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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Public Hearing

January 6, 2004
Comfort Inn Conference Room
Platte City, Missouri
Volume 3
5:00 p.m.

In the Matter of the Request of)
Aquila, Inc. D/b/a Aquila Networks --) Case No.
L&P and Aquila Networks -- MPS, to) GR-2004-0072
Implement a General Rate Increase in)
Electric Rates)

KENNARD JONES, Presiding,
REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

CONNIE MURRAY, COMMISSIONER

1 JUDGE JONES: Let's go on the record.

2 I want to welcome everyone here today. We
3 appreciate your coming out in spite of the dusting of
4 snow. My name is Kennard Jones. We're going to make
05:28PM 5 a record. Because there are no witnesses who will
6 testify, we'll just do that.

7 This is a local public hearing for the Aquila
8 natural gas rate case, Case No. GR-2004-0072. This
9 hearing is being held to give the public an
05:28PM 10 opportunity to voice their support or opposition to
11 the proposed rate increase.

12 My name is Kennard Jones. I'm the regulatory
13 law judge presiding over this matter. To my right is
14 Commissioner Murray, who is also attending the public
05:29PM 15 hearing.

16 There are no witnesses listed to testify and
17 at this time I have the attorneys present. Introduce
18 yourselves, enter an appearance, and that will be all,
19 starting with you.

05:29PM 20 MR. COOPER: Dean Cooper from the law firm of
21 Brydon, Swearingen & England, P.C., P.O. Box 456,
22 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102, appearing on behalf of
23 Aquila, Inc., doing business as Aquila Networks-NPS
24 and Aquila Networks-LLP.

05:29PM 25 MR. MICHEEL: Douglas E. Micheel appearing on

1 behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel, P.O. Box
2 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-2230.

3 MR. SCHWARZ: Tim Schwarz, S-c-h-w-a-r-z,
4 P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102,
05:30PM 5 appearing for the staff of the Public Service
6 Commission.

7 JUDGE JONES: Thank you. I note that there is
8 one member of the public here and he has stated he
9 does not wish to testify.

05:30PM 10 Is that true?

11 MR. PINE: Yeah.

12 JUDGE JONES: Okay. You don't have to if you
13 don't want to.

14 MR. PINE: No. I want to ask you some
05:30PM 15 questions.

16 JUDGE JONES: Well, actually you can't ask
17 questions of us. Did you have an opportunity to ask
18 questions of persons out here? Were you able to get
19 any answers?

05:30PM 20 MR. PINE: Well, the gentlemen explained to me
21 a while ago, but what I want to know. I'm on a fixed
22 income and my wife --

23 JUDGE JONES: Well, let's do this. It sounds
24 like you want to make a statement. Why don't you come
05:30PM 25 forward and let's do that.

1 MR. PINE: I got my old country clothes on.
2 I'm not dressed up.

3 JUDGE JONES: On this side of the podium.

4 MR. PINE: What I want to know is my wife--

05:30PM 5 JUDGE JONES: No. Just a second. Can you
6 state your name first?

7 MR. PINE: Robert Pine here in Platte City.

8 JUDGE JONES: And what's your address,
9 Mr. Pine?

05:30PM 10 MR. PINE: 501 Vine Street, but I have a post
11 office box because I don't have a mailbox.

12 What I want to know --

13 JUDGE JONES: And also can you raise your
14 right hand, sir.

15 (Mr. Pine complied.)

16 JUDGE JONES: Do you solemnly affirm that the
17 testimony you are about to give is the truth?

18 MR. PINE: Yes, sir.

19 JUDGE JONES: Go ahead, Mr. Pine.

05:31PM 20 MR. PINE: What I want to know, my light bill
21 was in my wife's name because when we got married,
22 it was there and I left, and two months ago -- She
23 used to be able to paint and walk and draw and cook,
24 and she's in a nursing home here now. She can't walk,
05:31PM 25 she can't talk, she can't even feed herself, so I go

1 up three times a day to feed her.

2 And the company has been very cooperative,
3 they've sliced the bill down considerably, but I'm on
4 a fixed income and they took our Medicaid away from us
05:31PM 5 because we had too many assessed, which I didn't know
6 counted against something like this, and it absolutely
7 buried me. I'm not going to stand here and lie. I'm
8 going to tell you the truth. It's absolutely crippled
9 us. Well, she gets \$731 a month and they take \$701
05:32PM 10 out. She gets a big \$30 a month to pay up everything.

