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STATE OF MISSOURI  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Local Public Hearing  
October 5, 2017  
St. Charles County Council  
Council Chambers  
100 North Third Street  
St. Charles, MO 63301

Volume X

In The Matter of Laclede )  
Gas Company's Request to ) File No. GR-2017-0215  
Increase Its Revenues for )  
Gas Service )  
  
In The Matter of Laclede )  
Gas Company d/b/a Missouri )  
Gas Energy's Request to ) File No. GR-2017-0216  
Increase Its Revenues for )  
Gas Service )

NANCY DIPPELL, Presiding  
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

MAIDA J. COLEMAN,  
COMMISSIONERS

REPORTED BY:  
AMANDA N. FARRAR, CCR  
MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 (The hearing commenced at 6:29 p.m.)

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: We can go ahead and go  
4 on the record.

5 The Commission has set this time for a  
6 local public hearing in Case Nos. GR-2017-0215 and  
7 GR-2017-0216, in the matter of Laclede Gas Company's  
8 request for a rate increase for its gas services,  
9 and in the matter of Laclede Gas Company's rate  
10 increase for its Missouri Gas Energy territory, and  
11 the company has since changed its name to Spire.

12 My name is Nancy Dippell and I'm the  
13 regulatory law judge assigned to preside over this  
14 matter tonight. I have with me Commissioner Maida  
15 Coleman.

16 Commissioner, would you like to say  
17 something?

18 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Sure. Thank you,  
19 Judge.

20 Good evening, everyone. Thank you so  
21 much for coming tonight to provide us with your  
22 comments and concerns relative to this rate case. I  
23 am one of five Public Service Commissioners, and I  
24 will be listening to and writing down the comments  
25 that you have tonight, in addition to the

1 information that will be provided to the PSC by the  
2 court reporter. We will provide that information to  
3 the other four commissioners who will be able to  
4 read your comments and be able to gauge from that  
5 the information that the five of us will need to  
6 make a decision concerning this.

7 Do know that we take your comments very  
8 seriously. It is important for us to hear from the  
9 customers of Spire, and I am one that's particularly  
10 interested in any customer service concerns that you  
11 have.

12 So, thank you for coming tonight and  
13 providing us with your information.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

15 So, the process tonight, now that we've  
16 finished the question-and-answer portion, will be  
17 the formal testimony portion. And so, I will call  
18 off the names that have signed up on the list and I  
19 will ask you to come forward to this microphone  
20 here. I'll ask you to give your testimony under  
21 oath or affirmation and the court reporter will  
22 transcribe what you have to say, and that will all  
23 become part of the record that way. So, I will ask  
24 you to say your name and to spell it so the court  
25 reporter gets it in the record correctly. After I

1 finished the people on the list, if anyone else  
2 would like to testify, I'll give you the opportunity  
3 to do so. I'd ask you to stay at the microphone  
4 after you finished giving your comments just in case  
5 there are any clarifying questions from myself or  
6 the Commissioner or some of the attorneys that are  
7 present.

8 So, to start with, I'm going to ask the  
9 attorneys that are present to make their entries of  
10 appearance. Can we start with Staff, please?

11 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Judge. Mark  
12 Johnson on behalf of the Staff of the Missouri  
13 Public Service Commission, and the court reporter  
14 has my contact information.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

16 And for Spire.

17 MR. PENDERGAST: Thank you, Your Honor.  
18 Michael C. Pendergast appearing on behalf of Spire.  
19 My business address is 423 South Main Street,  
20 St. Charles, Missouri 63301.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: And for the Office of  
22 Public Counsel.

23 MS. SHEMWELL: Thank you, Judge Dippell.  
24 Good evening, Commissioner Coleman. Lera Shemwell  
25 on behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel, and

1 the court reporter has my information. Thank you.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

3 And are there any intervenors present  
4 that want to make an entry?

5 Seeing none. Then we'll go ahead with  
6 the testimony portion. So, the first name, and I  
7 probably won't pronounce this correctly, the last  
8 name H-O-Y-N-A-C-K-I.

9 MR. HOYNACKI: Just Paul.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Paul, okay. That works,  
11 too.

12 PAUL HOYNACKI,  
13 being first duly sworn, testified under oath as  
14 follows:

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you go ahead and  
16 state your name and spell it for the court reporter.

17 MR. HOYNACKI: My name is Paul Hoynacki,  
18 H-O-Y-N-A-C-K-I.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead with your  
20 comments.

21 MR. HOYNACKI: Okay. Well, I thank you  
22 for the opportunity to appear here and I very much  
23 appreciate your interests.

24 The Missouri Public Service Commission  
25 is supposed to be regulate -- and does regulate

1 Laclede Gas and now Spire. It is a public utility,  
2 which basically cannot ever lose money. They pass  
3 along any extra costs they ever have. Like a fuel  
4 rate rider, like, when the fuel rates go up and so  
5 forth, they have the ability to pass that on if any  
6 additional cost. Any other commercial company can't  
7 do that. I mean, if they're not very well managed,  
8 they may lose money. A public utility can't.  
9 That's a bug and they're not entitled to the same  
10 profit potential as any other commercial venture in  
11 my opinion.

