

BEFORE THE
PHILADELPHIA WATER, SEWER AND STORM WATER RATE BOARD

In the Matter of the Philadelphia Water Department's Proposed Change in Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Rates and Related Charges	Fiscal Years 2019-2021
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Direct Testimony

of

Joanne Dahme

on behalf of

The Philadelphia Water Department

Dated: February 12, 2018

1 **DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JOANNE DAHME**

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3 **Q1. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS FOR THE**
4 **RECORD.**

5 A1. My name is Joanne Dahme. My business address is 1101 Market Street, Fifth
6 Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
7

8 **Q2. BY WHOM ARE YOU EMPLOYED AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?**

9 A2. I am employed by the City of Philadelphia and serve as General Manager of the
10 Public Affairs Division for the Philadelphia Water Department (“Department” or
11 “PWD”).
12

13 **Q3. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND**
14 **RELEVANT EXPERIENCE.**

15 A3. I hold a Bachelor’s Degree in Civil Engineering from Villanova University. I also
16 have earned Master’s Degrees in Journalism and Creative Writing from Temple
17 University. My experience and various positions with the Department since 1980
18 are described in my resume which is attached as Schedule JD-1.
19

20 **Q4. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?**

21 A4. The purpose of my testimony is to describe program outreach undertaken by the
22 City for the Tiered Assistance Program, also known as “TAP,” which included
23 the following steps: (i) publicizing TAP objectives, benefits and target population;
24 (ii) providing information about TAP and organizations that can assist in applying
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1 for TAP to individuals who contact the Department under circumstances that
2 suggest that the individual may qualify for and benefit from TAP; (iii) posting
3 information about TAP on City websites; and (iv) ensuring meaningful access to
4 TAP and other payment agreements for Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
5 persons.

6
7 **Q5. HOW HAS THE CITY PUBLICIZED INFORMATION ABOUT TAP?**

8 A5. PWD's Communications team developed a comprehensive campaign dedicated
9 to TAP education and public engagement beginning in July 2016. This campaign
10 was divided into two phases – a pre-launch phase which was focused on raising
11 public awareness about the program (as customers could not take any action until
12 July 1, 2017) and a post-launch phase that aimed to drive customers who are
13 struggling to pay their bills to submit an application. The campaign development
14 included: message and content development; audience and stakeholder
15 identification; tool development; user testing and partner engagement. The
16 following provides a brief summary of the campaign:

- 17 • Messaging development with Behavioral Health Science practitioners
18 from Drexel and Swarthmore universities.
- 19 • Formation of a TAP Advisory Committee that includes: Community
20 Legal Services (CLS), Utility Emergency Services Fund (UESF), Energy
21 Coordinating Agency (ECA) and their Neighborhood Energy Centers
22 (NECs) and Drexel Center for Hunger Free Communities.
- 23 • User testing of draft Customer Assistance Program (CAP) Application in
24 partnership with ECA, UESF and CLS with organization counselors and
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their clients. This feedback informed the content and format of the application that was used when the TAP program was launched on July 1, 2017.

- Development of a website for customers to sign up for information on TAP and updates regarding its launch.
- Development of TAP content and graphics that were used to create CAP/TAP fact sheets, FAQ flyers, pre-and post-launch posters, advertising via print newspaper and radio (July – September 2017), SEPTA posters on subway, buses and bus shelters (July – September 2017), posters for payment and partner centers, billstuffer, website (PWD and Revenue), point-of-sale displays and email and social media campaigns (including paid Facebook ads).
- Hosted TAP informational workshops in the fall of 2016 and the spring/summer of 2017 at ECA Energy Conference, ECA/NEC monthly meetings, offices of the Utility Emergency Services Fund and BenePhilly, and City Council Constituent staff meetings.
- Hosted PWD Town Hall meetings and attended civic and Registered Community Organization meetings throughout the year (and we are continuing to do so), providing info on TAP and the application process.

1 **Q6. WHAT STEPS HAS THE CITY TAKEN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**
2 **ABOUT TAP AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN ASSIST IN**
3 **APPLYING FOR TAP TO INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE CONTACTED**
4 **THE WATER DEPARTMENT OR THE WATER REVENUE BUREAU?**

5 A6. PWD continues to work very closely with its TAP Advisory Committee partners
6 to gain an understanding of potential customer impediments to apply for TAP.
7 Most recently we have met with our TAP Advisory Committee to review the
8 number of applications received to date and the number of applications that have
9 been received that are not complete and therefore cannot be processed. In
10 December of 2017, our team started user testing with the assistance of UESF and
11 ECA that included “intercept” interviews at NEC/UESF locations asking
12 customers about their knowledge and interest in TAP in addition to sitting down
13 with customers as they work through the TAP application process. This valuable
14 information will be used to inform the next iteration of the TAP application and
15 customer outreach process. Additionally, the TAP Advisory Committee
16 developed a web based map (that can also be printed) that lists all NEC, UESF
17 and BenePhilly locations that can provide various levels of assistance to potential
18 TAP customers including printing applications, computer access and assistance
19 with filling out and submitting applications.
20

