

Philadelphia Water Department Rate Board Hearing  
February 23, 2016

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
PHILADELPHIA WATER DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION  
RATE BOARD HEARING  
Tuesday, February 23, 2016  
MINUTES of FORMAL HEARING

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LOCATION: White Rock Baptist Church  
5240 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

REPORTED BY: ANGELA M. KING, RPR  
Registered Professional Reporter

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HELD BEFORE:

NANCY BROCKWAY - HEARING OFFICER  
BERNARD BRUNWASSER - CHAIR  
MICHAEL CHAPMAN, BOARD MEMBER

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL  
SENATOR ANTHONY HARDY WILLIAMS  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE VANESSA LOWERY BROWN



1 public advocate is here or members of the public  
2 advocate is with us. We also have some experts  
3 from the Water Revenue Bureau. You may not be  
4 aware, but the Revenue Department of the City  
5 handles the Water Department's billings. So if  
6 you have any kind of billing issues or billing  
7 problems, we will put you in touch with those  
8 folks. And hopefully, they will be able to take  
9 care of any specific problems that you have.

10 We also have the staff of the Water  
11 Department and many members of the staff who will  
12 be able to answer operational questions that you  
13 may have and any kind of problems -- flooding,  
14 hydrants -- or any of that type of thing.

15 So in order to get us going, we have  
16 Ms. Joanne Dahme from the Water Department. She  
17 is the Head of Public Affairs for the Department  
18 of Water. Has been for quite a while. We will  
19 begin a presentation. We kindly ask you to hold  
20 questions until the end so we can get through  
21 things a little bit quicker.

22 Joanne?

23 MS. DAHME: Thank you. Good evening,  
24 everybody. Thank you for coming out tonight. We

1 really appreciate the attendance on a cold, wet,  
2 rainy evening. The purpose of the presentation  
3 that I'll be giving is sort of an overview of  
4 what the Water Department does and what you're  
5 paying for in your monthly water, stormwater bill  
6 and also talk a bit about the rate increase.

7 Before I begin, I want to mention our  
8 Board Commissioner, Debra McCarty is here. Our  
9 Deputy Commission of Finance Missy LaBuda is also  
10 here. We have Water Department staff. I see  
11 Councilwoman Blackwell has joined the meeting.  
12 We thank everyone for coming out.

13 So essentially, we are asking for you to  
14 hold all questions. Hopefully, we can tackle  
15 everything very quickly. I know people want to  
16 get started. The Water Department usually  
17 provides integrated services -- water, wastewater  
18 and stormwater -- in one of the city's ten  
19 operating departments. We operate and maintain  
20 our water and storing infrastructure, water  
21 treatment plants, wastewater treatment facility.  
22 We are fully funded by all of you, our rate  
23 payers. We have a separate water fund. A lot of  
24 people sometimes thinks that what they're paying

1 is taxes for water. That's not the case. It's  
2 based off what we call cost of service. Our  
3 customers provide us with the revenue to do  
4 everything that we need to do.

5           What we are doing this time around,  
6 first time we had a Water Rate Board. They are  
7 going to be making the decision about the entire  
8 process. The Hearing Officer is here this  
9 evening. We have two members of the Rate Board.  
10 We have a number of hearings that will be taking  
11 place. This is the first one. You are sort of  
12 my focus group. You will give my some feedback  
13 about what you think about this presentation and  
14 how helpful it is.

15           What does the Water Department do? We  
16 provide drinking water. We clean up wastewater.  
17 And we also manage stormwater. The utility  
18 handles the entire cycle. We talk about where  
19 you get your drinking water. We pump that from  
20 one of our two rivers, Delaware and the  
21 Schuylkill. We take that through pipes to a  
22 water treatment facility. We have to process  
23 that, make it clean and safe to drink.

24           Then there is downgrade of people who

1 use that. Goes through a sewer system of our  
2 wastewater treatment facility where we clean the  
3 water up before we return it back to the Delaware  
4 River cleaner than when we took out.

5 Other major components, we have to do a  
6 lot of replacement and rehabilitation to the  
7 infrastructure in our old city and have old aging  
8 pipes and aging facilities in good shape. They  
9 are only in good shape because we continue to  
10 maintain them and update them as we continue to  
11 do that.

12 Our delivery and collection system.  
13 That's 6,000 miles of water mains that brings  
14 clean drinking water to your homes. The other  
15 half is the sewer system where we take the  
16 wastewater where you flush the toilet, take a  
17 shower, that goes through the sewer system to a  
18 wastewater treatment facility. We complete that  
19 entire water cycle.

20 Drinking water quality. As the Water  
21 Department, we see this as our top priority.  
22 Making sure that our customers receive top  
23 quality, safe, clean healthy drinking water. We  
24 all take that very seriously. We have excellent

1 track record. We received a number of awards.  
2 It's not about the award. It's about the  
3 dedication of our staff. We take it very  
4 seriously.

5 We have drinking water quality guides  
6 come out on an annual basis. We have copies on  
7 that table, which will sort of walk you through  
8 all the things we hope for, all the monitoring  
9 that we do, all the performing we have to make  
10 for. A lot of work goes behind that.

11 We have Bureau of Laboratory Services.  
12 The Bureau of Laboratory Services is essentially  
13 the team that looks at drinking water quality  
14 24/7, tests, monitors. We are required to  
15 regulate. We make sure the drinking water all  
16 meets top.

17 Our drinking water service area. I  
18 mention we have three water treatment facilities.  
19 We have one plant that serves in northeast which  
20 takes water from the Delaware River. We have a  
21 Green Lane and Belmont water treatment facilities  
22 that takes water from the Schuylkill. This  
23 section of Philadelphia is served by are Belmont  
24 water treatment facility. With that drinking

1 plants that process all that water, approximately  
2 236 million gallons a day around the city. 3,000  
3 miles of water mains. There's valves. There's  
4 hydrants. There's a lot of components that go  
5 along with that system. Many things that take  
6 care of that system.

7 Our wastewater treatment is also what we  
8 consider top quality and award winning. So, we  
9 take a lot of pride in considering that the  
10 sewages, the wastewater that comes in our  
11 facilities, we treat, clean that and turn it back  
12 to our river. It's our mandate to make sure we  
13 protect our drinking water sources. The  
14 Schuylkill and Delaware where we get our water,  
15 we don't want to dirty that water. We also want  
16 to make sure we improve the quality of life and  
17 amenity of those waters.

18 I have a few photos going to be showing  
19 you a snapshot of the things the Water Department  
20 takes care of. This is a photo of our southeast  
21 water waste control plant. One of the first  
22 pieces of equipment when the water comes into the  
23 plant, we have the water trash racks where we  
24 have to remove anything that will go down the



1 storm drain and get to the plant. We see volley  
2 balls, kick balls, twigs, whatever trash gets to  
3 it. We have to remove that. It's many  
4 components to the wastewater treatment process.  
5 Many moving parts.

6 Our wastewater system, we have three  
7 plants. We have northeast, southeast and  
8 southwest. The City is divided into those three  
9 drainage districts. Along with those wastewater  
10 treatment facilities, we have miles of mains over  
11 3,000-mile of water main. We treat an average of  
12 397 million gallons per day. These plants also  
13 treat stormwater in some areas of the City.

14 One of the other things we have to  
15 maintain, we manage stormwater. Some areas we  
16 have flooding issues. We have to build systems  
17 that amounts to taking more stormwater than it  
18 normally takes. The City has grown, has  
19 developed. It's very urban city. Lots of  
20 impervious surfaces. One of our regulatory  
21 requirements is making sure that we maintain and  
22 clean and stop those overflows.

23 This is a photo of our Belmont Wall  
24 Water Basin, our treatment plant that serves this

1 area. Gives you a sense of the scale. Our  
2 facilities are sometimes about a hundred years  
3 old. Facilities are in good shape. But to make  
4 sure that they are in good shape, you have to  
5 renovate, repair them. We have to empty the  
6 space. This is the basin where we pump river  
7 from the Schuylkill. It's not treated water, but  
8 it sitting there. That's the first part of our  
9 treatment. Allow it to settle down before it  
10 goes to the treatment process.

