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BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF MISSOURI

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
LOCAL PUBLIC HEARING

In the Matter of)
Missouri-American Water)
Company's Request for)
Authority to Implement a) File No. WR-2024-0320
General Rate Increase for)
Water and Sewer Service)
Provided in Missouri Service)
Areas)

Monday, November 7, 2024
06:00 P.M.

VOLUME 5

SAINT JOSEPH CITY HALL
1100 FREDERICK AVENUE
SAINT JOSEPH, MO 64501

JOHN CLARK
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

KAYLA HAHN, CHAIR
MAIDA J. COLEMAN
JASON R. HOLSMAN
GLEN KOLKMEYER
JOHN P. MITCHELL

Reported by:

COLIN WALLIS
LEXITAS LEGAL

* * * * *

(The Comments portion of the hearing began at 6:44 p.m.)

REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: All right, let's go ahead and go on the record. Good evening. It's November 7th of 2024, and the current time is 6:44 p.m. The question-and-answer portion of the public hearing just ended. If you had questions about this case, I hope you were able to get those -- if you had questions I hope you're able to get answers to those questions.

The Missouri Public Service Commission has set aside this time today for a local public hearing in file number WR-2024-0320, which is a general rate case captioned as In the Matter Of Missouri-American Water Company's Request for Authority to Implement a General Increase for Water and Sewer System Provided in its Missouri Service Areas. My name is John Clark. I'm the regulatory law judge proceeding over this hearing this evening.

The Missouri Public Service Commission regulates the rates charged by investor-owned utility companies in Missouri to ensure those

1 rates are just and reasonable. The Commission
2 also regulates the quality of service and the
3 safety of operations in investor-owned
4 utilities in Missouri. The Commission is made
5 up of five commissioners. The Commission's
6 chair, Kayla Hahn and Commissioners Maida
7 Coleman, Jason Holsman, Glen Kolkmeyer and John
8 Mitchell. The commissioners are appointed by
9 the governor to fixed terms and confirmed by
10 the Senate. The commissioners employ a staff
11 of engineers, accountants, attorneys, financial
12 analysts and other specialists in the area of
13 utility regulation.

14 And with me tonight in person is
15 Commissioner Glen Kolkmeyer and the chair,
16 Kayla Hahn, Maida Coleman, Jason Holsman and
17 John Mitchell are listening in online.
18 Commissioner Kolkmeyer, would you like to make
19 an opening remark?

20 COMMISSIONER KOLKSMEYER: Yes, thank you,
21 Judge. Good evening. On behalf of Chair Hahn
22 and the rest of commissioners, I want to
23 welcome you here tonight. This is step one in
24 a rate case hearing, so we haven't heard
25 anything much or anything from the company, so

1 this is step one. We were -- we're here to
2 hear from you, the consumer. Why is there only
3 one of us here tonight? We're scattered all
4 over the state. The five of us, we live all
5 over the state, so we cover the hearings that
6 in kind our -- our side of the state, so that's
7 why I'm here and the others are on WebEx here
8 tonight. So, hear again, welcome and we're
9 here to hear your comments from you, the rate
10 payers, so thank you.

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
12 Commissioner. At this time, I'd like the
13 parties to enter their appearance for the
14 record, starting with Missouri-American
15 Company.

16 MR. COOPER: Thank you, Judge. Dean
17 Cooper from the Law Firm of Brydon Swearngen &
18 England, PC. P.O. Box 456, Jefferson City,
19 Missouri, 65102, appearing on behalf of
20 Missouri-American Water Company.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
22 Mr. Cooper. On behalf of the Commission Staff?

23 MS. HANSEN: My name is Andrea Hansen, and
24 I am with the Missouri Public Service
25 Commission Staff Counsel's Office. That's

1 Andrea, A-n-d-r-e-a, Hansen, H-a-n-s-e-n.
2 Address is going to be 200 Madison Street, PO
3 Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
5 Ms. Hansen. On behalf of the Office of the
6 Public Counsel?

7 MR. CLIZER: John Clizer on behalf of the
8 Office of the Public Counsel. My contact
9 information is in the record.

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
11 Mr. Clizer. There are a number of interveners
12 in this case. Are there any interveners
13 present? I hear none.

