementioned was held on the time and  
in the place previously described.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and  
seal.

*Georgia Beth Long*

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**MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES**

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