11 Also when you think about all the water  
12 mains we have and the sewers we have, 6,000 miles  
13 of piping is a lot to maintain and replace. This  
14 photo is just to give you a sense of every time  
15 you peel back a layer of treatment, it's a lot of  
16 other infrastructure that lies beneath. It's a  
17 lot of work and a lot of time in order to replace  
18 mains and sewers. It's a complicated effort but,  
19 something that we are very serious about because  
20 you have an aging system. And we do need to make  
21 sure that replacement ideally at the end of  
22 useful life.

23 We have a lot of capacity. So, we have  
24 about 1.6 million customers in the City of

1 Philadelphia that we serve both drinking water  
2 and wastewater. We also have some wholesale  
3 customers. They are customers that we serve  
4 through municipalities or other utilities because  
5 we have excess capacity. A good thing for us to  
6 also provide services to those that need it.

7 We also comply with state and federal  
8 law. Everything we do to ensure safe water  
9 drinking quality is under Safe Water Drinking  
10 Act. Lots of regulations. They are there to  
11 protect public health. We adhere to them. We do  
12 better and exceed those standards. We also have  
13 a lot of regulations on the Clean Water Act Side.  
14 Making sure we protect our rivers and streams. A  
15 lot of what we're talking about tonight is based  
16 on regulatory requirements.

17 Big piece of that is stormwater. We  
18 have to stop combining stormwaters to our rivers.  
19 When we talk about this \$2.4 million program, it  
20 refers to the Green City Waters Program. We are  
21 really looking to protect waters and streams  
22 before it gets into our system.

23 So, we are meeting here today because  
24 the Department is requesting a rate increase. We

1 have proposed increase on the books. We notified  
2 City Council and the Water Rate Board January 8,  
3 2016. One of the major reasons for that is the  
4 replacement of critical infrastructure to make  
5 sure that we continue to provide reliable, safe,  
6 top quality service and the regulatory  
7 requirements that sort of drive that.

8 We need some additional 105 million over  
9 two years. We are talking about Fiscal Year 17  
10 and Fiscal Year 18. Fiscal Year 17 starts July 1  
11 for us. The 105 is sort of the gap that we have  
12 to replace and we have to collect in order to  
13 make sure that we continue to provide these  
14 essential services, make sure that we meet our  
15 regulatory requirements and replace  
16 infrastructures we need to replace.

17 We do like to point out that we are not  
18 a for-profit utility. We don't have a board of  
19 investors. So, we're not pressured to make  
20 money. We do need to recover the revenue that we  
21 need in order to make sure we meet our  
22 obligations to operate, maintain and treat.

23 So how this rate increase impacts water  
24 bills. I know that's what many customers are

1 most interested in. Over the two years, it's  
2 11.7 percent increase. When we look at it, it's  
3 broken down into what will happen over those two  
4 years. If the proposed rate increase goes  
5 through as we have on the books July 12, 2016, it  
6 will be a 6.2 percent which will be \$4.20  
7 additional on the typical customer bill. That is  
8 the bill if customer uses 600 cubic feet. On  
9 July 11, 2017, it's a 5.5 percent increase that  
10 will add an additional \$3.90 in the monthly bill.

11 For senior citizens, so eligible senior  
12 citizens -- and there are senior citizens who are  
13 eligible for a 25 percent discount if you have a  
14 certain annual income. The increase will be  
15 about \$3.10 beginning this July, and then the  
16 following July 2017, an additional \$3.

17 So, why we are requesting the water rate  
18 change. I talk about aging infrastructure. Very  
19 important for us to replace our 6,000 miles of  
20 water main and sewers. Our goal is to make sure  
21 we replace those. We want to take it to the end  
22 of what we call their useful life. Ideally, we  
23 replace before they break. We don't always do  
24 that, but that is the goal. We talk about

1 regarding regulations. We are required to  
2 protect our drinking water supply.

3 But the other components we do have are  
4 assistance program. We provide discounts and  
5 grants because we recognize not every customer  
6 has the wherewithal to pay the regular bill. And  
7 we see changes in water use. Water use is going  
8 down and appliances are much more efficient.

9 We compare wealth regionally. We look  
10 at sort of in the middle of the pack. We look at  
11 utilities around us. Even with the increases, we  
12 are still sort of in the middle of both. When we  
13 look nationally, we are also sort of more towards  
14 the lower end of the scale. Every utility across  
15 the country has the same regulatory obligations  
16 that we are dealing with. Everyone pays for  
17 those regulatory obligations.

18 Typical bill. When we break that down,  
19 about \$25 of that is for the water component of  
20 your bill. Treating, delivering safe drinking  
21 water. Sewer component is \$18, collecting and  
22 taking that to our wastewater facility.  
23 Stormwater is 14 sum. That is managing  
24 stormwater. There is service charge for a

1 million in collection. We do like to point out  
2 that even when these rates become official, every  
3 customer will be paying about \$2.40 for about 150  
4 gallons of usage which is really a lot. When you  
5 think about when you buy a cup of coffee or you  
6 buy a bottle of water, it's about \$2 for that.  
7 And we felt like public water is a much better  
8 buy and serves all kinds of uses that you need.

9           What would Philadelphians get for  
10 Philadelphia water? We also like to point out we  
11 are employees. We live here in the City. We  
12 have a stake in ensuring the quality of life in  
13 the City does improve. The Department also has a  
14 bid to helping find employment for underserved  
15 communities. We work on Philadelphia PowerPoint  
16 program. We required 87 young members from  
17 variety of communities and at-risk youth because  
18 we want to get back to the community. We want to  
19 make sure the work we do is passed down as a  
20 legacy to the residents in Philadelphia.

21           We clean our streams. We do a lot of  
22 other things that are working partnerships in  
23 order to make sure that we are ensuring that our  
24 rivers and streams are kept as clean as they can.

1 We do a number of things to keep rates as low as  
2 possible. We have a rate stabilization fund  
3 which is like our rainy day fund, smart debt  
4 management. Lots of assistance programs.

5 We have information about all these  
6 programs in the back. We have lots of  
7 information online. We recognize that water  
8 service is top priority for everyone. It's an  
9 essential service. We have programs in order to  
10 assist those people who cannot always meet those  
11 needs.

12 We are glad you are here tonight. The  
13 rate process is important. We need to hear from  
14 the public. We need to hear your concerns and  
15 what you care about and hear your opinions.  
16 That's why the Rate Board is here tonight.  
17 That's what they're here to listen to, the  
18 actions you can take.

19 So you can testify tonight. I know a  
20 sign-in sheet was going around. You can send a  
21 letter to the Rate Board. And we have other  
22 public meetings on the schedule. So, important  
23 that we hear from you. You are our customers and  
24 you are paying for these rates.



1           So thank you. I did that in record  
2 time.

3           HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you,  
4 Joanne. My name is Nancy Brockway. I am the  
5 Hearing Officer that was appointed by the Board,  
6 the Rate Board, to conduct hearings. I apologize  
7 for being late tonight.

8           This evening is for you guys to tell us  
9 what your thoughts and concerns are about rate  
10 increases or the rate increase that's been  
11 proposed. You've already met Bernie Brunwasser  
12 the Chair of the Board. With me is Mike Chapman  
13 who is appointed by the Mayor, Member of the  
14 Board. We are independent from the public -- the  
15 Philadelphia Water Department. So, we listen  
16 carefully to what they have to say and what their  
17 positions are and their requests and needs are.  
18 But we make the decisions based on the  
19 information that comes in through this process  
20 including tonight's hearing.

21           I understand we have with us  
22 Councilwoman Blackwell and State Senator  
23 Williams. And if I've missed any other public or  
24 appointed official.

1           AUDIENCE MEMBER: State Representative  
2 Vanessa Lowery Brown. She's my state rep.

3           REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you.  
4 Hello, everyone.

5           HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Great. This  
6 may be unusual for Philadelphia, so I don't mean  
7 to put anybody on the spot. As a courtesy, if  
8 any of the elected or appointed public officials  
9 want to speak first, we would be glad to hear  
10 from them. I guess we have two mics, so we're  
11 going to have to ask people to come up to the  
12 microphone up here.