14 Now, for those who would like to provide
15 comments today, I'm going to call the names
16 listed on the sign-up sheet in the order they
17 appear. And if I could get that sign-up sheet,
18 that would be great. When I call your name,
19 please come up to the podium here. I will
20 place you under oath, because the Commission
21 takes comments under oath. I will ask you to
22 state and your spell your name, and then you
23 may give your comments to the Commission. I'm
24 going to ask, so that people -- everybody gets
25 an opportunity who would like to offer comments

1 to the Commission, that you keep your comments
2 to five minutes. Also, please remain at the
3 podium after you've offered your comments, and
4 that's because either the commissioners or
5 myself may have questions for you; and if any
6 of attorneys -- if any of the attorneys have
7 questions for anyone who is giving comments
8 tonight, please let me know and I'll let you
9 ask your questions.

10 And we have a court reporter that has
11 joined online, and that court reporter is
12 taking down everybody's comments so that there
13 is a transcript of the comments this evening
14 that the Commission can reference.

15 Now, as Commissioner Kolkmeyer pointed out
16 to you, the commission will not be able to
17 answer any of your questions today. That's
18 what's the Q&A portion was for, and that's
19 because the commissioners and myself have to
20 remain impartial until all the evidence is
21 presented at the evidentiary hearing. If you
22 do have questions, please speak to the
23 representatives from the company, the Office of
24 the Public Counsel or the Commission Staff.

25 Also, you may not -- not everyone may

1 agree, but as you come up to offer your
2 comments, I'm going to ask that everybody
3 respect the people who are giving comments and
4 treat them as they would like to be treated;
5 and, so, allow everybody to make their
6 comments, don't interrupt them and don't --
7 don't -- don't comment on the comments from the
8 gallery. Okay, thank you very much. And the
9 first name I have, and if I butcher a name,
10 please let me know; I'll try and fix that.
11 Richard, is it Sharp?

12 MR. SHARP: Mind if I take this off here?
13 Is that okay?

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I think
15 that's just fine. Would you raise your right
16 hand to be sworn?

17 (Richard Sharp sworn.)

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
19 please and state your spell for the record.

20 MR. SHARP: My name is Richard Sharp,
21 R-i-c-h-a-r-d, S-h-a-r-p.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And,
23 Mr. Sharp, what would you like to tell the
24 Commission tonight?

25 MR. SHARP: Okay, I have nine points I

1 would like to make. Some facts that the public
2 needs to know is that the CEO, Susan Hardwick
3 of American Family Water, has a salary package
4 of 7,720,000, I won't go into change. Now,
5 this does not include board members and
6 executives salaries. Point number two, the
7 average salary for an employee at
8 Missouri-American Water is \$88,203, an hourly
9 rate of \$42 an hour. The highest earners,
10 which are the top 75 percentile are paid over
11 \$99,000. Missouri-American, Inc. pays 58.79
12 percent of company earnings in dividends. Now,
13 this is really good. The only problem is,
14 we're paying the bill.

15 Number four, American Water in 2023, paid
16 \$414,000 in contributions to political people
17 and a total of \$2.3 million in lobbying
18 activities.

19 Number five, in 2003, Evergee, Evergee
20 Energy, had a 7.2 percent rate hike. On the
21 average, it increased the bill from 143 to
22 \$175.

23 Number six, in May of 2023, American Water
24 received an average of \$18 a month in a
25 27 percent increase. Now, they are asking,

1 once again, numbers are being thrown all over
2 the place, I had 27 percent, but it looks like
3 there's a 47.3 percent, according to the paper
4 that I have out here. Bottom line is, it
5 really doesn't matter when you start throwing
6 the numbers around. The bottom line is, is
7 that the public is going to have increases of
8 about 50 percent in their utilities. And, so,
9 I don't know about everybody else, but on
10 Social Security, we got 2.5 percent pay raise,
11 okay? So, it doesn't quite match up here.
12 Like we said before, before long we're going to
13 be paying a mortgage payment on our utilities.

14 Number eight, the Public Service
15 Commission approves, and I believe that they
16 will because they usually do, these increases
17 on the utilities rounded up, as I said, is
18 around 50 percent.

