In the Matter of:

Barbara Edwards

V.

Evergy Missouri West

EC-2020-0252, VOL. II

July 17, 2020



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1	BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION			
2	STATE OF MISSOURI			
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5	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS			
6	Procedural Conference			
7	July 17, 2020			
8	Jefferson City, Missouri			
9	Volume 2			
10	WebEx			
11				
12				
13				
14	Barbara Edwards,)			
15	Complainant,)			
16	vs.) File No. EC-2020-0252			
17	Evergy Missouri West, Inc.,)			
18	Respondent.)			
19				
20	JANA JACOBS, Presiding REGULATORY LAW JUDGE			
21				
22				
23				
24	REPORTED BY:			
25	Beverly Jean Bentch, CCR No. 640 TIGER COURT REPORTING, LLC			

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9	Partic:	ipating pro se: Barbara Edwards
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PROCEEDINGS

JUDGE JACOBS: We are now on the record for the conference scheduled today, July 17, 2020, in this matter which is File No. EC-2020-0252 which is the case concerning Ms. Barbara Edwards, the Complainant, vs. Evergy Missouri West d/b/a Evergy Missouri West, the Respondent.

This conference was set for 10:30 a.m. today, July 17, and it is now 10:32 a.m. My name is Jana Jacobs. I'm the Regulatory Law Judge assigned to this matter. This conference is being conducted by telephone and videoconference. We had originally planned to conduct an evidentiary hearing in this case at this time today; but because of the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the evidentiary hearing has been continued and the procedural schedule has been suspended.

We have a court reporter on the line who will be preparing a transcript of this on the record portion of the conference.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss how to conduct this case using a remote hearing format. I will begin by asking the parties to enter their appearance for the record. First of all, Ms. Barbara Edwards, the Complainant, are you present, ma'am?

1	MS. EDWARDS: I am, Judge.
2	JUDGE JACOBS: Thank you so much. And then
3	because we're all participating by phone, I'll ask the
4	lawyers to identify yourself by name and provide your
5	address and phone number for the court reporter. So
6	appearing today for Evergy, we have Mr. Roger Steiner;
7	is that right?
8	MR. STEINER: That's right, Judge.
9	JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. You can go ahead and
10	enter your appearance, sir.
11	MR. STEINER: Let the record reflect the
12	appearance of Roger W. Steiner, 1200 Main Street, Kansas
13	City, Missouri 64105, appearing for Evergy Missouri
14	West.
15	JUDGE JACOBS: Thank you so much. And for
16	Commission Staff, Mr. Pringle?
17	MR. PRINGLE: Thank you, Judge. This is
18	Travis Pringle appearing on behalf of the Staff of the
19	Public Service Commission. My contact information is
20	200 Madison Street, P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City,
21	Missouri 65102. I am also joined from Staff by Contessa
22	King, Tammy Huber and Amanda Coffer.
23	JUDGE JACOBS: Thank you very much for
24	introducing those folks for Staff. I don't believe
25	we've ever had a member of the Office of the Public

Counsel appear in this case, and I don't see any such person on the line with us here today. So I don't believe I've missed anyone. I think everyone has been identified.

Does anyone have any preliminary matters that they want to talk about before we get into discussing how to resolve this case to a remote hearing if possible?

Okay. So we'll go ahead and proceed to the main event. The Commission is not scheduling in-person hearings at this time. There are some that have been placed on the schedule. Unfortunately as we schedule in-person things, they are tending to get rescheduled as remote hearings. So it seems like we do need to address how this case can be resolved with a remote hearing under the circumstances that we're in. And I understand from looking at the joint procedural schedule that was proposed that at that point, after the parties had a conversation, the request was to have an in-person hearing. And so I wanted to meet today and talk about what we need to do to have a remote hearing and what the barriers are to remote hearings.

So we can go ahead with Ms. Edwards. Ma'am, if you don't mind, you can address whether you would be able to participate in a hearing by phone in a format

like we are in today and what concerns you might have about that or if you might be able to participate in a hearing via internet format such as Zoom or WebEx which we're using today.

Could you go ahead, please, ma'am, and just let me know your thoughts on that?

MS. EDWARDS: All right, Judge, thank you very much. As Mr. Pringle knows, I really do prefer to do this at a hearing and I did suggest to Mr. Pringle after you were off the line at our initial conference that if need be I would come to Jefferson City rather than since things are closed down here in Jackson County. Is that a possibility?

JUDGE JACOBS: Well, it actually doesn't make that much of a difference because there are really no proceedings that are taking place in Jeff City either, ma'am. The only proceeding I am aware of that is actually going to take place in person at the Commission offices is a hearing that was scheduled and published in the rulemaking register to the public and so essentially the Commission has to hold that hearing in person because they advised the public that's when it would be conducted. So really nothing else is happening in person in Jeff City or anywhere else.

MS. EDWARDS: I really prefer to have it -- I

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think it's going to be too difficult for me to present what I've got in a video. Number one, my computer is not that good. I think I would rather put it off. As much as I would like to get this settled, I would really rather -- I mean, I can't imagine that we're going to keep the government shut down forever, although it's been a year. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

JUDGE JACOBS: I think we're all in a situation that we couldn't imagine three or four months ago. It's very difficult for any of us at this point to project the future. This case has been pending since February. Let's talk about what you think is going to happen at an in-person hearing that can't be accomplished over the phone.