13           Again, you don't have to.

14           MR. CHAPMAN: We asked if anybody wants  
15 to speak, any public official.

16           SENATOR WILLIAMS: For those who don't  
17 know me, my name is Senator Anthony Hardy  
18 Williams. For those who do, I am glad to see you  
19 are here. Obviously, this issue is one that  
20 plays to the City and not the State. I am really  
21 hear to listen as a citizen. My neighborhood is  
22 Cobbs Creek Parkway. It affects me as you. So,  
23 I want to get as much information as I can. I am  
24 here to support my Councilwoman and take

1 direction from her on what she thinks is  
2 appropriate and take it from there.

3 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you  
4 very much. Any other public or appointed or  
5 elected official?

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.  
7 Good evening. Let me first thank God for the  
8 privilege of being here tonight. And I thank him  
9 for being here at Church of White Rock. So, it's  
10 a privilege and a pleasure.

11 I, like all the folks who deal with  
12 especially our Former Commissioner and our  
13 Commission, who deal with this issue. But I  
14 don't support a water rate increase.

15 You know why I don't support it?

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I don't support  
18 it because I like my job. I know how all of you  
19 feel. We just had a 13 percent increase in '13,  
20 and they want to go up to 17 by '17. And I know  
21 the people just can't afford it.

22 So, we will do what we have to do with  
23 City Council. I believe that my colleagues will  
24 feel as I do. And they'll have issues to say.

1 And besides that Water Department, I still got  
2 about twelve people from the pipe that broke  
3 about 52 and Westminster between Westminster and  
4 Wyalusing. I got about twelve people who still  
5 aren't straight from June 14. Come on folks.

6           You know, I love all of you and you all  
7 have done a great job over the years. But my  
8 work, my people need to be serviced. And we are  
9 already dealing with that introducing a  
10 legislation we have with regard to what happens  
11 when there's an emergency, a fire emergency or  
12 emergency for water.

13           And you know, I only fight when I have  
14 to. When you all watch the budget, I'll be quiet  
15 unless some of those Commissioners try to talk to  
16 me about you. I have no need to do anything but  
17 service you. I thank God for the privilege. And  
18 certainly, we're going to do our part to  
19 represent you as best we can.

20           I have a new gentleman with me that some  
21 of ou may not have met. Tim Cooper, would you  
22 stand up. (Mr. Cooper stands.) This is Tim  
23 Cooper. He is part of our staff. In case you  
24 see him around town, and you'll know he

1 represents me. And Marty you already know.

2 Marty, stand up please. (Marty also stands.)

3 You already know Marty. I've known  
4 Marty since 1972, so what can I tell you, we go  
5 way back. We like family.

6 But I will be -- I will turn the mic  
7 over to State Representative Vanessa Lowery  
8 Brown. I want to say thank you Grace from the  
9 60th Ward. Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And all of my  
12 friends and neighbors and people who will deal  
13 with this issue, I know why you are all out here  
14 in this bad weather. I know what you tell me,  
15 what you say about water rate increase. And I  
16 will do my part to make sure that is known.

17 All of these folks work for the Water  
18 Department, but the Board has to okay for it to  
19 happen. So, we're not at that point. We will  
20 have an opportunity to do our part to reject it  
21 if possible.

22 Thank you very much.

23 (Applause.)

24 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Thank you,

1 Councilwoman. I'm going to show you how smart I  
2 am. I'm with her.

3 (Applause.)

4 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: So, I pay water  
5 bills just like you do. No one wants to see  
6 their bills go up. I support whatever the  
7 community is on this. This is where I want to  
8 be. I kind of have a feeling I know already  
9 where you are. We are going to hope that we can  
10 have a good discourse tonight. And we will do it  
11 civilly tonight and respectfully. And we will  
12 listen to what is being presented to us and then  
13 we are going to give our opinions about how we  
14 feel about what we hear. And I think that's fair  
15 on all parts.

16 Without any further ado, I am just going  
17 to remove myself from the mic and get on with the  
18 program.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We got good  
20 people here.

21 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: Yes, we do.  
22 Thank you, everyone.

23 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you  
24 very much. Now we've come to the essential

1 reason for our gathering together just to hear  
2 from you what your opinions are about the rate  
3 increase proposal and what your concerns are and  
4 anything else you'd like to tell the Board as we  
5 over the next, let's see, we have until June 30  
6 to figure this out. So any time between now and  
7 June -- any time between now and April 18, I  
8 think. We will let you know. It's on our web  
9 page.

10 We will take any kind of comment, even  
11 if you have spoken here tonight. We will take  
12 your comments. We will take your complaints,  
13 your concerns. We can't help with individual  
14 bill problems. For that, you do have to go to  
15 the PWD itself. What we are here to do is to  
16 review the PWD's request for a rate increase.

17 I have before me four names on the  
18 sign-up sheets that people who said they would be  
19 interested in speaking. We are not going to  
20 limit it to that, but why don't we start there.  
21 I have a Diane Showers. Come on up and you can  
22 use the mic if you would.

23 MS. SHOWERS: Hello. This increase that  
24 you're talking about, is this a temporary

1 increase? I heard you say two years.

2 Is this supposed to be for two years the  
3 same kind of increase, temporary increase, that  
4 Michael Nutter asked for on our real estate that  
5 was supposed to be for two years and it just  
6 continued on and on and on?

7 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: I don't know  
8 about that. If they get it, it will go up the  
9 beginning of July next year and then stay at that  
10 level unless it's changed for some other reason.  
11 And then July of the following year, it would go  
12 up again. These increases will stay unless, for  
13 some reason, their cost of doing service drops  
14 and they lower the rate.

15 MS. SHOWERS: It's not for two years  
16 then?

17 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: No. It's  
18 going to happen over two years.

19 MS. SHOWERS: What I'm saying, is the  
20 rate going to go back after the second year?

21 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: No.

22 MS. SHOWERS: Okay. Well, I think that  
23 the citizens of Philadelphia would be impacted  
24 negatively. This is not Simi Valley where they



1 have money up the yahoo where, you know, they  
2 have a lot of disposable income. A lot of people  
3 here in Philadelphia on fixed incomes, low  
4 income, no incomes.

5 And I think we've been tricked a lot,  
6 particularly with that real estate increase that  
7 we got from Michael Nutter. And we are hammered  
8 all the time by the gas company, and I think  
9 enough is enough. I think we need to -- we just  
10 need to stop. I think if you need that  
11 \$150 million, can you get it in a two-year  
12 period?

13 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: I'm not sure  
14 I understand the question.

15 MS. SHOWERS: I thought I saw something  
16 that you need \$105.

17 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: The three of  
18 us and the other Board Members, I am staff -- we  
19 don't need anything, but the Water Department  
20 does.

21 MS. SHOWERS: They need the \$105  
22 million.

23 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: That's what  
24 they said.

1 MS. SHOWERS: Can they get it in a  
2 two-year period? That's what I'm asking. How  
3 come the rate can't go back after two years like  
4 Michael Nutter did real estate taxes? That  
5 stayed the same.

6 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: The Board  
7 does look at the question of beyond the two  
8 years. Nobody so far has suggested to the Board  
9 that their costs are going to go down after the  
10 two years. So nobody --

11 MS. SHOWERS: I am just talking about  
12 the figure I saw \$105 million. If that's what  
13 they need and they can get it in two years, why  
14 can't they get it and then go back to the  
15 57-dollar a month rate?

16 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Well, you can  
17 talk with them about it.

18 MS. SHOWERS: Who do I talk to?

19 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: They are  
20 proposing that going forward.

21 MS. SHOWERS: Can somebody answer that.

22 MR. DASENT: After the presentation by  
23 the various witnesses as to their concerns, Debra  
24 McCarty and her Deputy Commissioner from Finance

1 Ms. LaBuda is here. We can get additional -- and  
2 Steve Vertek are in the room and can offer some  
3 additional explanations.