19 Last one, I urge the Commission to stop
20 these increases in this particular time, and
21 especially with inflation the way that it is
22 right now. These utility companies seem to
23 think that they have the right to come back
24 every year and hit us with some kind of a 10,
25 15, 18 percent pay raise because of their

1 capital expenditure. I don't know about you,
2 but when I do home improvements, or I do
3 something to my house, I don't get to go to
4 Social Security and say, hey, I need a
5 10 percent increase so that I can pay this
6 expenditure.

7 Now, the lady asked once before, I just
8 want to finish with this last thing, total
9 assets for American Water, 30.3 billion
10 dollars, an increase in 9 percent from the
11 previous year. Net income for American Water:
12 1.5 billion, a decade high. Operating revenue,
13 was 4.2 billion increase of 11.7 percent, and a
14 capital expenditure, which was asked earlier,
15 is 2.6 billion dollars. I say for that 2.6,
16 why don't we let American Water use some of
17 their profits up here to relieve some of this
18 on the people in this public? That's all I
19 have to say.

20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you.
21 Mr. Sharp, could you -- please -- please don't
22 take the microphone.

23 MR. SHARP: Yeah.

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Sharp, I
25 have one question for you, and I think -- I

1 think I have an idea why you said this. You
2 brought up Evergee having a 7 percent increase;
3 is that accurate --

4 MR. SHARP: I think that was 7.2 percent.

5 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay. What's
6 the significance of Evergee in relation to
7 this? Is it just --

8 MR. SHARP: Uh --

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: -- for
10 contrast?

11 MR. SHARP: Yes, yeah, they -- if you add
12 up those increases that the public has had to
13 swallow, between the 7.2, and now the 40 some
14 odd percent that they want, we've got about a
15 50 percent increase in our utilities. The
16 figure that I had actually was 18, I took it
17 right off of Google so I wasn't that brilliant,
18 okay, but if you look at it, I think they said
19 we were going to get a \$18 pay raise again. We
20 had one last year; we're going to get one this
21 year. But then when I looked at your papers,
22 it says 43, point, something. So, numbers and
23 statistics really don't mean anything because
24 you get numbers and statistics all over, but
25 the bottom line is, I don't care how you add it

1 up. You're going to be up around 40 percent
2 increase to the public.

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And you
4 understand the Commission has not approved a
5 rate --

6 MR. SHARP: Oh, sir. I hope -- yes, I do,
7 and that's the reason I urge you, please let
8 these people with their profits that I just
9 mentioned right there, let them absorb some of
10 this instead of the public constantly having to
11 absorb these exorbitant rate increases.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
13 Mr. Sharp.

14 MR. SHARP: You bet.

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: That was very
16 pointed, and I like your nine points.

17 MR. SHARP: Thank you.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Kayla
19 Marmaud; is that correct? Say that again,
20 please.

21 MS. MARMAUD: Marmaud.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE PRIDGIN: Marmaud.

23 (Kayla Marmaud sworn.)

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
25 please state and spell your name for the court

1 reporter?

2 MS. MARMAUD: Kayla Marmaud, K-a-y-l-a,
3 M-a-r-m-a-u-d.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: What would
5 you like to tell the Commission this evening?

6 MS. MARMAUD: Good evening. I work for
7 Community Action Partnership of Greater St.
8 Joe. We're a community-action agency that
9 serves Andrew Buchanan, Clinton and DeKalb
10 County. We are a partner with
11 Missouri-American Water in providing critical
12 water assistance to low-income residents
13 through their Help2Others program. Thank you,
14 Missouri-American Water for those.

15 I am here today to express our deep
16 concern about the proposed rate increase.
17 While we understand the need for infrastructure
18 improvement and operation costs, we also
19 consider the impact on our most valuable --
20 vulnerable residents. So far this year, we
21 have pledged \$20,927 in assistance from
22 Missouri-American Water bills through this
23 program, helping 126 households. Of these
24 households, 13 have somebody who is 60 or
25 older, 63 have children and four have both

1 children and elderly residents. The program
2 offers the maximum payment of \$250 with an
3 average assistance payment being \$167.41.

