

**

June 21, 2023

Missouri Public Service Commission
PO Box 360
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

Gentlemen,

This is a letter of concern regarding a significant increase in our water charges beginning in 2016.

From 1997 to 2015 our annual charges for water averaged \$220.00. Water charges for 2016 totaled \$409.00; for 2017, \$557.00; 2018, \$369.00. then from 2020 to 2022 our average yearly charges for water was \$540.00. For two months in 2023, with charges totaling \$93.00, our annual charge for 2023 is estimated to be \$558.00.

We are now very concerned about the imminent increase in our water charges expected to be an additional 24%. I intended to attend the Public Service Commission hearing on January 25, 2023 at Florissant Valley Community College, to voice my distress over these increases, but it was cancelled due to inclement weather.

How can we fight these continued increases in charges for our water service? Monopolies in community service providers are supposed to be monitored and regulated by a Public Service Commission, but my wife and I feel at the mercy of bureaucrats who rubber stamp approval of company requests for increases in their charges.

Our Water Company was just awarded a 25% increase in charges in 2021 (January 2023 letter attached). Help!

**

**

CC: Missouri American Water
727 Craig Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63141

**

**

October 17, 2024

Missouri Public Service Commission
PO Box 360
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

RE: Case Number WR 2024-0320

Gentlemen,

Mr. Richard Svindland became president of Missouri American Water Company (MAWC) in 2021. He petitioned the Public Service Commission (PSC) for a 24% rate increase in 2021, then in 2023 for a 26% rate increase, and now in 2024 he brings his third request of a 34% rate increase in three years for 2025. (“\$18.00 for 5475 gallons monthly”).

(Copies of 2021, 2023, and 2024 public notices enclosed).

This rate increase could project our average water costs in 2025 to increase from \$495 to \$650. This is painful for our family for three reasons: 1) it will have a significant impact on our family budget, 2) we have no choice in pursuing other water options – MAWC is a Monopoly, 3) we have no voice with the MAWC. You are our voice!

We believe Mr. Svindland can justify each request for more money by providing whatever numbers he can generate for the PSC. We have lived at this residence since 1996 and have only been subjected to significant rate increases since 2021. Since this current request is Mr. Svindland’s third in three years, our concern is that the PSC is serving the water company as an approving rubber stamp for whatever increases he requests.

My questions for the PSC are: 1) What protection do we have as consumers from a utility company, a monopoly, which regularly raises our costs biannually; 2) What is Mr. Svindland’s ten-year plan regarding requests for additional rate increases – what can we expect from our water company and you, the Public Service Commission, in the years ahead if this current trend of rate increases continues?

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter at ** _____

_____ **

Sincerely,

**

Enclosures: January 10, 2023 letter to the PSC; Public Hearing Notices of 2021, 2023, 2024; June 2023 email communication with Lanna.

Cc: Richard C. Svindland
727 Craig Road
Creve Coeur, Missouri 63141

From: ** **
To: [OPC Service; pscinfo@psc.mo.gov](mailto:pscinfo@psc.mo.gov)
Subject: Complaints Regarding MO American Customer Service
Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 3:57:19 PM

I just spoke with Charm in the office of the Public Service Com. and I am forwarding my complaint to both of your offices. My phone number is: ** _____ ** and is a landline which you may leave a message on if you need any info. Also, my MO American Account Number is: ** _____ **

I was sent an estimated bill for September from 9/4 to 9/30 for use of water in the amount of \$118.98 which I paid because I called to ask for someone to come out and they assured me it would be read the next month but did say I didn't have to pay. So, I went into the backyard and lifted the 30lb lid to read it and it seemed accurate, so I mailed a check to them. Then from 10/1 to 10/31 (?) I received a second estimated bill. I called the water company and spoke to Mikayla this time. I feel I pay enough to the water company that I figure they can at least read the meter on time. I spoke to Mikayla the first week of November. She said they couldn't get anyone out until the 22nd of Nov. I asked why and she said it usually takes that long to get a read. I asked why, and she said they were busy. I asked if all bills in my neighborhood had been estimated twice. She said they could not give out that info. I did ask Makayla to have a supervisor call me to see if this reading couldn't be escalated. I waited that morning for a call but did not get one. I did get a call back in the next couple of days and the supervisor said she could possibly get someone out before the 22nd to read the bill but she wasn't sure. She said she might be able to send someone out on the 20th but if they didn't make it I would lose my apptment on the 22nd. (?) I asked for someone to please let me know when they come out because if something couldn't be done soon, I was going to contact the Attorney General's Office to see what I should do. I did call the Att Gen Office and they said to just go online and file a complaint.