4 Why don't we hear from the customer  
5 first.

6 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you,  
7 Mr. Dasent. I apologize.

8 MR. CHAPMAN: Are you okay with that?  
9 If they respond after, can you wait?

10 MR. BRUNWASSER: Can you wait?

11 MS. SHOWERS: They will answer it?

12 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: We can't  
13 answer that.

14 MS. SHOWERS: Thank you.

15 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: We have to  
16 rule on the request.

17 MS. SHOWERS: Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Certainly, we  
19 have taken your comment about this.

20 MS. SHOWERS: That 105 million in two  
21 years, yes.

22 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Next, Sandra  
23 Steward. By the way, if you hadn't mentioned it,  
24 we do have a court reporter here. Nobody is

1 under oath, but we like to have a record of  
2 what's been said so that we can refer back to it  
3 and to get your comments, also.

4 Chairman Brunwasser asked me to let you  
5 know there are several board members who could  
6 not be here tonight. One of them is home with a  
7 sick child. The other baby-sitting daughter's  
8 child. But they will have access to the  
9 transcript as well, so I'm sure they will read it  
10 to hear your comments.

11 And now, ma'am.

12 MS. STEWARD: Councilwoman Blackwell,  
13 she answered some of my questions which was when  
14 was our last increase. And I think you said it  
15 was 2013. Okay, so 2013. This is 2016.

16 Can someone tell me what that  
17 increase -- what did that cover? What did we get  
18 from that increase in 2013?

19 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: You know,  
20 this is making it clear to me that the format  
21 that we thought we were going to use for tonight  
22 is not going to be responsive. Because, again,  
23 the Board can't answer those questions. There  
24 are people here from the Water Department.

1           We had wanted to just hear from the  
2 public. And we certainly have quite long  
3 presentations from the Water Department. But if  
4 it would be preferrable to you all, we could ask  
5 a representative of the Water Department to  
6 answer your questions.

7           AUDIENCE MEMBER: We don't want a rate  
8 increase.

9           MS. STEWARD: I would appreciate that.  
10 I don't want an increase especially if you can't  
11 tell me what you did with the money that you got  
12 lost time. If you can't tell me that, then no.  
13 No increase. Because it's getting ridiculous.  
14 Every couple of years there is more money. You  
15 need more money. You need more money.

16           What are you doing with it?

17           MS. SHOWERS: And where is it coming  
18 from? Where is the money coming from?

19           AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is everybody in the  
20 city paying back equal share.

21           MS. STEWARD: There are some of us  
22 paying to --

23           (Public begins speaking all at once.)

24           MR. CHAPMAN: One person at a time. We

1 appreciate the comments.

2 SENATOR WILLIAMS: Can I make a  
3 suggestion? I don't really understand the  
4 format.

5 There are technical questions that  
6 people in the community want to have. I don't  
7 think they understand the Board are not staff,  
8 you are not paid as a part of the Administration.  
9 I think you need to clarify the Board's function.  
10 You all are private citizens and just  
11 volunteering your time versus a staff person can  
12 answer your questions.

13 And I think, Greg, you know, the format  
14 is pretty simple. Do we agree with a rate  
15 increase or not is what you're trying to get at  
16 as a board? I don't think that answer is going  
17 to be complex at all. The nuances that you want  
18 to know from us, we can fill in the back part.  
19 We can do that. But the truth is, it takes about  
20 ten minutes to get to where we are and that is,  
21 like, no.

22 I don't think people here know -- I  
23 think it would be very helpful is if people  
24 understand; one, you are Philadelphians; two, you

1 all want to help the City; and three, you don't  
2 have a position on it. You are trying to take  
3 input as private citizens. I think they need to  
4 understand that and what the staff is doing.

5 MR. CHAPMAN: I think you have done a  
6 fabulous job with that.

7 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Because we  
8 are independent, we have -- we are going to have  
9 to take questions like that over to the  
10 Department. And we have -- the Department has  
11 sent its Commissioner Debra McCarty here.

12 What I would like to do, though, Debra  
13 is separate that out from the process of hearing  
14 from the public about their concerns, so not go  
15 back and forth, back and forth. If that's all  
16 right with you all, tell us, do you accept the  
17 idea of a rate increase? Do you reject it.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We don't want no rate  
19 increase. I don't want the rate increase.

20 (Public all at once states "no" to increase.)

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just want to say,  
22 it's not a question of whether we want it or not  
23 want it. Obviously, we do not want it. That's  
24 why we all are here. So, that question should

1 not even came up across the table. Now, for  
2 people who have questions that need to be  
3 answered, we need someone here.

4 MS. SHOWERS: Exactly.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You as a Board Member  
6 is to take notes and present it back to your  
7 people. You is supposed to listen and answer our  
8 questions that we brought it to you.

9 MS. SHOWERS: Exactly.

10 MS. McCARTY: I'm happy to do that.  
11 Happy to do that. But the Hearing Officer is --  
12 I'm taking her lead.

13 (Applause.)

14 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Supposedly,  
15 I'm running this show. But we didn't want to get  
16 in a position where we were saying to you or  
17 suggesting to you that, oh, what the Water  
18 Department says is what we believe. We wanted to  
19 make it clear we are independent.

20 But it sounds like you all know what  
21 your position is. You want certain questions  
22 answered. And for that, if Ms. McCarty is  
23 willing, she can come up and answer your  
24 questions one by one. Would that be all right by



1 the --

2 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: When people say  
3 they are opposed to the rate hike, it's not  
4 because they don't want it. It's because they  
5 can't afford it. It's difference between wanting  
6 something and affording it.

7 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Sure. People  
8 should certainly feel free to make a comment  
9 right now without a question. We've had a lot of  
10 hands.

11 SENATOR WILLIAMS: Madam Chair, I want  
12 to help you out here because you are in charge.  
13 But let me -- I want to say something.

14 The Board is private citizens come  
15 before us without them. They have to be here.  
16 There is a rate increase. It's a lot of  
17 information. I thought was appropriate for  
18 somebody -- when you said what does the money  
19 being spent for, right, they are not going to be  
20 able to answer that. They have a presentation  
21 from the Water Department to sort of make you  
22 feel better about your rate increase. Make you  
23 feel better.

24 But that said, I think -- understand

1 something. When we're standing up, in order for  
2 them to go back to the Board and vote, they need  
3 to know your name, my name, everybody's name.  
4 This is actual testimony that they are going to  
5 have prepared and say we talked to 50 citizens,  
6 Joe Blow lives in West Philadelphia, such and  
7 such. We need to do that in the process.

8 Frustrating as it may seem and the  
9 questions you may want to ask of the Water  
10 Department, understand something, they're sort of  
11 an adage. You may say to your Councilperson,  
12 this is the current. We want them to come back  
13 and ask technical questions.

14 Their part is simply as private citizens  
15 to hear what we're going to say and then talk  
16 with -- they going to do this across the entire  
17 city. Not paid. A lot of nights go to other  
18 parts of the City to probably hear pretty much  
19 the same thing. And people being frustrated  
20 about what they don't get back.

21 I want to make sure you understood, I  
22 don't want you to get frustrated -- well, go  
23 ahead if you need to be. That said, make sure  
24 you get your name as part of the record so it can

1 be part of the official record rather than just  
2 saying they had a meeting and people said no  
3 because it doesn't count.

4 As we're sitting, my name is Anthony  
5 Williams. I live on Cobbs Creek Parkway. I said  
6 no. Thank you.

7 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: And tell how it  
8 affects you.

9 MS. JONES: My name is Carla Jones. I  
10 live at 58th and Thompson. I'm a single parent  
11 of two, and I vote against a Philadelphia Water  
12 Department rate increase.

13 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Okay.

14 MS. McCARTY: I think it --

15 MS. TRAN: As public advocate --

16 MS. McCARTY: I'm sorry, too. I think  
17 we all know no one wants a rate increase. But  
18 when you come up, it would be helpful if you have  
19 specifics like someone did say it's not  
20 affordable. That's very helpful.