4 It's important to note that all of these
5 households are at or below the 200 percent
6 federal poverty guidelines. With the projected
7 increases, the average family would see an
8 additional \$216 per year based on the
9 information provided by Missouri-American
10 Water's website. When you're living on a fixed
11 income or limited financial resources, even an
12 extra \$18 a month can be a significant burden.
13 Unfortunately, do to limited funding, we often
14 find ourselves unable to assist all eligible
15 applicants.

16 The rate increase will worsen the
17 problems, forcing us to turn away more
18 households in need of critical water
19 assistance. The impact of this rate extends
20 beyond mere numbers. It means denying
21 essential water services to families, seniors
22 and individuals. We are urge the Commission to
23 carefully consider the impact of this rate
24 increase on low-income families. We believe
25 there must be a balance between the needs of

1 the utility company, and the affordability of
2 essential services for our community members.
3 Thank you for your time and your consideration.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
5 and I'm going to -- that went by pretty quick,
6 so I've got a little questions for you. You
7 say -- that of the -- that you have -- is it a
8 \$20,000 grant; is that correct?

9 MS. MARMAUD: We get -- through their Help
10 to Others program, we get money quarterly, so
11 far this year, those are the amounts of money
12 we have paid in bills.

13 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: It's 20,000?

14 MS. MARMAUD: \$20,927.

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay. And of
16 the households, you said -- you said 13 have
17 older residents, correct?

18 MS. MARMAUD: Yep, 13 have elderly. 63
19 have children in the homes, and then 4 have
20 both children and elderly residents.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Now, and I
22 don't know whether you said it or not, I didn't
23 get it down, what's the total number of
24 households?

25 MS. MARMAUD: So far this year, we've

1 helped 126 households.

2 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Commissioner
3 Kolkmeier?

4 COMMISSIONER KOLKSMEYER: Yes, thank you
5 for testifying. What -- what connection do you
6 have with Missouri-American Water?

7 MS. MARMAUD: So, we're a community action
8 agency, so they're Help to Others program, we
9 get the money quarterly to help pay
10 Missouri-American Water bills.

11 COMMISSIONER KOLKSMEYER: Okay. You're
12 paying them. Do they give any money back to
13 you?

14 MS. MARMAUD: So, they give us the money
15 quarterly that we then use to help pay low
16 income families' bills.

17 COMMISSIONER KOLKSMEYER: Okay, thank you.

18 MS. MARMAUD: Uh-huh.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you
20 very much for your comments.

21 MS. MARMAUD: Thank you.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Next, I have
23 Randy or Diana Letham?

24 MS LETHAM: Of course, I'm --

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Randy, I'm

1 going to leave you seated. I'm going to let
2 Diana speak. Would you raise your right hand
3 to be sworn?

4 (Diana Letham sworn.)

5 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE SEYER: Will you
6 please state and spell your name for the court
7 reporter?

8 MS LETHAM: Diana Letham, D-i-a-n-a,
9 L-e-t-h-a-m.

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE SEYER: And what
11 would you like to tell the Commission tonight?

12 MS LETHAM: Okay, out of -- out of 126
13 families that are helped in the St. Joe area
14 under community missions, I would like to see
15 the other numbers also that they are not able
16 to help and other agencies that are not able to
17 help, because I know there's people living out
18 there in their home without certain utilities
19 because of all these increases that you all
20 think you need. I don't think we feel that way
21 and a lot of other citizens don't feel that
22 way. Our pockets are only so deep. We can
23 only give you so much, and we are on Social
24 Security and like the gentleman said, we get a
25 2 point whatever percent increase, and now you

1 all want to take it. And I asked the question
2 before, what about senior citizens getting a
3 reduction in their water bills and their light
4 bills and their sewer bill.

5 We don't see that happening. We are still
6 paying ungodly amounts of money to live just
7 basic needs. Now, then you have the elderly
8 that also -- they have everything paid, but
9 they have no money for food, groceries, so
10 they're going to Interserve. They're going to
11 other places to get food, so they're not even
12 getting a choice of what they eat. They're
13 given peas and beans and simple little things
14 like that that's not even a luxury food, which
15 isn't fair to our citizens that are elderly
16 that have worked all their life to make a
17 living and now they may be doing without
18 utilities, food, health, medical.

