

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of the Request of Liberty Utilities)
(Missouri Water) LLC d/b/a Liberty for Authority to)
Implement a General Rate Increase for Water and)
Wastewater Service Provided in its Missouri)
Service Areas)
File No. WR-2024-0104

PROPOSED LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING LOCATIONS

COMES NOW the Staff (“Staff”) of the Missouri Public Service Commission (“Commission”), by and through counsel, and on behalf of itself and the Office of the Public Counsel (“OPC”), submits these proposed public hearing locations:

1. On March 13, 2024, Liberty Utilities (Missouri Water) LLC d/b/a Liberty filed its request for a rate increase for its water and wastewater service areas in Missouri.
2. On March 15, 2024, the Commission filed its *Order Giving Notice, Setting a Deadline to Intervene, Setting a Deadline to Respond to the Test Year, and Directing a Proposed Schedule*. Among other requirements the *Order* directed the filing of a proposed procedural schedule including local public hearings.
3. Staff, Liberty, the Office of Public Counsel... were able to reach agreement on all aspects of the proposed procedural schedule except the appropriate number of local public hearings.
4. Due to the rate impact associated with the requested increase,¹ Staff anticipates significant public interest. Early press coverage associated with just one of Liberty’s twenty-nine (29) service areas has generated over 270 public comments for this case already. Once customer notices are generated Staff anticipates a much greater

¹ The Commission recognized in its March 15, 2024 *Order Giving Notice, Setting a Deadline to Intervene, Setting a Deadline to Respond to the Test Year, and Directing a Proposed Schedule* that Liberty’s proposed annual water revenues are an increase of approximately 130.37%.

interest. Because of this anticipated level of participation, the number of distinct systems, the distance between many of the communities served by Liberty, and the rural setting of these communities, a large number of local public hearings is necessary.

5. Staff proposes the following local public hearing locations:

- Pacific
- Cape Girardeau
- Poplar Bluff
- Branson
- Republic
- Bolivar (2)²
- Noel

6. In addition to the local public hearings listed above, Staff recommends two virtual public hearings.³

WHEREFORE, on behalf of itself and OPC, Staff respectfully proposes that the Commission accept Staff and OPC's proposed local public hearing locations, and grant any such other and further relief as is just under the circumstances

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ Casi Aslin

Casi Aslin,

Mo. Bar No. 67934

Deputy Counsel

P.O Box 360

Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Phone: (573) 751-8517

Fax: (573) 751-9285

E-mail: casi.aslin@psc.mo.gov

**Attorney for the Staff of the
Missouri Public Service Commission**

² At this time, many of the over 270 customer comments filed in the Commission's Electronic Filing Information System ("EFIS") arise from the Bolivar area. Recognizing this, Staff and the OPC propose holding two (2) local public hearings in Bolivar to ensure all customers are able to have their voices heard.

³ There is a concern regarding access to reliable internet sufficient to attend a virtual local public hearing for some of Liberty's service territory. Therefore, Staff and the OPC suggest holding virtual local public hearings only in addition to the in-person local public hearings identified above.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand-delivered, transmitted by facsimile, or electronically mailed to all parties and/or counsel of record on this 24th day of April 2024.

/s/ Casi Aslin