21 If there are specific issues, I think  
22 that's helpful for the Board and it's helpful for  
23 us, as well. So if you wouldn't mind, I don't  
24 know if that was what you were going to say.

1 MS. TRAN: Something similar. Very  
2 briefly, could I just introduce myself?

3 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: What we are  
4 going to do, a representative from the Public  
5 Advocate group will speak and then we will  
6 continue to take your comments.

7 MS. TRAN: I have met a bunch of you  
8 already. My name is Thu Tran. I'm the Community  
9 Legal Services. The CLS is the public advocate  
10 on behalf of residential customers and other  
11 small users of the Water Department. And I do  
12 encourage you to come up and say your name and  
13 address and say a few words about why you are  
14 opposed to the increase.

15 I mean, there were promises made in the  
16 last rate case. Have you seen the improvements?  
17 What areas would you like to see as a condition  
18 of the current rate increase? Those are the  
19 types of things we would like to hear. We are  
20 working with a team of experts to examine the  
21 over 5,000 pages of financial figures and filing  
22 that has been submitted in this case.

23 And we are going to -- we are working  
24 for you to make sure that there is a reasonable

1 rate request and that it's not higher than  
2 absolutely necessary. So it is helpful for us to  
3 hear individually about your situations.

4 And in case you missed it, it's a  
5 12 percent increase by next year. The \$97  
6 increase by July 2017. So, I'm not getting a  
7 12 percent increase next year. This affects the  
8 things we need to hear. Our experts will be  
9 looking at the issues that we talk about and  
10 looking to see if there might be some  
11 improvements that could come your way.

12 Please come up.

13 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you  
14 very much. We have one -- after you give us your  
15 comments, I'm going to want to introduce -- I  
16 want to tell you all about one specific thing  
17 that is being requested which is a program to  
18 help people pay their water bills.

19 MS. BAZEMORE: I know about that, too.  
20 My name is Ruth Bazemore. I live in West Philly.  
21 I actually work with Action Alliance and I'm the  
22 community legal ward when we go to court to fight  
23 these increases. And it's very important to  
24 understand that we have no representation in

1 Philadelphia as residents on what they're doing  
2 to us.

3 One of the things that is so funny is  
4 that we have these old, old pipes that they been  
5 here for years. And nobody -- the water people  
6 has not invested any money to do anything. But  
7 they change the law that now the pipes are  
8 broken, we have to pay to go to the street.  
9 There has not been any hearing, and I had been a  
10 victim of this thing.

11 Number one, when they come into your  
12 neighborhood and tell you that you have to pay  
13 thousands of dollars for this, then they tell you  
14 that they can help you with a program you don't  
15 know anything about. And that's called help.  
16 Now help -- actually say, we can fix your pipes  
17 through our -- our people who we suggest. These  
18 people are given the price. You don't even know  
19 the price because you can't really shop. But  
20 there are people that the City has put in place  
21 and they decide how much you pay.

22 And it just seems very strange that all  
23 of this fluctuates and doesn't really make sense.  
24 Because after you do it, my water pressure is not

1 done. Nobody can tell you exactly what part is  
2 what part.

3 Then we also have the same little bit  
4 that we doing with the Water Department with  
5 lead. And nobody is saying that these old pipes,  
6 they are old. And I live in West Philly when we  
7 do move out. They came through. And 52nd Street  
8 is a prime example of the water and the  
9 devastation of these pipes. And they have not  
10 fixed them. They still on 52nd Street still  
11 trying to fix them. And it's not happening.

12 All of these things is being put on our  
13 water bill. We are not being told and the City  
14 is not actually -- we also have these things  
15 where they giving us \$15 where we have to do --  
16 water coming through our pipes into our lots.  
17 The main people who have these high developments  
18 are not paying but one time. We are paying for  
19 our lot, and we are paying for our houses. And  
20 nobody can tell you actually in one block who is  
21 paying what.

22 The water bills fluctuate onto whomever  
23 they feel like it. And it needs to be  
24 accountability and people looking at a census of

1     how one block having to pay extra nominal bills  
2     and the other blocks not paying any.  So, we are  
3     asking for equal justice for you to do anything  
4     as far as paying a bill.  Thank you.

5                     (Applause.)

6             HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY:  We have one  
7     more person who signed up.

8             MS. WILLIS:  My name is Denise Willis,  
9     6th Ward, 6th Division.  These are my elected  
10    officials.  Thank you for showing up.

11            Councilwoman Blackwell, this is you.  
12    Love Park spewed water in pink, blue, purple,  
13    orange that fountain.  That was enormous water  
14    bill.  Mayor Nutter, bless his heart, put a Brown  
15    Out for fire codes.  Buildings just burned.  
16    There was no water.

17            COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:  People died,  
18    too.

19            AUDIENCE MEMBER:  People died.

20            MS. WILLIS:  The census, and I am  
21    acknowledging we the people because these three  
22    people represent well over a hundred thousand  
23    people.  So, I recognize we the people of the  
24    United States.





1           AUDIENCE MEMBER: These people got the  
2 answers.

3           MS. McCARTY: What quality pipes do we  
4 use?

5           MR. RODWELL: What AQL, acceptable  
6 quality levels, do you propose for pipes for this  
7 City?

8           MS. McCARTY: Well, we replace the water  
9 mains. We replace them with ductile iron pipes.  
10 A lot of the older pipes are cast iron. And  
11 ductile iron, we have seen, lasts much longer.  
12 And is better pipe to replace the cast iron ones.

13           MR. RODWELL: Do you test them in any  
14 way, form or fashion?

15           MS. McCARTY: Our materials testing lab  
16 does test the pipes to make sure that we are  
17 getting what, you know, we specified in the  
18 contracts.

19           MR. RODWELL: Okay. You do test.  
20 How many do you reject?

21           MS. McCARTY: Off the top of my head, I  
22 can't tell you.

23           MR. RODWELL: Somebody ought to know  
24 that. Somebody -- you shouldn't be accepting

1 pipes without AQL, acceptable quality level. And  
2 if there is a crack or anything in those pipes,  
3 you should not be using them.

4 MS. McCARTY: You are correct. You are  
5 correct. But we have inspectors on our capital  
6 projects. And they make sure the contractors --  
7 not only does the pipe need to be good quality,  
8 how it is installed is very important, as well.

9 MR. RODWELL: I think -- I didn't want  
10 to get to that, but since you brought it up.

11 MS. McCARTY: We inspect all of that.

12 MR. RODWELL: I live at 5734 Wynnefield  
13 Avenue. From 54th and Wynnefield all the way up  
14 to 5738 Wynnefield and Cardinal Avenue, we have  
15 had five water main breaks. Five. It makes no  
16 sense to nobody that's human. It don't make  
17 sense.

18 Now I'd like to know what method do you  
19 use to test these pipes? That's all I want to  
20 know.

21 MS. McCARTY: I believe the main you are  
22 talking about is a transmission main. I have  
23 been out there a couple times on those breaks.  
24 And I believe, and this is just off the top of my

1 head, so don't hold me to it. But that pipe was  
2 installed somewhere between 1900 and 1910. And  
3 we have made repairs. We do have -- I'm looking  
4 at Steve. I think we have a capital project to  
5 relay that main if I'm not mistaken.

6 But the way, you know, if you -- I've  
7 asked Joanne to put the slide up that shows what  
8 the five drivers are for our rate increase. The  
9 one that you see is aging infrastructure.

10 You're right. A few of you have  
11 mentioned this. We need to be more aggressive  
12 about replacing our infrastructure, but it costs  
13 money. And so, we've increased from doing about  
14 18 to 20 miles of water main a year on a  
15 3,100-mile system to 28 miles per year. So,  
16 that's a big jump. And we're still, you know,  
17 going to have pipes that are older than a hundred  
18 years.

19 But we're trying -- the way we target  
20 what pipes need to be replaced is how vulnerable  
21 they are to breaks, how many breaks they have had  
22 in the past. That all goes into the formula, if  
23 you will, on the decision to where we prioritize  
24 our money. Because there isn't an infinite

1 amount of money as you all know and you live and  
2 deal with day in and day out. We need to spend  
3 your money very, very responsibly. So, we target  
4 and prioritize where we do replace these pipes.