19 So, I don't see where you should have a
20 big increase. I don't see where that money is
21 going to except your income to your household,
22 but you don't care if your utilities go up,
23 because, hey, man you're making a lot of money
24 a year. There's a lot of people out here
25 that's not making that kind of money. They're

1 likely to make 15,000 a year. 20,000 a year.
2 Can you imagine? Put yourself in that place
3 and try to pay rent or mortgage, insurance on a
4 car, maybe a car payment, then you have all
5 your utilities and taxes. Now, you got to put
6 gas in the car, food on the table, where is
7 that money going to come from? Anybody have
8 any idea? They don't either. They don't know.

9 They're doing their very best just to
10 survive without making their children starve
11 while big profit utility companies keep
12 pocketing that money, donating the money we're
13 paying you all to candidates in politics. We
14 didn't ask you to do that. And my husband
15 said, yeah, you might not want to bring up this
16 whole thing about water, but you know God
17 created water. It's free. You'll all get the
18 water for free. It comes from the clouds; it
19 comes from evaporation; it comes from the
20 ground; it comes from the ocean and streams and
21 rivers. You're not even paying that. Now,
22 wait a minute, let's say God is going to send
23 you a bill for that water, he wants an
24 increase. How's that? Do those boots fit?
25 Probably not for you all. It doesn't fit for

1 us either to have such a huge increase, because
2 people just don't have this kind of money
3 anymore.

4 People are starting to collect rainwater
5 off the roofs and water in gardens and trying
6 to save where they can. You know, we can't
7 even turn on our lights whenever we want. We
8 can't wash and dry clothes whenever we want
9 because we have to be controlled by the utility
10 company to -- to -- yeah, we have to choose.
11 Oh, do you want to use your drier at a certain
12 time or do you want to not use between 4:00 and
13 8:00 and so that limits you so if you got
14 something to do, well, that's just too bad. I
15 can't dry these wet clothes until after 8:00
16 o'clock at night. Is that fair? Is that fair
17 to us? No.

18 And I know we're not talking about lights
19 tonight, but I'm just saying utility is just
20 getting way too high. And for me, I'm against
21 this huge increase. Thank you so much.

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE SEYER: Ms. Letham,
23 would it be fair to summarize that your major
24 concern is that people on a fixed income are
25 having to make difficult decisions between

1 essential services, food, medicine and
2 utilities?

3 MS LETHAM: Yeah, they are. Where am I
4 going to get the money for food when I'm paying
5 all you guys this huge amount of money for
6 utility? It's sad. It's totally sad that
7 people think it has to be this way, you know.
8 It's not making huge amounts of money. You
9 know what? I have an 8th Street Backpackers
10 Group, and it's just a community group. I
11 don't get paid for it. I don't get gas for it.
12 I don't get nothing for it except blessed by
13 God and be able to bless other people. I'm
14 doing this on my own, out of my own pocket with
15 some help of people in the community. If I'm
16 able to budget like that, I think you all
17 should be able to do that, too, you know? Cut
18 some wages, cut some positions, cut donating
19 here and donating there. That's our money.
20 Put it back into your big upgrades and all that
21 stuff, put that money there instead of putting
22 it on us to pay it.

23 Yeah, there are a lot of people in St. Joe
24 that are on fixed income, whether they're
25 elderly, disabled, just low income in general,

1 both people are working in the household and
2 they're trying to make ends meet and they still
3 can't. They can't buy shoes and clothes for
4 their children. They have to go to the
5 community outreach centers and me to get
6 something for their kids to wear.

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay.

8 MS LETHAM: You know, it's sad. It's just
9 sad, that you are all sitting up on your high
10 throne, making all this money and here we've
11 got so many poor people that can't even eat and
12 eat nutritional food. What are you going to
13 eat tonight, well, you know, I got a can of
14 peas. I got some beans.

15 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay,
16 Ms. Letham?

17 MS LETHAM: Yes?

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
19 your comments.

20 MS LETHAM: You're welcome.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Kenyon
22 Watkins.

23 (Kenyon Watkins sworn.)

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Would you
25 please state and spell your name for the

1 record?