This is another part of the complaint which may not be imperative to anyone else but the Hearing for the water company asking for a rate increase was held only one night in the St. Louis area, at MO University, I believe. The water company is asking for a pay hike of \$18 a month. However the "powers that be" scheduled all of the hearings for the pay hike at other cities in MO. That was it...the other locations listed on my sheet were Branson, Joplin, St. Joseph, and Jefferson City MO. I am guessing, but almost certain, St. Louis area which depends on MO American Water has a much larger area of coverage and customers. Why are they allowed to hold only one location for a water hearing in our area? Yes, I digress and I am sorry but I feel their customer service is truly lacking. My water meter was put in during the early 50's I guess and is located about 30 feet from the house, 3 ft. underground what is most comparable to a 30 lb. sewer lid. I also have asked about them moving that to a more convenient location for years and they said I would have to pay for it. I can't even imagine what that bill would be! That should be documented in my account for the past 21 years I have lived here. Of course, the conversations were with servicemen who came out to find out why that area which contains the meter was flooded. They said it doesn't hurt...??? Yes, the face of the meter is about 3 inches below the lid on a pipe that goes down 3 feet underground.

Thank you for reading and trying to help with improving the Water Company Customer Service and hopefully no more rate increases until we see some sort of improvement in the quality of customer service.

Sincerely,

**_____

_____ **

From: ** _____ **
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2024 11:43 AM
To: Clizer, John <John.Clizer@opc.mo.gov>
Subject: Testimony Documents from 11/12/2014

I've enclosed PDF copies of the documents I brought to the public hearing last night. I did not have time to discuss all the documents last night when I opposed the requested rate increase on the grounds that the Company was not meeting its obligation to provide "adequate, and "reliable utility services" as expressed in the MOPSC "Snapshot" or "good utility services" as expressed by the Office of Public Counsel. The Company is not even meeting its obligations under 20 CSR 4240-13.040 since it has not "established procedures to be followed when customers make inquiries of utilities so customer inquiries are handled in a reasonable manner." I have provided summaries below of each document.

I have two primary issues. The first is that the Company-provided online application, MyWater, is not what the Company claims. The second is that Customer Service representatives know little about the application and are unable or unwilling to get customers to people that do understand the application. My issues with Customer Service actually started late in 2023. I had a faulty toilet valve and a faulty main shut off valve in the basement. I replaced the toilet valve immediately. I then called a plumber to replace the main shut off valve but he was unable to turn the water off at the curb. He asked me to call the Company to replace the curb shut off. My problems began immediately with the Company's "Customer Service." When I was told it would be about two weeks to get a crew to my house, I objected and was told "the local office" would be contacted. I asked to be transferred or provided with the "local office" number but was refused. I never got a call from the "local office." The Company sent two crews to shut the water off at the curb but neither crew was able to turn off the water at the curb. A third crew and private contractor were sent, two holes were

dug in my front yard, the curb shut off was replaced, and the Company moved my meter from my basement to the second and larger hole (three feet deep) in my front yard. I expressed my concern about being able to read the meter and was assured that all meter information was available on the Company's website. I then had to have my plumber make a second trip to replace the main shut off valve in the basement. I also called the MOPSC to complain about Customer Service and was told that an informal complaint would be filed. I never obtained a copy of the informal complaint nor received a call from the Company about it.

1 AMI from MyWater

MyWater is the Company's online system which is the only water usage information that the Company makes available to customers. When at first I could not locate the website, I called Customer Service and was told the information was not available to customers. I suspect the Customer Service representative may have been thinking of another system only available to Company field personnel because she did not even mention MyWater. I eventually found MyWater on my own and started to visit the website daily. The AMI from MyWater is information I obtained directly off of MyWater. The two references to "improve customer experience" could not be further from the truth. I have to almost get on my hands and knees, lift the meter box cover, reach in the pit and lift the meter cover, sometimes wipe off the display, and try to read the meter in that dark hole called the "meter pit." I can usually only do this on nice, clear days while being very careful not to drop something into the pit like my glasses. My wife and many, if not most, of my neighbors could not do this. On November 6, 2024, I lifted the pit cover only to find the pit full of water and the meter remained under water for the entire day. No data was available on MyWater the entire day. The other so-called customer benefit in this document is "quickly detect and notify customers of costly leaks." Despite numerous instances of high water usage, I've never been notified by the Company.

