

PHILADELPHIA WATER, SEWER AND STORM WATER

RATE BOARD

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Virtually

HELD BEFORE: MARLANE R. CHESTNUT,
Hearing Officer

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2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: This
3 is the second of the public hearings
4 scheduled by the Philadelphia Water,
5 Sewer and Storm Water Rate Board to give
6 the Board a chance to hear directly from
7 the customers concerning the Philadelphia
8 Water Department's proposed rates and
9 charges for fiscal year 2021 and 2022.

10 The Rate Board is an
11 independent body that was established to
12 set rates and charges for water and sewer
13 service in Philadelphia. As part of its
14 mandate to conduct an open and
15 transparent examination of the proposed
16 rates, the Board hired Community Legal
17 Services to act as the Public Advocate in
18 this case and selected me as Hearing
19 Officer to ensure that the hearing
20 process is conducted in a fair, impartial
21 and expeditious manner.

22 Due to the ongoing public
23 health emergency caused by the Covid
24 pandemic, this and all hearings are being

1 conducted remotely.

2 There is a court reporter who
3 is taking down what is being said and
4 will produce a stenographic record of
5 this hearing, so please be sure to speak
6 slowly and clearly.

7 Before we get to hearing from
8 you I will introduce the representatives
9 from the Water Department and the Public
10 Advocate and let them give you an
11 overview of the filing and their plans
12 for how to proceed in this case.

13 Mr. Dasent.

14 MR. DASENT: Yes. Thank you,
15 Your Honor. Glen Abrams from the Public
16 Affairs Unit at the Water Department will
17 be giving an overview of the proceeding
18 as we see it. And then we can proceed to
19 CLS.

20 MR. ABRAMS: Great. Thank you,
21 Andre and Ms. Chestnut.

22 Good evening, everyone. My
23 name is Glen Abrams and I'm speaking on
24 behalf of the Philadelphia Water

1 Department in this proceeding.

2 We first want to thank you all
3 for joining the hearing this evening to
4 share your views about the rate increase
5 request that the Water Department has
6 filed with the Philadelphia Water, Sewer
7 and Storm Water Rate Board.

8 As you may know, if the Rate
9 Board approves the Water Department's
10 full request, a typical residential
11 customer using 500 cubic feet of water
12 per month would see their bill increase
13 by about 11.6 percent in fiscal year 2022
14 and 5.3 percent in fiscal year 2023. Or,
15 approximately \$7.74 per month beginning
16 on September 1st, 2021 and an additional
17 \$3.98 beginning on September 1st, 2022.

18 The Water Department recognizes
19 that any increase in rates can be a
20 hardship, especially right now. But this
21 increase is necessary to address the
22 Department's current financial deficit
23 and to continue maintaining, upgrading
24 and renewing its system to make sure that

1 clean water is delivered as safely and
2 reliably as possible, and that wastewater
3 treatment and storm water management
4 services continue unabated.

5 This system provides essential
6 services that are the foundation of
7 public health in Philadelphia.

8 Importantly, since the Water
9 Department is a municipal utility it has
10 no shareholders and every dollar that it
11 collects is used to support the safe and
12 reliable operation and maintenance of the
13 utility system. Rate relief is necessary
14 now to sustain our operations.

15 It should be noted that the
16 Water Department continues to invest in
17 much needed upgrades to critical water
18 and wastewater infrastructure including
19 replacing aging water mains to reduce the
20 occurrence of water main breaks and
21 increase the reliability of water service
22 to customers; extending the life and
23 reliability of the wastewater system by
24 making repairs and improvements to

1 treatment facilities and improving
2 drinking water treatments; and improving
3 our water conveyance system by
4 rehabilitating critical water
5 infrastructure such as pumping stations
6 and water mains; as well as upgrading
7 water and wastewater treatment
8 facilities.

9 All projects planned for fiscal
10 years 2022 and 2023 are critical
11 investments to ensure the utility can
12 support its operations and continue to
13 provide safe and reliable service to
14 current and future customers with a well
15 maintained water and wastewater system
16 they can count on.

17 I would also highlight that the
18 Water Department has a robust and
19 comprehensive customer assistance program
20 which helps low income customers pay
21 their bills, including the Tiered
22 Assistance Program or TAP, senior citizen
23 discount program, and other programs that
24 are more flexible than ever during this

1 difficult time.

2 The Water Department has also
3 agreed to extend the shutoff moratorium
4 for residential customers through
5 April 1st, 2022 and has paused
6 enforcement activities for our most
7 vulnerable residential customers.