21 **Q7. HAVE THE DEPARTMENT AND THE WATER REVENUE BUREAU**
22 **POSTED INFORMATION ABOUT TAP ON THEIR WEBSITES?**

23 A7. Yes. The Revenue/Water Revenue Bureau is hosting the official Customer
24 Assistance Program website which is the portal to the application:
25

1 <https://cap.phila.gov/static/index.html>. PWD also has information about the
2 program and a link to this site on its website:

3 <http://www.phila.gov/WATER/EDUCATIONOUTREACH/Pages/default.aspx>
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5 **Q8. WHAT STEPS DID THE CITY UNDERTAKE TO ENSURE**
6 **MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT TAP AND**
7 **OTHER PAYMENT AGREEMENTS TO LIMITED ENGLISH**
8 **PROFICIENCY (LEP) PERSONS?**

9 A8. Information about TAP has been produced and disseminated in both English and
10 Spanish. Translation services are also available for customers who request
11 information or the application in a language other than English or Spanish. The
12 application itself is currently available in the top ten languages requested in
13 Philadelphia.
14

15 **Q9. IN ADDITION TO THE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED OUTREACH AND**
16 **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, IS PWD PLANNING ANY NEW**
17 **INITIATIVES?**

18 A9. Yes. PWD has engaged a fulltime Philadelphia VISTA Corps member (“VISTA”)
19 to act as a TAP ambassador for the Department. Our VISTA will work with our
20 TAP Advisory Committee and serve as our liaison to the various NECs and other
21 intake locations. The VISTA, among other duties, will (i) assist with on location
22 updates, (ii) work with the NECs to gather feedback about customer experiences
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(e.g. the application process); and (iii) assist the Department in identifying where additional resources may be required to increase customer enrollment.

Q10. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR PREPARED TESTIMONY?

A10. Yes, it does.

Schedule JD-1: Resume of Joanne Dahme

Joanne Dahme
ARAMARK Tower
1101 Market Street, 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Work History

January 2009 To present *General Manager, Public Affairs, Philadelphia Water Department*

2000 - 2008 *Watersheds Programs Manager*

As the Philadelphia Water Department's Watersheds Programs Manager, I am responsible for the development and implementation of regional watershed partnerships, working with a team of Water Department engineers and scientists. The mission of these partnerships is to create watershed management plans in the various sub-watersheds in Philadelphia that will result in the improvement of stream water quality and measurable improvements to the quality of our parks and neighborhoods. Watershed management issues are to be communicated and shared with a diverse group of stakeholders including regional municipal partners, elected officials, the general public and the media, to gain local support for the implementation of regulatory-driven initiatives and community-based projects. I am responsible for ensuring that stormwater management as it is related to land-based practices will also be incorporated into final best management practices.

1993- 1999 *General Manager, Public Affairs, Philadelphia Water Department*

As a member of the PWD's Executive Staff, I reported directly to the Water Commissioner. All tasks which involved interaction with our customers, including emergency phone service, public meetings, public participation mandates, school programs, media, correspondence with City Council and elected officials, assistance to low-income customers, and the development and production of the department's brochures and publications, were my responsibility. As GM, I ensured that the five responsibility centers in Public Affairs, including Public Relations, Public Education, Assistance Programs, Government Affairs and Customer Service - each met the PWD's customer service and public participation goals. I developed and worked with my staff to create a variety of public information campaigns, some required to meet state and federal environmental education mandates, and others to improve the department's customer service functions. The most recent campaigns, including those I developed, were focused on drinking water quality issues, e.g., EPA Public Right-To-Know rules (Consumer Confidence Report), Cryptosporidium in drinking water, lead and copper sampling, and the new Risk Management Program (RMP), as required under the Clean Air Act. These campaigns were developed and produced, for the most part, with the talents and expertise of the Public Affairs staff. I created and facilitated two citizens advisory committees -- one whose mission is to improve drinking water quality communications and the other designed to improve community relations in the neighborhood of one of the

PWD's operating facilities. My staff managed two others. Our public education curriculum development focused on the urban water cycle, watersheds, and stormwater pollution prevention. I worked with the media one to one to keep them up-to-date on PWD issues, and hosted a number of workshops, for both print and broadcast media, to familiarize local reporters on local and national water resource issues.

1986-1993 Public Relations Manager, Philadelphia Water Department

As Public Relations Manager, I was responsible for the development, copywriting, editing and production of the PWD's publications, which include: billstuffers, brochures, newsletters, press releases and annual reports. I also represented the PWD at community meetings and represented the Public Affairs Division on PWD operations committees. I also responded to media inquiries

1980-1986 Civil Engineer, Philadelphia Water Department

With a team of civil, mechanical and electrical engineers, I supervised the work of PWD contractors during the renovation and reconstruction of one of the department's wastewater treatment plants

EDUCATION

1999-2001 Master's degree in Creative Writing, Temple University

1983-1986 Master's degree in Journalism, Temple University

1976-1980 Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, Villanova University

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Society of Women Environmental Professionals

Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center Advisory Board

Board Member, North Light Community Center

Board Member, Awbury Arboretum

Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery

Board Member, Tookany/Tacony-Frankford Watershed Partnership