2 MR. WATKINS: Kenyon Watkins, K-e-n-y-o-n,
3 W-a-t-k-i-n-s.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Mr. --

5 MR. WATKINS: I --

6 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I apologize,
7 go ahead.

8 MR. WATKINS: My point tonight, which I
9 brought us up earlier is, I want to know what
10 is the justification for this massive increase?
11 I do work for manufacturing, and we have to do
12 capital investments all the time, and they're
13 expensive; but I cannot get an over 40 percent
14 increase from my products. I have competitions
15 that would be happy to undercut me and drive me
16 out of business. This, unfortunately, is a
17 situation where they do have a monopoly, and I
18 just want to know what exactly am I getting,
19 what capital investments, particularly in my
20 neighborhood, in Clinton Estates, that
21 justifies them getting well over 40 percent?

22 Now, when we -- when they first bought our
23 place, we were spending slightly over \$44.

24 Now, they're asking \$83 in four years. Boy,
25 I'd love to get that much from the products

1 that we manufacture but we can't, and if we
2 could, I'd be retired right now. So, that's my
3 concern with that if this is allowed, what
4 about the future and still coming up with large
5 increases. At some point, and I'm not
6 screaming hardship, I'm just cheap. I want
7 something worth my money. So, that's -- that
8 really is my concern, and they are going to
9 send the information about my particular place
10 in Clinton Estates, which I appreciate, and so
11 that's pretty much my concerns.

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay,
13 Mr. Watkins, thank you for your comments. As I
14 indicated earlier, the Commission can't answer
15 questions today. That's what's the Q&A portion
16 was. I am glad the company is going to be
17 sending you some information.

18 MR. WATKINS: Thank you.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you,
20 Mr. Watkins. Frederic Windisch?

21 (Frederic Windisch sworn.)

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
23 please state and spell your name for the court
24 reporter?

25 MR. WINDISCH: Frederic, that's no K.

1 Whiskey, India, November, Delta, India, Sierra,
2 Charlie, Hotel. They can't even spell it right
3 at the bank.

4 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And what
5 would you like to tell the Commission today?

6 MR. WINDISCH: Well, actually, as I
7 mentioned earlier, I didn't get very much
8 notification of -- to be able to compile decent
9 questions but from listening here, we're paying
10 something like 2.3 million to a lobbyist group.
11 Are you not a monopoly?

12 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And I'm just
13 going to say this real quick, there's multiple
14 entities here. So, there's the company;
15 there's the Commission; and there's the Office
16 of the Public Counsel; and there's the Staff
17 here so --

18 MR. WINDISCH: The public -- they're all
19 operated as pretty much a monopoly. There's
20 only one commission. There's only one water
21 company. There's only one of each, right?

22 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I believe
23 that would be correct.

24 MR. WINDISCH: Okay, so why are we paying
25 2.3 million to lobbyists to entities that are

1 operating singly when you got a whole bunch of
2 lobbyists right here that work free, and you
3 charge us in the meantime. I mean, you got a
4 bazillion customers. Is the water company
5 public? Can I buy stock in it, or are the
6 investors private?

7 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Again, I'm
8 going to say the Commission can't answer your
9 questions today in regard to that.

10 MR. WINDISCH: Do they have like a New
11 York Stock Exchange short code? Is there some
12 way to look up the basics.

13 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I think those
14 are all questions for the company.

15 MR. WINDISCH: Okay.

16 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: This is the
17 comment portion.

18 MR. WINDISCH: Well, like I say, I'm
19 starting from zero. None of this is easily
20 accessible -- you can't -- I couldn't invent a
21 phrase that would pull any of this up in the
22 hours leading up to today's meeting. Is there
23 an estimate how long this 34/30 something
24 percent increase is supposed to stave off
25 further improvements? Is this going to be like

1 a year's worth of work?

2 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Again, you
3 keep -- you keep asking questions, and
4 there's -- as I indicated before, the
5 Commission has to remain neutral until after
6 evidentiary hearing.

7 MR. WINDISCH: Are they not being recorded
8 so the company can read them?

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: These
10 questions or these comments, yes. The court
11 reporter is taking them down. The transcript
12 will be filed in the case.