2. M-A Water Email

This document is a flyer emailed to me by the Company on October 17, 2024. The statement in the first paragraph "that allows customers to track their up-to-the-hour water usage" is a blatant lie. As I will show with the next document, the data on MyWater is 55 to 79 hours behind depending on which hour of the day being considered. Because MyWater is so far behind displaying water usage data, a truly accurate "up-to-the-hour water usage" is likely only possible by actually reading the meter which is problematic at best, especially for customers whose meters are located outside in a meter pit. The Company should provide wireless meter displays connected to the meter to any customer whose meter is located outside. The statement "Log on to MyWater any time, day or night, to view your water usage" at the bottom of the first page is also untrue. In the early morning, you usually get a message "No data to display." On weekends you often get a message "MyWater is Undergoing Maintenance" or "Our MyWater Website is Currently Unavailable." Because the MyWater data is not current, the statement at the top of the second page "Better understand your water usage" is not possible without the customer keeping a daily log of activities that consume water. The statement "in addition to providing customers with access to real-time data" indicates that the individual that wrote this is either not familiar with MyWater or simply does not know what "real-time" means.

3. MyWater Reports for 241110

The MyWater reports printed on the day before (November 11, 2024) the public hearing disclose many of the problems with the reports produced by the MyWater application. First notice that there is no indication on the report as to when it was produced. All reports generated by MyWater should be date and time stamped. Note also that the 30 Days report on the first page has only 29 entries and the oldest date (“Oct-13”) is showing zero gallons. Consequently this 30 Days report and all 30 Days reports I have seen in the last nine months show less than 30 days. Note also the vertical axis on the graph on the second page reads “Gallons (In Hundreds)” which means add two zeros to the indicated quantity. No zeros should be added to any quantity on the graph which already shows a handful of days exceeding 100 gallons which is consistent with the actual quantities shown on the first page. Adding two zeros would make the quantity 10,00 gallons for the day. The sum of the hourly gallons shown on page 3 is 82 gallons which is less than the total for the day shown on the first page. I don’t think I have seen the sum of any 24 Hours report equal to the reported daily amount for the same day in the nine months I have been recording hourly data. In addition, MyWater has failed to report any daily or hourly data on about 60 days during that nine months. The daily quantities can be captured on a future 30 Days report but the hourly data cannot be recovered presently. The Company claims it retains MyWater data for three years so some provision should be developed by the Company to recover historical hourly data for customers that request it. Perhaps even more distressing, however, is that the last hour shown on the report is 12 AM which is actually the next day. So if the meter is read at 12 AM on 11/10/24, the measured water usage is for May 9 and not May 10. In addition, The legend “Gallons (In Hundreds) on the 24 Hours graph on the third page suffers from the same deficiency as the 30 Days graph on the second page. Many of the differences are small but some can be alarmingly high as shown later in 5. House Visit.

4. Leak Adjustment Claim

In mid-February 2024, I noticed abnormally high water usage for the last three days of January. Despite using more than 3,000 gallons or ten times my normal usage over that three day period, I was never notified of the problem by the Company. I found that the toilet valve I had replaced late in 2023 was faulty, the manufacturer sent me a replacement and I completed a timely repair. I called the Company on February 12th because of my concern of the impact on my sewer bills for an entire year and got a message “40 minute wait” but was able to leave a call back number. The call back never came. I called again and in the process I also requested a leak adjustment on my water charges. I had really forgotten all about the leak adjustment request until I received the email on page 3 from the Company on April 15, two months after submitting the request, that it had been denied. Much to my surprise, the Company letter indicated it had not even looked at the three-day period at the end of January.