11 What is people going to do that don't have any
12 jobs, that don't have any income, just Social Security
13 like her? How are they going to be able to pay their
14 light bills?

05:32PM 15 Like these people in Kansas City today, I seen
16 where they paid a 900 bill, the Governor did, and they
17 said they was going to run out of money either the
18 first or middle of February. People are being laid
19 off. What are people going to do to pay their light
05:32PM 20 bills and things if they don't have the money?

21 And my wife was home two months ago and I'm a
22 diabetic, so I don't have any insurance after
23 September, and my medicine is going to cost me at
24 least a thousand dollars a month. Hell, I can't
05:32PM 25 afford it. I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm

1 scared. Really, I'm scared. I've done talked to
2 people. And my pension and my Social Security is too
3 much, so we lost our Medicaid, and we've reapplied and
4 we're not going to get it back because I make too much
05:33PM 5 money.

6 And like I said, when they took that Medicaid
7 away from us, we cut out everything in the book. I
8 mean we canceled everything we could cancel just to
9 pay the bills, and in fact I'm not going to have
05:33PM 10 enough money to pay what bills we have. I had to take
11 over her bills after she went, for insurance and
12 things, and it's just absolutely crippled me. But you
13 people have been very cooperative, the office I've
14 called, and they've helped me every way they can.

05:33PM 15 What are people going to do that don't have
16 any income? She gets \$731 a month. Hell, she can't
17 live on that. She couldn't do it. What are people
18 going to do?

19 You guys got any kind of suggestion or
05:33PM 20 anything?

21 JUDGE JONES: Well, I should tell you that
22 your concerns are rather general.

23 MR. PINE: My what?

24 JUDGE JONES: Your concerns are just rather
05:34PM 25 general, just generally times are difficult for you,

1 and I'm sure that there are persons here that have
2 listening ears to what you're saying.

3 You do realize that this public hearing
4 concerns only the rate increase of Aquila and also, as
05:34PM 5 I said earlier, you may have had an opportunity to
6 speak with people from Aquila. How they are able to
7 answer that question I don't know.

8 MR. PINE: Well, they have been very
9 cooperative and I really appreciate it, but like I
05:34PM 10 said, after this September I'll be 65 and Medicare
11 don't pay for medicine and if I don't have it, I ain't
12 going to be here, so I told them just dig a hole and
13 throw me in it and cover me up. Put my blue jeans and
14 boots on me like I was driving a truck.

05:35PM 15 I just don't understand what we're supposed to
16 do and I can't cut out anything else, and like I said,
17 she had been up there and they wanted a \$120 a day if
18 I didn't have any insurance. I said, "People, I don't
19 have insurance. I can't afford it."

05:35PM 20 Well, I tried to get insurance on myself for
21 medical and when I tell them I'm a diabetic, that's
22 it. That's the end of the rope.

23 MR. RICHARD GREEN: I don't want to be out of
24 order, but we certainly can continue our discussions
05:35PM 25 afterwards and provide maybe some more ideas and

1 connections to help him out.

2 JUDGE JONES: That sounds good.

3 Are there any other comments other than what
4 you said?

05:35PM 5 MR. PINE: No. Like I said, though, your
6 company has been very cooperative with Mary and I, and
7 the light bill is in her name and I just paid it
8 yesterday and I'm going to leave it in her name
9 because I think you have to pay a transfer fee and
05:35PM 10 all. I don't keep up on that stuff. In fact, I took
11 over the book work last week. I've never done it.
12 She always did it.

13 JUDGE JONES: Thank you for your comments.
14 I should ask before you leave if anyone has any
05:36PM 15 questions.

16 MR. MICHEEL: No.

17 MR. COOPER: No.

18 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No.

19 JUDGE JONES: Thank you. You can go ahead and
20 step down.

21 MR. PINE: One of the gentlemen told me a
22 while ago, and I was very pleased with what he said.

23 JUDGE JONES: Great.

24 Well, seeing no more witnesses, then we will
05:36PM 25 adjourn the meeting. Thank you all for coming.