

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of Elm Hills Utility Operating)
Company, Inc.'s Request for a Water Rate) **File No. WR-2020-0275**
Increase)

ORDER DIRECTING JOINT PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR VIRTUAL HEARING AND PUBLIC COMMENT

Issue Date: May 28, 2020

Effective Date: May 28, 2020

On March 6, 2020, Elm Hills Utility Operating Company, Inc. filed a notice opening two staff assisted rate cases under Commission Rule 20 CSR 4240-10.075.¹ Commission Rule 20 CSR 4240-10.075(6) requires a local public hearing. On March 20, 2020, because of the limitations imposed on public gatherings in response to COVID-19, the Commission waived the requirement to schedule a local public hearing within the 60-day period required by rule and ordered the parties to file a status report no later than May 15, 2020, to advise the Commission about potential dates and venues for a local public hearing.

On May 15, 2020, the parties filed a joint proposal advising that it is not currently possible to hold an in-person public hearing on or after June 1, 2020, because of restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people and continuing uncertainty regarding COVID-19 response. The parties proposed the Commission may conduct virtual public hearings in tandem with the collection of written public comment, to be compiled and submitted to the case record. During the May 28, 2020, agenda meeting, the Commission expressed support for both alternatives.

¹ File No. SR-2020-0274 has been consolidated into this file.

To assist the parties in establishing a schedule, the Commission proposes the following guidelines for virtual public hearings in this case. Virtual public hearings will be conducted by WebEx, which allows both video conferencing by computer and smartphone and audio conferencing by phone. To facilitate an orderly presentation that can be preserved for the record, those who would like to present comments to the Commission at a virtual public hearing will be required to register by providing their first and last name before the hearing. Those who wish to participate through an internet connection, via smartphone or computer, must provide an email address. Those who wish to participate by audio only may receive telephone dial-in and meeting numbers at registration. A list of registered participants, including email addresses for those connecting via the internet, will be provided to the regulatory law judge before the hearing. The regulatory law judge will schedule and host the virtual public hearing.

In addition, the Commission will direct the parties to produce a joint proposed schedule to receive public comment in this case. The Commission requests the joint schedule address the following issues:

- Hearing date(s) and time(s);
- How the parties will register participants;
- The date the participant roster and email addresses will be provided to regulatory law judge;
- The date email invitations will be distributed to participants;
- The deadline for submission of comments to be submitted for the case record;

- Whether any party has any comment regarding the use of a live stream to broadcast the local public hearing on the Commission website, which will allow observers to listen to the hearing without registering as participants;
- How and when the parties will notify customers of hearing date(s), provide instructions for submitting written comments and provide information about the hearing live stream;
- How the parties will replace the question-and-answer session that typically precedes local public hearings;
- Whether any party has any comment regarding the proposed guidelines stated above; and
- Whether the parties require a prehearing conference to clarify any technical concerns or other questions regarding virtual public hearings.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. No later than June 8, 2020, the parties shall submit a joint proposed schedule for virtual public hearings and the collection of written comment, as described in this order.
2. This order shall be effective when issued.



BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morris L. Woodruff".

Morris L. Woodruff
Secretary

Charles Hatcher, Regulatory Law Judge,
by delegation of authority pursuant to
Section 386.240, RSMo (2016).

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 28th day of May, 2020.