5 MR. RODWELL: The only thing that I'm  
6 concerned about, ma'am, and I am very much  
7 concerned about is if one of these pipes break,  
8 why don't we try to figure out what was the  
9 reason for the breakage?

10 Now if you -- these pipes are being  
11 tested before they go in the ground, I don't know  
12 what method you use to test them with whether  
13 it's ultraviolet or someone crawl in there or  
14 what, but something has to be done with these  
15 pipes especially when you see one or two is  
16 broken, then you ought to change them and try to  
17 figure out what happened to that one.

18 MS. McCARTY: What I can tell you is  
19 that none of the ductile iron pipes we have  
20 install have failed. None of them. And that's  
21 what we're installing now. It's the older pipes  
22 that are failing. It's not the new pipes. And I  
23 wasn't around a hundred years ago, so I don't  
24 know what they did back then.

1 MR. RODWELL: No, no, no, no.

2 MS. McCARTY: What I can tell you also  
3 is that we have, you know, a lot of pipes that  
4 haven't failed yet. And so, somebody was doing  
5 something right back then because we would be in  
6 a whole lot more trouble if they hadn't.

7 We do care very much about how they're  
8 installed and the quality and the workmanship of  
9 the materials.

10 MR. RODWELL: You stated that your old  
11 pipes has been here a hundred years.

12 MS. McCARTY: Or more.

13 MR. RODWELL: My house was built in  
14 1946.

15 MS. McCARTY: Okay.

16 MR. RODWELL: We have had five pipes for  
17 54th and Wynnefield all the way up to 5738  
18 Wynnefield. And they started last year in  
19 August, I believe, before then. And here in  
20 January and February of this -- no, yeah.  
21 December. December of this year -- last year.

22 I had SEPTA come out because I was  
23 complaining about buses running down the street  
24 which we never had before, okay? Now, that was a

1 problem. We still got buses running down the  
2 street.

3 And it's amazing to me nobody can tell  
4 me just what quality of iron you using or  
5 whatever you're using. I really don't know. But  
6 it seems like corrective action has been delayed.  
7 If a pipe break, find out what the reason that it  
8 break.

9 MS. McCARTY: We do. On the large  
10 transmission mains, we do diagnostics. Yes, we  
11 do.

12 MR. RODWELL: You do?

13 MS. McCARTY: Yes, sir.

14 MR. RODWELL: Now, what directive action  
15 you have taken to the vendor who is supplying you  
16 with these pipes to take corrective action?

17 MS. McCARTY: The pipes that are failing  
18 are typically over a hundred years old.

19 MR. RODWELL: Well, you still saying  
20 hundred years. This started back 50 years ago  
21 doing this.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. RODWELL: Come on. Let's be  
24 realistic. I mean, that's just being realistic.

1 Why you let them sit there now and they breaking  
2 up on you. And technology, you got the  
3 technology to determine why they break.

4 MS. SHOWERS: Because they old.

5 MS. McCARTY: Actually, what we see on  
6 the smaller pipes -- so the distribution system  
7 which is the majority of our, you know, our  
8 thousands of miles of pipe, so 6-inch pipes,  
9 8-inch pipes, 10, 12, is in the -- when the water  
10 temperature goes below 40 consistently is when we  
11 see those pipes fail. So, it tends to be the  
12 winter time. It's not that they don't fail every  
13 day. We have water main breaks, believe it or  
14 not on average, at least one a day.

15 Because larger pipes, the ones that are  
16 very devastating typically and, you know,  
17 Wynnefield is a large main. I think it's a  
18 30-inch main, but there is also smaller main in  
19 there, as well. But the transmission mains we  
20 test. Every time they break, we do diagnostics.  
21 We have an expert come out and diagnose what  
22 caused the problem. And basically, it tends to  
23 be a site specific issue.

24 I don't recall -- I think maybe once or



1 twice in the last 15 years there was a defect, a  
2 manufacturing defect with that pipe. But again,  
3 that pipe was installed 1800s, early 1900s. I  
4 can't go back to the manufacturer. They don't  
5 exist.

6 MR. RODWELL: I don't expect you to go  
7 back to the manufacturer.

8 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: I'd like to  
9 let someone else talk, Mr. Rodwell, if that's  
10 okay?

11 MR. RODWELL: Am I over my time here?

12 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: It's not time  
13 so much as we have been over this topic. I don't  
14 think we're going to get better answers.

15 MR. RODWELL: I see that I'm not getting  
16 that good answers. I'm going to speak to her on  
17 the side.

18 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: That's what I  
19 was going to suggest if people feel like back and  
20 forth is not getting them the information they  
21 need, that's one reason the Department is here to  
22 try to answer your questions.

23 Is there anybody else who would like to  
24 come up and speak to the Board about your view on

1 the rate increase?

2 Gentleman in the back.

3 MR. SMITH: Good evening. My name is  
4 Ted Smith. I'm at 44th Ward, 18th Division. I  
5 live at the 5200 block of Winslow Street. I  
6 have -- I vote no for the increase, first of all.

7 Unfortunately, I have been a victim  
8 indirectly of the pipe breaks on 52nd Street. We  
9 have had three major pipe breaks in the last  
10 twelve years. My question is, how much of the  
11 money of the increase is allotted to the  
12 residents who have been displaced from the pipe  
13 breaks by the water that has spilled out which we  
14 had 55 million gallons on June 19?

15 We had several, over dozens of residents  
16 who had to be displaced, who had to rent cars,  
17 who had to move, who had to get motel rooms just  
18 to survive. Where is the money going to assist  
19 these residents when these major pipe breaks  
20 happen?

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, where is the  
22 money?

23 MS. McCARTY: Good to see you again,  
24 Ted. Ted came to most of the community meetings

1 we had down at 52nd and Wyalusing with  
2 Councilwoman Blackwell and State Rep Vanessa  
3 Brown was there, as well.

4 And we are working with our Risk  
5 Management Department to settle all of the claims  
6 for the folks that were impacted by that water  
7 main break back on June 14, 2015. The money is  
8 going to the residents, those that suffered  
9 losses. Risk Management needs to work out all of  
10 the claims. I mean, it's going to the folks that  
11 were suffering damages.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's a disgrace  
13 that they haven't straightened this out. Every  
14 time it's mentioned from June 14 to now, people  
15 have not been straightened out. They made them  
16 use deductibles from their insurance and  
17 everything. We have been fighting it ever since.  
18 It's a disgrace.

19 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Gentleman in  
20 the back?

21 MR. SPEARMAN: My name is Greg Spearman.  
22 I am the 60th Ward. I think you can save money  
23 but not having this young lady here. Don't no  
24 why you have to have some transcripts. Got three

1 of y'all there. I am sure you can bullet point  
2 the issues and concerns that we have. It's not  
3 that deep. I mean, for real, for real. That's  
4 money saved.

5 We keep playing these -- as the  
6 Councilwoman talked about, I mean, we look at  
7 basic rights that we -- that we have as citizens  
8 in Philadelphia. And we look at the water main  
9 break on 52nd Street. We still going on and you  
10 want more money. You want us just to say, okay,  
11 you can have more money. To do what? Disrespect  
12 us with our own money?

13 Then you talk about 11, 12 percent  
14 increase. You know, last I heard it's something  
15 reasonable is like 6 percent, 7 percent increase.  
16 But how do you jump to 12 and turn on forever?  
17 Forever? And then give us this show for  
18 something that's going -- that after you make the  
19 money, you still keep the increase. That's  
20 another insult. That's another insult. That's a  
21 big insult.

22 When we talk about hardships on our  
23 community, thank God -- thank God, everybody, for  
24 the elected officials that we have because they

1 fight so hard. Thank you, Councilwoman  
2 Blackwell.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.  
4 Thank you.

5 MR. SPEARMAN: Thank you State  
6 Representative Ms. Vanessa Brown. Thank you.  
7 And I thank my Senator Anthony Hardy Williams.  
8 And take back the message that we will not go  
9 forth. We don't want it. We already know what  
10 it is. And then they send y'all out to take the  
11 bullets, to take the bullets.