5. House Visit

On April 30, 2024, MyWater showed 272 gallons of water consumed for the day on the 30 Days report. The 24 Hours report for the same day, however, showed only 160 gallons, a difference of more than 100 gallons. I called the Company and requested a field representative visit which was

scheduled about two weeks out. The next day's (May 1, 2024) 30 Days report indicated 277 gallons of water consumed. The 24 Hours report for the same day, however, reflected a whopping 475 gallons, a difference of almost 200 gallons. Two Company field reps, Hozie Carter and a fellow named "Paul," showed up at my house on May 13 and first removed the bolt on my meter pit cover so I could have easier access to my meter. I also showed the two men the strange reported numbers for April 30th and May 1st as well as many other questionable reports from MyWater. I offered copies of my documents to the two men who replied it would not be necessary because they could not be of any help with MyWater. Hozie Carter wrote up a service report and shared a draft with me. I pointed out one error in the report that never got corrected and Hozie filed the report asking that "a supervisor or IT associate with more knowledge on how the system works and handles contact Jim to enlighten him on the system [MyWater] works." That call never came but I did receive a letter from the Company offices in Camden, NJ dated 5/30/2024. The letter referred to a "leak investigation" and other subjects totally unrelated to the service call. When I finally figured out a couple of weeks later that this letter must be the Company's response to Hozie Carter's service report and that the requested phone call requested by Hozie Carter was not going to materialize, I wrote the one page letter dated June 7, 2024 to the Company's offices in Camden. I never received any response to my letter.

6. Missing Data

I encountered a period of nine days in early October 2024 when I could not get any updated data from MyWater. The first page of the document, which I printed from MyWater on October 4th, shows 100.5 gallons of water consumed the day before, October 3rd. The second page which I printed on April 14 and which hadn't changed early on October 15, was still showing October 3rd as the last date covered by the report. So from October 4 until early on October 15, I could not get any updated data on my water usage. I could not get any report with updated, current water usage until April 16 which is shown on the third page. What is also very disturbing about the report generated on October 16 is that the daily usage for October 7 and October 10 is zero and the two days in between, October 8 and 9 are completely missing from the report. Notice also that none of the three 30-day reports has 30 days of usage, the Nov. 14/15 report only has 19 days, and the other two of the reports show zero usage on the oldest day covered by the report..

7. MOPSC Complaints

Since my meter was moved by the Company from my basement to the outside meter pit in late 2023, I have not been able to talk to anyone from the Company knowledgeable about MyWater despite numerous attempts. I have contacted the Public Service Commission and expressed my frustration. I was told late in 2023 that an "informal complaint" would be filed and I expected to receive some contact from the Company about my complaint. I never followed up to obtain a copy of the complaint nor was I ever contacted by the Company. As time went by and I became more frustrated with MyWater and the inability to get anyone from the Company to contact me, I started looking into the complaint process more deeply. On 9/24/2024, I sent an email to Jay Eastlick of the Public Service Commission attempting to start a formal complaint regarding the Missing Data explained earlier in section 6. Customer Service. I explained that Customer Service had told me MyWater was the responsibility of "Web Services" but she could not provide that number. I had

previously been told it was the responsibility of the “Meter Department” and was promised a call back from that department that never came. Since that call from the Meter Department had never come, I asked for a supervisor. Since I had become accustomed to my calls to the Company going to different parts of the country, I asked the supervisor where she was located. She would not tell me and when I think I asked again, she hung up on me. Frankly I’ve been hung up on by Customer Service so many times that I have to believe it is part of their training. I appreciated Mr. Eastlick’s attempts to help me but was not very encouraged by his response shown on the second page. At that point I thought I might have to pursue a formal complaint and asked (page 3 of the document) Mr. Eastlick if he could provide any information on my 2023 informal complaint. I’ve not yet received a response.

From: **
To: [Missouri Public Service Commission](#)
Subject: Water Increase SHAME ON YOU!
Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 8:20:15 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

It's sad that you would stick the middle class with more of your rate increases, shame on you!

[M. Susan Hardwick](#)
President and Chief Executive Officer \$7,720,825 ¹

[Cheryl Norton](#)
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer \$2,700,343 ¹

[Melanie M. Kennedy](#)
Executive Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer \$1,496,037 ¹

[James H. Gallegos](#)
Executive Vice President and General Counsel \$2,354,199 ¹

[John C. Griffith](#)
Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer \$3,788,248 ¹