

**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            ) Case Nos. WR-2024-0104  
General Rate Increase for Water and            ) and SR-2024-0105  
Wastewater Service Provided in its            )  
Missouri Service Areas.                            )

**RESPONSE CONCERNING LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**COMES NOW** Liberty Utilities (Missouri Water) LLC d/b/a Liberty (“Liberty”) and for its *Response Concerning Local Public Hearings* states as follows to Missouri Public Service Commission ("Commission"):

1. On March 15, 2024, the Commission issued 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 things, the order directed the parties to submit, jointly, if possible, a procedural schedule that includes the following:

- Conclude the evidentiary hearing by November 22, 2024;
- Submission of List of Issues and Order of Hearing Components, and submission of Position Statements due at least ten days in advance of the hearing;
- At least two settlement conferences;
- Cut-off dates for service of discovery requests and responses;
- Dates for discovery conferences;
- Local public hearings; and
- Evidentiary hearing.

2. The parties agreed to such a proposed procedural schedule that includes all items except local public hearings. Staff and OPC filed a list of proposed local public hearings. Through this pleading, Liberty is providing its local public hearing proposal.

3. Liberty is a water corporation and a sewer corporation serving approximately 12,100 water and 4,900 wastewater customers in the state of Missouri utilizing 25 water systems

and 9 wastewater systems.<sup>1</sup> However, of the water customers, approximately 4,600 are served by the Bolivar water system and 4,500 are served by the former Empire water systems. On the wastewater side, approximately 4,650 of the 4,900 total customers are served by the Bolivar wastewater system.<sup>2</sup>

4. As a result, a great percentage of Liberty's relatively small customer base may be reached with a limited number of in-person hearings. For those that are not relatively close to one of these in-person local public hearings, virtual public hearings will provide another opportunity for customer input. On the other hand, each in-person hearing creates expense and the use of time resources for the Company, Staff, the Office of the Public Counsel, and the Commission itself, with little chance of unique information for the Commission's consideration, given the alternative opportunities for the submission of written comments and the collection of comments through virtual local public hearings.

5. For these reasons, Liberty suggests that the Commission hold no more than four in-person local hearings and two virtual public hearings. If the Commission utilizes four in-person hearings, it is Liberty's suggestion that they be held in Bolivar, Branson, Cape Girardeau, and Aurora.

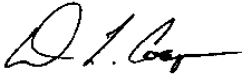
**WHEREFORE**, Liberty requests the Commission to issue an order setting no more than four in-person local hearings and two virtual public hearings, as further described herein, and grant such further and other relief as is just and proper in the circumstances.

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<sup>1</sup> Penna Dir., p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Penna Dir., p. 5.

Respectfully submitted,



Dean L. Cooper MBE #36592  
BRYDON, SWEARENGEN & ENGLAND  
P.C.  
312 E Capitol Avenue  
P.O. Box 456  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
(573) 635-7166  
dcooper@brydonlaw.com

/s/ Diana C. Carter

Diana C. Carter MBE #50527  
Liberty Utilities (Missouri Water) LLC  
428 E. Capitol Ave., Suite 303  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101  
Joplin Office Phone: (417) 626-5976  
Cell Phone: (573) 289-1961  
E-Mail: Diana.Carter@LibertyUtilities.com

**ATTORNEYS FOR LIBERTY UTILITIES (MISSOURI WATER) LLC D/B/A LIBERTY**

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that a copy of the above and foregoing document was sent by electronic mail on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024, to:

Staff Counsel’s Office  
[staffcounsel@psc.mo.gov](mailto:staffcounsel@psc.mo.gov)  
[casi.aslin@psc.mo.gov](mailto:casi.aslin@psc.mo.gov)

Office of the Public Counsel  
[opcservice@opc.mo.gov](mailto:opcservice@opc.mo.gov)  
[Lindsay.VanGerpen@opc.mo.gov](mailto:Lindsay.VanGerpen@opc.mo.gov)

Tim Opitz  
[tim.opitz@opitzlawfirm.com](mailto:tim.opitz@opitzlawfirm.com)

Donald Brown  
[donald@dhhlawfirm.com](mailto:donald@dhhlawfirm.com)

Terry Jarrett  
[terry@healylawoffices.com](mailto:terry@healylawoffices.com)

Peggy Whipple  
[peggy@healylawoffices.com](mailto:peggy@healylawoffices.com)

