

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a session of the Public Service Commission held at its office in Jefferson City on the 8th day of December, 2021.

In the Matter of The Empire District Gas)	
Company's d/b/a Liberty Request to File)	<u>File No. GR-2021-0320</u>
Tariffs to Change its Rates for Natural Gas)	Tracking No. YG-2022-0040
Service)	

ORDER SETTING LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

Issue Date: December 8, 2021

Effective Date: December 8, 2021

On August 23, 2021,¹ The Empire District Gas Company (Liberty) filed tariff sheets designed to implement a general rate increase for its electric and natural gas services. On October 20, the Commission issued an order setting a procedural schedule, including an evidentiary hearing in this matter, but did not set out a detailed schedule for local public hearings. On November 10, the Commission issued an Order to File Recommendation Regarding Local Public Hearings recommending the number, locations, dates and times for the local public hearings. That order stated that depending upon the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, the local public hearings might be ordered held virtually by WebEx. The Commission's Staff (Staff), Liberty and the Office of the Public Counsel (OPC) filed local public hearing recommendations on November 19. No other party has filed recommendations or an objection or response to the recommendations of Staff, Liberty, or OPC.

Staff and Liberty recommended the Commission order two virtual public hearings, to occur respectively at 6 p.m. on February 17, 2022, and at noon on February 22, 2022.

¹ All dates are in 2021 unless otherwise indicated.

OPC recommended four in-person local public hearings, to be held respectively in Maryville (February 17, 2022); Chillicothe (February 22, 2022); Sedalia (February 23, 2022); and Nevada (February 24, 2022). OPC stated that it did not oppose Staff and Liberty's recommendation in the event the Commission decided to hold virtual local public meetings. OPC's recommendation also set out an exemplar local public hearing notice and recommended the Commission order Liberty to mail its customers local public hearing notices similar in form to the exemplar notice.

The Commission will now set the local public hearings. The Commission will hold these hearings via video and telephone conference and will order how written comments may be submitted.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The Commission's Public Policy and Outreach Department shall make an informal presentation and conduct a question-and-answer session for the public at the beginning of each local public hearing. Comments to the Commission from the public will begin at the conclusion of the question and answer session.

2. Liberty, Staff, and OPC shall each make a representative available to address substantive issues during the question-and-answer sessions at the beginning of each local public hearing. Those parties shall also make a short statement at the beginning of the question-and-answer session outlining their current assessment of the case. Any other party may have a representative present and may make a short statement at the beginning of the question-and-answer session.

3. No later than ten days before the local public hearings, Liberty shall provide hearing notice to each of its customers. Such notice shall contain the following:

NOTICE OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS ON LIBERTY’S GAS RATES

On August 23, 2021, The Empire District Gas Company d/b/a. Liberty filed a general rate request with the Missouri Public Service Commission (Commission). Liberty is seeking in this proceeding to increase its annual gross revenues by approximately \$1.36 million, or approximately 4.16%, or 6.64% excluding gas revenues. As part of this proceeding, Liberty is proposing to increase its fixed residential customer charge from \$16.50 per month to \$18.10 per month. For a residential customer using 54 CCF of natural gas a month, Liberty’s proposed increase is approximately \$2.71 each month, or 9.9% percent.

LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and for public safety, the Commission will hold the hearings virtually where members of the public may participate by WebEx video, or by telephone. The Commission has scheduled question and answer sessions to begin at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, February 17, 2022, and at noon, Tuesday, February 22, 2022. Each will be followed by WebEx video and telephone conference local public hearings where anyone may testify to the Commission for its consideration in this general gas rate case. To facilitate an orderly hearing, any member of the public who wishes to testify at a local public hearing should register to do so by sending his/her first and last name to pscinfo@psc.mo.gov, or by calling (800) 392-4211 by 5:00 p.m. no later than the last business day before the hearing.

Dates of Local Public Hearings

Date	Start Time	At the time of the hearing, dial xxx and enter the Access Code/Password
February 17, 2022	6:00 p.m.	Meeting number (access code): 2458 344 2289 Meeting password: 0320
February 22, 2022	12:00 p.m.	Meeting number (access code): 2451 816 5889 Meeting password: 0320

Anyone wishing to comment on Liberty’s requests may also do so by submitting them electronically through the Commission’s Electronic Filing and Information System at <https://www.efis.psc.mo.gov/mpsc/Comments.html> (Please reference Case No. GR2021-0320). Do not include any information in a public comment that you do not wish to be made public. Anyone also may contact the Staff of the Commission and/or the Office of the Public Counsel to comment on or inquire about Liberty’s requests:

Commission Staff
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
Telephone: 1-800-392-4211
E-mail: pscinfo@psc.mo.gov

Public comments may be submitted at https://psc.mo.gov/General/Submit_Comments (please reference case number GR-2021-0320)

Office of the Public Counsel
P.O. Box 2230
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102
Telephone: 573-751-4857 or toll-free at 866-922-2959
E-mail: opcservice@opc.mo.gov

The Commission has scheduled an evidentiary hearing from April 25 through May 6, 2022, for parties in this case to present their evidence to the Commission for its decision. This hearing is open to the public, except portions the Commission may close to protect the dissemination of nonpublic information. The evidentiary hearing will occur under conditions that meet accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If someone needs additional accommodations to participate in or attend any local public hearing or the evidentiary hearing, please call the Commission's Hotline at 1-800-392-4211 (voice) or Relay Missouri at 711 prior to the hearing. The evidentiary hearing will also be streamed live on the Commission's website at <https://psc.mo.gov/>.