12 Laclede started this TPIS or ISP -- TPIS  
13 I guess it is, surveillance charge some years ago.  
14 I understand it was done all the way back in the  
15 early 2000s, but this year in February my rate was  
16 \$3.01. In April it went to 3.57. In June it went  
17 to 3.86. In July it went to 3.94. That's a 32  
18 percent increase in six months. That doesn't make  
19 any sense to me at all. I mean, annualize that,  
20 it's a 64 percent increase, but the -- I mean, how  
21 can you-all continue to let this happen?

22 And I thank you so much for the ability  
23 to present this.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Coleman?

25 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Sir, the numbers

1 that you're giving us, you're talking about fixed  
2 rate costs?

3 MR. HOYNACKI: No. That's just the  
4 incremental cost for this, what is it, the ISRS.  
5 That's the incremental cost increase on my bill  
6 every month from February to July and, I mean, four  
7 increases. One of the gentleman explained to me,  
8 well, some of it was incremental because it was one  
9 transfer over to the other, but it resulted in four  
10 increases however you read it. I can't read it any  
11 other way than what it appears on my bill.

12 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you, sir.

13 MR. HOYNACKI: Thank you.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you very much.

15 Ron Oakley.

16 MR. OAKLEY: My name is Ronnie W.  
17 Oakley, O-A-K-L-E-Y. I live in Dardenne Prairie,  
18 Missouri.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm going to swear you  
20 in.

21 RON OAKLEY,  
22 being first duly sworn, testified under oath as  
23 follows:

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Go ahead  
25 with your comments.



1 MR. OAKLEY: I guess, you know, having  
2 worked for other companies and so forth, I'm used to  
3 them always putting back a set amount of money each  
4 year for infrastructure or building repair, also  
5 setting aside money for new product development or  
6 additional infrastructure expansion. I don't know  
7 if Laclede does this. I do not know, but all I do  
8 know is that in January of this year the customer  
9 charge for delivery of gas was 19.50 and the gas  
10 itself was about 80 bucks. Okay. In July of this  
11 year the charge was the same, 19.50 for delivery of  
12 \$2.53 worth of gas. I just have a hard time  
13 perceiving that. If the fixed charges were attached  
14 more to the rate of the gas so you use more, you pay  
15 more, I can see that. But according to their bills,  
16 they pass the price of the gas onto us directly with  
17 no added charge, but I still don't see this fixed  
18 rate. And like I said, as far as their rate  
19 increase, they said that it's, like, a 10 percent  
20 profit rate. I know a lot of companies that don't  
21 get 10 percent, and this seems a little -- you know,  
22 it's not 50 percent, but it seems a little harsh to  
23 guarantee them that income. Thank you.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. And I will  
25 just say if you have any questions about the way the

1 rates are structured, I will ask you to speak to  
2 some of these people either with the company or the  
3 Staff of the Commission or Office of Public Counsel.  
4 I think you understand it from your comments, but if  
5 you need --

6 MR. OAKLEY: Yeah.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: -- more explanation,  
8 please take opportunity tonight when there's people  
9 available.

10 MR. OAKLEY: Thank you.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you for your  
12 comments.

13 John Elek.

14 JOHN ELEK,  
15 being first duly sworn, testified under oath as  
16 follows:

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Can you, please, state  
18 your name and spell it, please.

19 MR. ELEK: John Elek, E-L-E-K. I live  
20 in St. Charles County. I do have another home in  
21 south St. Louis City.

22 My question is based on a monopoly  
23 situation. All public utilities seem to be a  
24 monopoly. I've been to several rate increase  
25 hearings with Ameren, also with the water company,

1 and they all give me the same type of answer. It  
2 is -- it is what it is because we can do -- because  
3 we are a monopoly. My question is: When is this  
4 going to stop? Some of us have fixed income, I am  
5 one, and sooner or later I'm not going to be able to  
6 pay the pills. Maybe I'm going to die before then,  
7 I don't know, but sooner or later there's got to be  
8 some way of capping the pricing of services to maybe  
9 just the senior citizens of the group, but sooner or  
10 later it's going to have to stop.

11 Basically that's my comments and I thank  
12 you for your time.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir.

14 COMMISSIONER COLEMAN: Thank you, sir.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Norm Hild.

16 MR. HILD: I, unfortunately,  
17 misinterpreted the function of that piece of paper.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: That's fine.

19 MR. HILD: I have no need to make any  
20 further questions.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. And Sharon  
22 Hild?

23 MRS. HILD: No. He put my name on  
24 there.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Also. All right.

1 That's fine.

2 Is there anyone else who would like to  
3 testify?

4 Okay. Well, we appreciate you-all  
5 coming out, spending your valuable time here to give  
6 us the information that we need to help make  
7 decisions at the Commission, and I'll wish you-all  
8 safe travels home, and we can go off the record.

9 (The hearing adjourned at 6:41 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Amanda N. Farrar, a Certified Court Reporter for the State of Missouri, do hereby certify that the witnesses whose testimony appears in the foregoing transcript were duly sworn; the testimony of said witnesses was taken by me to the best of my ability and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this hearing was taken, and further that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties thereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

*Amanda Farrar*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Certified Court Reporter

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