13 MR. WINDISCH: I don't need to hear an
14 answer. It doesn't -- it doesn't make these
15 people think I'm pretty sure, and those --
16 those few details what I've come up with so
17 far.

18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Mr. Windisch,
19 go ahead.

20 MR. WINDISCH: Go ahead.

21 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: No, you were
22 going to say something.

23 MR. WINDISCH: No, go ahead.

24 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: I was just
25 going to thank you for your comments, but

1 you're not finished yet and it appears that one
2 of our attorneys has a question. Mr. Clizer?

3 MR. CLIZER: Yes, I'm afraid. You used a
4 phrase, I could not invent a phrase in
5 describing your difficulty in any attempt to
6 get information --

7 MR. WINDISCH: A search term.

8 MR. CLIZER: Okay. So when you say that,
9 you mean to say that you had difficulty finding
10 information about this meeting using a Google
11 internet search function; is that what you're
12 trying to say?

13 MR. WINDISCH: Yeah, I mean, it's like not
14 public at all.

15 MR. CLIZER: Did you actually receive a
16 physical copy of the notice of this --

17 MR. WINDISCH: No.

18 MR. CLIZER: Okay.

19 MR. WINDISCH: Was that sheet of papers
20 that was on the table are our words that I
21 would have used in a search, you know, trying
22 to arrange them so Google will respond, you
23 know, there was nothing about this here
24 tonight. Not a peep.

25 MR. CLIZER: How did you find -- what led

1 you to be here tonight?

2 MR. WINDISCH: I was by told somebody with
3 a card that was taking their mother to Kansas
4 City for a doctor's appointment, I can't get
5 back in time. Go -- go at 6:00 o'clock. Okay,
6 I will.

7 MR. CLIZER: Okay, thank you very much,
8 sir. I have no further comments.

9 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for
10 your comments, and I apologize I'm having a
11 hard time reading this name. Is it James
12 Henning? Did I say your name correct, sir?

13 (James Henning sworn.)

14 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
15 please state and your spell your name for the
16 court reporter?

17 MR. HENNING: James Henning, J-a-m-e-s,
18 H-e-n-n-i-n-g.

19 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And what
20 would you like to tell the commission tonight?

21 MR. HENNING: So, we're in a rural section
22 of the county, and we try to be
23 self-sustaining. We have 20 chickens. I'd
24 like to grow -- it's hard to get wheat around
25 here, so I grow a little patch of wheat. Well,

1 our monthly water bill when we were in the
2 drought here just recently, jumped from 70
3 dollars to 135, and this is before any
4 increases. And my little patch of wheat may
5 make two bushels of wheat, which is worth \$8,
6 so that's before the increases. I just wanted
7 to come up just to make that comment. It's
8 ridiculous that we have to pay that much for
9 water.

10 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, and I'm
11 just trying to follow here. When you said it
12 went 70 to 135 without an increase, what caused
13 it to go up?

14 MR. HENNING: Because I was watering the
15 wheat to get it up because I planted it during
16 the drought.

17 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay. So,
18 when you say 70 to 135, you're talking about
19 the difference between your bill when you're
20 not watering wheat as opposed to watering
21 wheat?

22 MR. HENNING: Yes.

23 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Okay, thank
24 you. I have no questions for you. Thank you
25 for your comments. Richard McLauchlen. And I

1 feel like I didn't say that right.

2 (Richard McLauchlen sworn.)

3 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And would you
4 please and state your name for the record.

5 MR. MCLAUCHLEN: My name is Richard
6 McLauchlen. R-i-c-h-a-r-d,
7 M-c-L-a-u-c-h-l-e-n.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: And what
9 would you like to tell the Commission today?

10 MR. MCLAUCHLEN: I just have two points
11 right now, and it has to go back to those who
12 just don't have enough in this community. We
13 have an organization here that has plenty of
14 money available. They have a lot of employees
15 that I'm sure are overpaid. They have a lot of
16 expenses, I know. Now, here in St. Joe, there
17 are a lot of people that are on a lot of
18 prescription medicines, and this goes -- and
19 this is also along with having to pay
20 utilities, rent or house payment or whatever
21 there is; but a lot people who are on fixed
22 incomes, and they do not have an opportunity to
23 decide what they're going to pay each month,
24 what bills or their medicines or what, and
25 there's a lot people that are suffering because

1 of it.