4. Any person may comment at either of the two local public hearings.

Comments at the hearing will be limited to five minutes per person.

5. To facilitate an orderly presentation that can be preserved for the record, members of the public who wish to participate in the hearing shall sign-up by sending their first and last names, phone numbers, email addresses, and the hearing they wish to attend, to pscinfo@psc.mo.gov, or by calling (800) 392-4211 by 5:00 p.m. the day before the hearing.

6. A live audio web stream at the Commission's website, www.psc.mo.gov, will provide audio of the hearing. Those who do not intend to participate in the hearing may listen via the web stream.

7. To attend the hearing by telephone at the time of the hearing, call toll free 1-855-718-6621, listen to the prompt and enter the meeting number set out below, followed by # (pound/hashtag symbol). If prompted for a password, enter 0320. To attend by video/internet, visit the website at www.webex.com or download the Cisco WebEx Meetings application. At the hearing time, enter the corresponding access code and password listed below.

8. Local public hearings shall be held as follows:

Date	Start Time	At the time of the hearing, dial xxx and enter the Access Code/Password
February 17, 2022	6:00 p.m.	Meeting number (access code): 2458 344 2289 Meeting password: 0320
February 22, 2022	12:00 p.m.	Meeting number (access code): 2451 816 5889 Meeting password: 0320

9. Any person needing special accommodations to participate in the hearing as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Missouri Public Service Commission at least ten days prior to the hearing at one of the following numbers: Consumer Services Hotline 1-800-392-4211 or TDD Hotline 1-800-829-7541.

10. Comments may also be submitted to the Commission in writing by mailing the comment to the Missouri Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102, or electronically using the Commission’s electronic filing system at https://psc.mo.gov/General/Submit_Comments. When submitting comments please reference File No. GR-2021-0320.

11. The Commission’s Public Policy and Outreach Department shall make notice of this order available to the members of the media and the General Assembly representing customers in Liberty’s gas service areas.

12. The Commission's Data Center shall provide a copy of this order to the county commission for each county in Liberty's gas service area.

13. This order shall be effective when issued.



BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morris L. Woodruff". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

Silvey, Chm., Rupp, Coleman, Holsman, and
Kolkmeier CC., concur.

Graham, Regulatory Law Judge


STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 8th day of December, 2021.




Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

December 8, 2021

File/Case No. GR-2021-0320

**Missouri Public Service
Commission**

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staffcounsel@psc.mo.gov

Office of the Public Counsel

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County of Andrew, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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Savannah, MO 64485
clerk@andrewcounty.org

County of Atchison, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
400 S. Washington - Atchison County
Courthouse
P.O. Box 280
Rock Port, MO 64482
acclerk@atcomo.org

County of Chariton, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
306 S. Cherry
Chariton County Courthouse
Keytesville, MO 65261
countyclerk@charitonco.com

County of Cooper, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
200 Main Street, Room 23
Cooper County Courthouse
Boonville, MO 65233
Sarah.Herman@coopercountymo.gov

County of Grundy, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
700 Main, 2nd Floor
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County of Henry, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
100 W. Franklin Street
Henry County Courthouse
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County of Holt, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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County of Howard, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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howard@sos.mo.gov

County of Johnson, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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Johnson County Courthouse
Warrensburg, MO 64093
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County of Lafayette, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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Lafayette County Courthouse
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j.middleton@lafayettecountymo.com

County of Linn, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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County of Livingston, Missouri

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countyclerk@livingstoncountymo.com

County of Morgan, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
100 E Newton St.
Morgan County Courthouse
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County of Nodaway, Missouri

County Commission Clerk
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Maryville, MO 64468-1614
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County of Pettis, Missouri

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County of Platte, Missouri

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Platte City, MO 64079
CountyClerk@CO.Platte.MO.US

County of Ray, Missouri
County Commission Clerk
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County of Saline, Missouri
County Commission Clerk
19 East Arrow
Saline County Courthouse
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County of Vernon, Missouri
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Enclosed find a certified copy of an Order or Notice issued in the above-referenced matter(s).

Sincerely,



**Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary**

Recipients listed above with a valid e-mail address will receive electronic service. Recipients without a valid e-mail address will receive paper service.