MS. EDWARDS: I think, number one, it's more effective when one can look at other people that are involved. I do want to have Mr., I forgot his name, Bassham, whatever it is, the President of the company of Evergy, I would like to have him subpoenaed. And I was told by Mr. Poston is it, Mark Poston, that he actually would have subpoena powers.

So even though it is pending, if at all possible I would prefer that we have it in person. I know this is a difficult time. Nobody was expecting this. Again, there's nobody who wants it any more than

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I do to be over, but I would really prefer to just say 1 2 okay, if we have to put it off for awhile longer. Again, there's going to come a time that we're going to 3 have to get back to doing business as normal. 4 5 JUDGE JACOBS: I definitely hear the message 6 that you're saying, although most state agencies are 7 trying to get their work done to the best of their ability rather than waiting until everything is 8 9 so-called normal again. So what I can do is I can go 10 back to the Commission and I can tell them that you very 11 much desire an in-person hearing and that you're willing 12 to have your complaint sit around while you wait for that to become possible. Is that a correct statement of 13 14 your wishes, ma'am? 15 MS. EDWARDS: Yes, it is, Judge. Thank you. JUDGE JACOBS: All right. So Mr. Steiner, do 16 17 you have anything you wanted to say about how a remote 18 hearing would work or anything that Ms. Edwards had to 19 say? 20 MR. STEINER: Judge, we'll do whatever the 21 Commission prefers. We can do it live or we can do it 22 by videoconference. Were you able to hear me? 23 JUDGE JACOBS: I did hear you. I think you 24 said we could do it live or we could do it by 2.5 videoconference; is that right?

MR. STEINER: That's correct. 1 2 JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. And Mr. Pringle, did you have anything that you wanted to say? 3 MR. PRINGLE: No, Judge. Staff is willing to 4 5 do this hearing however the Commission deems fit. 6 JUDGE JACOBS: And do either -- Does any party 7 have any response to Ms. Edwards's request essentially 8 to just continue this indefinitely until the Commission is able to have a traditional in-person hearing? Are 9 10 all of the other parties in agreement that that would be 11 appropriate or does anyone see any problem with that, 12 because I think that would be a question the Commission 13 would have if that's the request. 14 MR. STEINER: No response other than what I 15 previously said. We will do it however the Commission 16 prefers. We don't have an objection if she wants to 17 continue it. If the Commission would like to move this 18 case along, we'll do it by video. 19 JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. And then, Mr. Pringle, 20 anything? 21 MR. PRINGLE: Really nothing from Staff, 22 I did a quick little look-through at the rules Judge. 23 yesterday about what an indefinite continuance could be; 24 but as long as there's good cause, there's really no 25 limit on continuing a complaint case, and a pandemic is

pretty good cause for a continuance.

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JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. So I think this covers the first issue which is preferences for whether we do a remote hearing. And so we've heard Ms. Edwards's strong preference to do an in-person hearing and I've heard the other Staff and the company say that's fine with us, if I understood you correctly. Should the Commission decide that it does not want to delay resolution of the case to some indefinite period of time and feels a responsibility to take up the case and handle it, we would have to decide when that would be possible.

So perhaps it would make sense for me to just ask the Commission its preference and then I may have to assemble all of you again to talk about if we are going to do a hearing when we would do that or alternatively I think maybe something that might be -- you could tell me if this would work for you. I could just issue an order that would ask the parties to propose a date for a hearing if we're going to have one. I assume that you could all figure out how to get on the phone together and do that. Is that possible or would it be necessary to bring you together like this again?

MR. STEINER: I think we can do it by phone or email amongst ourselves to figure out the schedule.

JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. Ms. Edwards, do you

1	agree?
2	MS. EDWARDS: I do.
3	JUDGE JACOBS: And Staff?
4	MR. PRINGLE: Yeah, Staff agrees.
5	JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. So this is what I think
6	how we'll proceed. I'll go back to the Commission and
7	figure out how they feel about an indefinite continuance
8	for essentially the resolution of the pandemic or at
9	least resumption of in-person hearings. And then if the
10	Commission decides that that's the course that will be
11	taken, then you'll see an order to that effect. If the
12	Commission decides that instead we need to proceed to
13	resolve the case to the best of our ability using a
14	remote hearing, which is the way that virtually all
15	other cases are being resolved at this time before the
16	Commission, then I will issue an order that will ask the
17	parties to get together and figure out when that hearing
18	should take place. Does that work for everyone?
19	MS. EDWARDS: Yes.
20	MR. STEINER: Yes, Judge.
21	MR. PRINGLE: Yes, Judge.
22	JUDGE JACOBS: All right. Okay. Does anyone
23	have anything else that you'd all like to address here
24	today while we're on the record together?
25	MS. EDWARDS: I don't, Your Honor.

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1	MR. PRINGLE: No, Judge.
2	MR. STEINER: No, Judge.
3	JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. And do you think will
4	the parties need to continue their discussion with each
5	other off the record once I've left or should I just
6	disconnect the call today?
7	MS. EDWARDS: I don't think I have anything,
8	Your Honor.
9	MR. STEINER: I have nothing, Your Honor.
10	MR. PRINGLE: Staff has nothing.
11	JUDGE JACOBS: Okay. Thank you so much. I
12	really appreciate all your cooperation in showing up
13	today and talking to me about this, and you should be
14	seeing something soon to let you know what direction the
15	Commission would like to take. Thank you all so much.
16	Have a great weekend. We are off the record.
17	(Off the record.)
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