12 You seen how we came up here and we got  
13 questions and we got concerns? It's nothing you  
14 can do for us. I mean, we respect you. God  
15 bless you, too. But it's nothing you can do for  
16 us. This is a mock meeting.

17 Take the message back strong. Like I  
18 said, thank God for the strong representation  
19 that we got here in West Philadelphia.

20 (Applause.)

21 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Before we  
22 take some more comments, I need to explain a  
23 little bit about what you are seeing here. I am  
24 actually getting paid for tonight. I am a

1 Hearing Officer. I was hired by the Board. And  
2 yes, our court reporter is getting paid.

3 The City passed an ordinance last year  
4 that was based on the recommendation of all the  
5 people. They didn't think that the process for  
6 setting rates by the Department was open enough,  
7 and they wanted to have stricter rules. And one  
8 of the results of that is that we are here trying  
9 to have a hearing to hear your concerns.

10 And I will be running all the technical  
11 hearings. And we will have it all reported by  
12 the court reporter. That's one of the things  
13 that was asked for of us. So -- but I don't want  
14 to give you the impression that I personally am  
15 not being paid. The gentleman who are on the  
16 Board and who will make the decisions are not  
17 being paid.

18 We have the gentleman in the back.

19 MR. THOMAS: Good evening. My name is  
20 Darryl Thomas. I live at 4119 Baron Street.

21 Two years ago, a water main broke. And  
22 I was told as well as 50 other residents were  
23 told that it was a private sewer. And I was  
24 charged as well as the other 50 residents for the

1 repair of the private sewer. So not only did I  
2 deal with the increase, but I also dealt with the  
3 repair personally as well as the 50 other  
4 residents. It's unfair. It's unfair. It's  
5 unfair. It's unjust.

6 I think I'm speaking for everyone in the  
7 190th that is here. That is unfair. It's  
8 unjust. We vote no.

9 MS. HARTLEY: My name is Jerry Mosely  
10 Hartley. I live at Penrose Park. I am one of  
11 those people who had a pipe break in their home.  
12 And I'm one of the people that's typical paying  
13 these bills. And I called the water company to  
14 have someone come out so that they can explain to  
15 me why my bill was so expensive. I'm still  
16 waiting. That was in January.

17 But my question now is after all these  
18 hearings, will we have another meeting to  
19 determine if there is going to be an increase or  
20 the water company going to just assume and make  
21 that increase?

22 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: What's going  
23 to happen is in February, March we are having  
24 these meetings directly for the public. Then we

1 are going to have these experts that is trying to  
2 talk about -- present their information to the  
3 Board Members. And the people, the public  
4 advocate and others like them, are going to write  
5 to the Board their reasons why they want it or  
6 don't want it or what they want.

7 We're not going to have more public  
8 hearings. But we do welcome your comments,  
9 emails, snail mail, carrier pigeon, any way you  
10 can get it to us.

11 MS. HARTLEY: With us saying no to the  
12 increase, doesn't matter to the Board Members,  
13 they going to increase it anyway?

14 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: That's not --

15 MR. CHAPMAN: That's why we're here.  
16 We're having five or six meetings all around the  
17 City to allow the people of the City to express  
18 their --

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think everybody is  
20 going to say no.

21 MR. CHAPMAN: I'm a rate payer, also,  
22 myself.

23 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: The whole  
24 reason this Board was set up was because people



1 felt that their concerns weren't being heard.  
2 And so, this Board takes very seriously its  
3 responsibility to hear what people say and take  
4 into account. The Chairman asked me to make sure  
5 that I advise people that part -- another  
6 ordinance that is passed created a program so  
7 that people of very low income won't have to pay  
8 more than a certain percentage of their income  
9 towards their water bills.

10 The details of that program are being  
11 worked out.

12 MR. CHAPMAN: Joanne, do you have the  
13 slide on the affordability?

14 MS. DAHME: It doesn't break it down to  
15 the actual components we talk about for the  
16 assistance programs.

17 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: There is a  
18 new one coming down the pipe which is intended to  
19 be more tailored to what people need and directly  
20 go to the question of affordability. So, that  
21 will be taken up also in these proceedings.

22 MS. McCARTY: If I may to Ms. Mosely,  
23 there are folks right back at that table that  
24 right now today tonight can help you with your

1 issue with the large bill and can provide  
2 assistance on that.

3 MS. HARTLEY: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. McCARTY: If I may add to what the  
5 Hearing Officer mentioned, not only did City  
6 Council pass an ordinance to create the Rate  
7 Board, but the citizens of Philadelphia voted for  
8 the charter change to how we do this process now.

9 MS. BAZEMORE: They voted on when, the  
10 ballot?

11 MS. McCARTY: Yes, ma'am.

12 MS. BAZEMORE: That's another thing. We  
13 never even know the questions on the ballot, and  
14 they're not clear. And it really says can the  
15 City do capital improvement. And I'm beginning  
16 to tell people if you don't know these questions  
17 and they have not come out in the meeting to  
18 explain to you about the questions, vote no.  
19 Vote no for all of these things because it's a  
20 scam.

21 Like the Water Department, you getting  
22 ready to give us poor people some relief when  
23 they can't even pay the water bills and you shut  
24 the water off. So, why haven't you come and

1 talked to the people about the program first so  
2 that we will understand what you're trying to do.  
3 You're going to raise the water bills, say we  
4 giving you a break. No, you're not. It's all a  
5 scam. And we need to understand that we need to  
6 come to the people and tell the people what's  
7 going on with the hearing. Because you vote as  
8 City Council for things we don't even know about,  
9 and it's done.

10 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: It isn't  
11 done.

12 MS. SHOWERS: Who determines what low  
13 income is? If you make \$11,000 a year, suppose I  
14 make 12,000? I don't qualify.

15 MS. McCARTY: It's based on various --  
16 there are three tiers based on federal poverty  
17 level. There is 0 to 50, 50 to 100, 100 to --

18 MS. SHOWERS: You got working poor  
19 people, too, that work every day that can't pay.

20 MS. BAZEMORE: You penalize the people  
21 that work.

22 MS. McCARTY: These are --

23 MS. SHOWERS: As was said, you got  
24 working poor people. People that go to work

1 every day that can't afford it.

2 MS. McCARTY: If I may, this is valuable  
3 feedback to the Board. The Board --

4 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: I don't -- I  
5 think you don't need to speak for the Board, if I  
6 may, please.

7 I think what I want to do now is go back  
8 and see if there are any further public comments?  
9 Anybody else who wants to come up and make a  
10 comment.

11 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: I'm State  
12 Representative Vanessa Lowery Brown. And I just  
13 wanted to just talk about a few of the  
14 constituents that we serve in our office and what  
15 some of the hardships are that they are going  
16 through.

17 I have a senior that I'm working with  
18 right now. She's not had water in her house for  
19 a year. Her pipes have broken under in the  
20 ground, and that was between the street and her  
21 house. And she was told she was responsible to  
22 have those pipes fixed. Her income, she's on a  
23 fixed income and her income didn't allow her  
24 enough money to dig up the street and pay a

1 contractor to fix those pipes.

2 This is a 74-year-old woman who is going  
3 every day to the store to buy cases of water. I  
4 mean, she's like a Flint, Michigan story. She is  
5 buying cases of water to bathe, to eat and  
6 prepare her food, to drink and prepare her food.  
7 She's been doing that now for a year.

8 When I call and I talk to her, she says  
9 I'm tired. We told her that there were programs  
10 and loan program. She's in a tangled title  
11 situation in her home. Her mother died, left her  
12 the home. And her mother didn't have some other  
13 issues and she can't get the house comfortable --  
14 quickly enough turned over in her name.

15 This is a good woman who worked hard in  
16 her life who has now been a year without water,  
17 dredging cases of water back and forth. And  
18 she's just one example of many women, single  
19 women that are out there doing this.