2 I have one particular individual that's a
3 friend of mind, and he was an Air Force
4 veteran; and he had so much problem with his
5 overhead and stuff that he actually ended up
6 living on the street for a period of time.
7 Then, we were finally able to find people to
8 help him get off of the street.

9 That's not just an isolated case. There
10 are a lot of individuals like that in this
11 community. Now, I'm retired, and I'm on fixed
12 income also, but I'm not in as bad of a
13 position as a lot of people. If that bill --
14 if our rates are increased, I can still afford
15 it for now. They're coming -- when you have
16 the water company getting this increase, power
17 company is going to come back in the future and
18 want more increases. We're paying high fuel
19 bills, you know, our expenses are not
20 declining; and when you have a fixed pot of
21 money to draw from, it won't be long until a
22 lot of people will be deciding do they want to
23 eat or pay their bills; and that's a tragedy;
24 and that shouldn't be that way.

25 If you're going to have increases like

1 this, those who are on fixed incomes should be
2 able to have an opportunity to have a different
3 rate than all those who are able to have
4 increasing incomes on a regular basis. People
5 can only bleed so much money, and then it just
6 becomes a tragedy. That's the main thing I
7 wanted to say, so thank you.

8 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Mr.
9 McLauchlen, thank you for your comments.

10 MR. MCLAUCHLEN: Thank you.

11 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Those are all
12 the names that I have written down of people
13 who wanted to speak. Is there anybody here
14 who, having heard comments, wanted to offer
15 some comments of their own? Okay.
16 Commissioner, would you like to make a closing
17 remark?

18 COMMISSIONER KOLKSMEYER: Again, I would
19 like to thank everyone for coming out this
20 evening. Thank you for those that gave the
21 comments, and the Judge will give you a way
22 to -- if you want to still give comments, we
23 still take those on our website. So, again,
24 thank you for coming. Have a safe trip home.

25 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE CLARK: Thank you for

1 your -- hold on just a second. Thank you for
2 your participation this evening. This is --
3 these local public hearings are very important
4 to the Commission. We have a chance during the
5 evidentiary hearing to hear from the parties,
6 including the company, but this is our
7 opportunity to hear from the public, and while
8 it may be hard to listen to sometimes, we
9 greatly appreciate your comments.

10 If you have additional comments, or if you
11 know someone who wanted to come tonight and was
12 unable to or if you know someone who would like
13 to make comments, you can make written comments
14 by contacting the e-mail address:

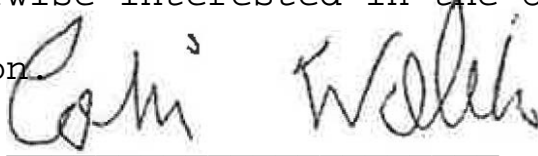
15 pscinfo@psc.mo.gov; by contacting the Office of
16 the Public Counsel, which Mr. Clizer is here
17 from tonight. They've been very gracious about
18 seeing that people who get comments to them
19 that those get filed with the Commission.

20 You can also go to the PCS's webpage, and
21 there is a link there to offer comments. If
22 you're going to offer comments on today's case,
23 it is important that you know the case number
24 because there are several cases running right
25 now before the Commission. And that would be

1 case number WR-2024-0320. With that, I will
2 adjourn this hearing. We'll go off the record.
3 Thank you very much for your participation.
4 (Ending time of the hearing: 07:34 p.m.)

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1 I, Colin Wallis, in and for the State of
2 Missouri do hereby certify that the witness
3 whose testimony appears in the foregoing
4 Examination Under Oath was duly sworn by me;
5 that the testimony of the said witness was
6 taken by me to the best of my ability and
7 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
8 direction; that I am neither counsel for,
9 related to, nor employed by any of the parties
10 to the action in which this examination was
11 taken, and further that I am not relative or
12 employee of any attorney or counsel employed by
13 the parties thereto, nor financially or
14 otherwise interested in the outcome of the
15 action.



17 within and for the State of Missouri
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