20 Now we have single mothers who are on  
21 fixed incomes and even on the Department of  
22 Welfare that is the only income that are in the  
23 paid work positions where they are, you know,  
24 have to work in order to get their welfare

1 benefits. It's just not enough to pay their  
2 bills.

3 It's not just a water bill we're talking  
4 about. We are talking about all of their bills  
5 accumulated together and how they budget and save  
6 on this little bit of money and try to survive.  
7 They are having a very hard time making it on a  
8 very small amount of money. So any increase and  
9 especially 12 percent is going to just add more  
10 burdens to the people that we serve. It's going  
11 to bring more people into our offices that are  
12 going to be coming in there asking for help. And  
13 people just cannot live without water.

14 Once you're terminated from the Water  
15 Department, you have to pay very high fees to get  
16 cut back on. And a lot of people say I can't  
17 afford it. And they just walk away and they just  
18 try to figure out a new way to live in their life  
19 without water. It's just not acceptable in this  
20 country for us to allow people to live like that.  
21 It's not acceptable.

22 (Applause.)

23 REPRESENTATIVE BROWN: I understand. I  
24 feel the pressure about the infrastructure. We

1 were down there on 52nd Street. We know that the  
2 reason why we had all those floods was because  
3 the infrastructure was so old and we understand  
4 it has to be repaired, but on whose back? You  
5 know, at some point the people can't carry any  
6 more on their back. They just can't do it.

7 I wanted to get up and explain to you  
8 some of the things that I'm experiencing in my  
9 office. And my heart just goes out to the people  
10 because there are sometimes we can't fix their  
11 problems. I know when they walk out the door  
12 they are going to be terminated. There's nothing  
13 we can do to get them back on. I just want you  
14 to take that into consideration when you think  
15 about the hike.

16 Thank you.

17 MR. CHAPMAN: Thank you very much.

18 (Applause.)

19 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Is there  
20 anybody who hasn't had a chance to speak who  
21 would like to come up?

22 MR. SPEARMAN: No more increase. No  
23 more increase.

24 MS. SHOWERS: I already spoke, but I

1 need my question answered. This \$102 million  
2 that they need, is this the same kind of tax that  
3 Michael Nutter asked for in real estate that's  
4 supposed to be temporary for two years? And I  
5 really -- how long is this increase going to be  
6 needed?

7 MS. McCARTY: So, we're asking for this  
8 July.

9 MS. SHOWERS: Two years, right?

10 MS. McCARTY: This July we are asking  
11 for 6.2 percent rate increase. And then the next  
12 following July, we're asking for a 5.5 percent  
13 rate increase.

14 MS. SHOWERS: Uh-huh.

15 MS. McCARTY: So that's -- that is to  
16 continue.

17 MS. SHOWERS: The new rate forever.

18 MS. McCARTY: It's not temporary as you  
19 mentioned about the real estate tax. It's to  
20 address the infrastructure issues. It's to  
21 address the infrastructure issues you brought up.  
22 It's to also address affordable -- affordable  
23 rates that we want to -- we have asked the Board  
24 to help us establish a program, a different



1 affordable rates program for folks that have  
2 challenges, pay their water source and water  
3 bill. It's also --

4 MS. SHOWERS: Everybody has challenges.

5 MS. McCARTY: Well, some people have  
6 more than others. And so --

7 MS. SHOWERS: You just do abracadabra  
8 and the money just -- the 12 percent, you just do  
9 abracadabra, wave a wand. Where does this money  
10 come from? I just want to know.

11 MS. McCARTY: Everything that we collect  
12 in the water stormwater bill has to go back into  
13 operating the utility. It's the people that are  
14 running any one of our six treatment plants, the  
15 three drinking water and the three wastewater  
16 plants. And it's to pay for chemicals, pay for  
17 power, pay for fuel. Those are some of the big  
18 ticket items just like our bills.

19 You know PGW -- if you got PGW and PECO,  
20 those are my higher bills. My water bill is not  
21 anywhere close to those two. And we have to pay  
22 those bills, too, to our utilities.

23 MS. SHOWERS: You not applying for those  
24 programs, though?

1 MS. McCARTY: We can't apply.

2 MS. SHOWERS: I know you can't. You  
3 don't qualify for them.

4 MS. McCARTY: What I can tell you about  
5 the electricity is we take advantage of getting  
6 electric power, what they call on spot market.  
7 And we've been able to get a very good rate. In  
8 fact, our electric bill is not going to go up  
9 next year. So, we're passing -- you know,  
10 believe it or not, that's being passed on to you  
11 all our rate payers, that savings. That, you  
12 know, lack of increase for power is getting  
13 passed on to you all. And, you know, we don't  
14 have to ask for as much.

15 And I will also point out that there was  
16 no rate increase in July of 2015. So we had --  
17 there was no rate increase. But we now  
18 unfortunately because of a lot of those things I  
19 mentioned, have to come back and ask for a rate  
20 increase.

21 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you.

22 MS. McCARTY: Did I answer your  
23 question?

24 MS. SHOWERS: Nope. You said you need

1 \$105 million. I can't see why the increase has  
2 to go on forever.

3 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: We are going  
4 to have -- we have five dozen pages.

5 MS. SHOWERS: It's a hardship. I like  
6 her mathematics \$5 times 105 million people or  
7 whatever it is.

8 MS. McCARTY: Our --

9 MS. SHOWERS: That should be enough.  
10 It's greed. It's a lot of waste. It's a lot of  
11 waste. What you all need is more creative minds  
12 in your department to come up with ways to --  
13 like an Atlanta. Those progressive cities like  
14 that, that don't operate so much on the backs of  
15 the people. They have -- they can invite  
16 corporations to come into their city because they  
17 have something to offer.

18 You all need to get creative.

19 MS. McCARTY: What I can tell you is  
20 Atlanta, their charges are higher than ours. And  
21 we --

22 MS. SHOWERS: They got a lot of  
23 corporations centered, they got a main hub for  
24 Delta Airlines. They got Coca-Cola. They got

1 CNN.

2 MS. McCARTY: Right.

3 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Ladies,  
4 ladies --

5 MS. McCARTY: Our program provides  
6 overflow. It's a regulatory program. We're  
7 ahead of the game compared to Atlanta.

8 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: I don't think  
9 you're going to be satisfied --

10 MS. SHOWERS: Nope.

11 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: -- by  
12 anything we can say or the department can say  
13 tonight.

14 MS. SHOWERS: Absolutely. That's right.

15 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: You might  
16 want to talk to Ms. Tran because her office is  
17 the Public Advocate. And their job is to pick  
18 apart the request and see if there's anything  
19 soft in it, and then tell us about it.

20 I want to make sure there's nobody else  
21 who -- nobody who hasn't spoken who wants a  
22 chance?

23 MS. RUPPERT: Can I say something? My  
24 name is Virginia Ruppert. I'm live in Mantua.

1 And Drexel University is consuming us. I'm  
2 concerned about the universities and the  
3 hospitals. They use water, also. Are they  
4 paying what we're paying or do they get a  
5 discount?

6 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: They get a  
7 different rate. I don't know.

8 MR. THOMAS: I don't think is different.

9 MS. McCARTY: The universities get a  
10 discount except for like their dorms. Any  
11 residential does not get the discount. But  
12 hospitals and universities, yes, they get a  
13 discount. And that's by ordinance.

14 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: That's by  
15 ordinances.

16 MR. BRUNWASSER: That's by regulation.

17 MS. RUPPERT: We need to change the  
18 ordinance especially for the universities.  
19 That's my opinion.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm with you.

21 HEARING OFFICER BROCKWAY: Thank you.  
22 Thank you very much, especially all of you who  
23 lasted till the very end here.

24 Again, please let the Board know if you

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1 have questions that have not been answered and  
2 you don't get an answer that you want from the  
3 Department. If you have further comments or just  
4 want to say anything you want to the Board, we  
5 want to hear from public and we would be glad you  
6 came here tonight to tell us what you felt.

7 Thank you very much.

8 (Public Hearing concluded at 8:01 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

-----  
ANGELA M. KING, RPR  
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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