8 If you are experiencing
9 financial hardship we want to help. We
10 encourage you to apply for TAP, the
11 senior discount program or other programs
12 that are available to assist households
13 with payment difficulties. These
14 programs are accessible through the
15 website, www.phila.gov/waterbillhelp, or
16 by calling 215-685-6300 Monday through
17 Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

18 I would also note that if you
19 are having specific billing questions or
20 other service issues that you would like
21 assistance with, please let us know and
22 we will have a customer service
23 representative contact you as soon as
24 possible. Tonight, please use the chat

1 function to identify yourself or let us
2 know that you would like to speak in a
3 breakout room to exchange contact
4 information.

5 The purpose of today's session
6 is to hear from you, the consumers. We
7 appreciate you taking the time to share
8 your views with us today. And we look
9 forward to hearing from you.

10 Thank you.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
12 Pickens, if you want to make a statement
13 on behalf of the Public Advocate.

14 MS. PICKENS: Yes. And thank
15 you. Good evening, Hearing Officer.
16 Good evening, everyone. My name is Josie
17 Pickens and I'm an attorney at Community
18 Legal Services or CLS.

19 CLS has been appointed to serve
20 as Public Advocate to represent the
21 interests of residential and small
22 commercial customers, your mom and pop
23 shops, in this rate proceeding. We are
24 working with a team of experts to examine

1 PWD's proposal and to present our
2 analysis on the independent Water, Sewer
3 and Storm Water Rate Board that will make
4 a determination of whether, and if so,
5 how much PWD rates are allowed to
6 increase.

7 PWD has proposed to raise
8 typical residential water bills by 17
9 and-a-half percent over two years. At
10 the end of that, if that rate request is
11 approved, that would cost you about \$140
12 more per year. We have concerns about
13 PWD's proposal. And we're here this
14 evening to hear from you.

15 Should PWD raise your rates
16 during a pandemic or should it look for
17 ways to lower costs? What about the
18 estimated \$1.4 billion in local
19 government recovery funds that
20 Philadelphia is going to get, shouldn't
21 the City use that to support PWD instead
22 of increasing your rates? What would it
23 mean to your family to have to pay
24 significantly more money for water right

1 now? And has PWD done everything it can
2 do to help you with the assistance you
3 may need?

4 I want to encourage you to
5 please share your views. What you share
6 this evening will be an important part of
7 the record of this case. The Board needs
8 to hear from you and understand what you
9 think about PWD's request to increase
10 your water bills.

11 I want to thank everyone for
12 making the time to participate in this
13 process. Thank you.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
15 thank you, Ms. Pickens.

16 Let me state that there are
17 other participants to this proceeding.
18 They include the Philadelphia Water
19 Revenue Board, which does the actual
20 billing and collections on behalf of the
21 Water Department; the Philadelphia Large
22 Users Group; PECO; and a number of
23 individuals.

24 Let me also note that the

1 chairman of the Rate Board, who is
2 actually the body charged with making the
3 decision concerning the proposed rates,
4 is present also, Sonny Popowsky.

5 Let's take a minute and talk
6 about the schedule and the process.

7 Generally, the process is that the
8 company, the Water Department, excuse me,
9 filed a request to change its rates and
10 charges, and in support of that filed a
11 substantial amount of testimony and
12 exhibits.

13 The Public Advocate and other
14 participants have conducted a discovery
15 which is, they ask questions, they go
16 into detail about that filing. And all
17 of this is posted on the Rate Board's
18 website. The filing, as well as the
19 discovery and the answers to the
20 discovery. So that goes into a lot more
21 detail about every component of this
22 case. If you're interested, it's
23 available for you to see.

24 Now, once the discovery is over

1 and the other non-department parties have
2 a chance to file their own written
3 testimony giving their opinion of the
4 company's filing, there will be another
5 round of testimony to respond to
6 everybody else's. But then there will be
7 what are called technical hearings in
8 April. That's when each side can present
9 its experts who would be cross-examined
10 about the testimony they submitted.

11 After that, each party will
12 have the opportunity to file a written
13 brief. I will write my decision sometime
14 probably, hopefully, by the end of May.
15 And the Board will make the decision by
16 the end of June. Which gives the
17 Department time to deal with whatever the
18 Board decides in order to implement any
19 rates by September 1st. But that's
20 generally the process.

21 And as I said, all this is
22 posted on the Rate Board's website. So
23 if you have any questions about what's
24 filed or dates, it will all be there.

1 It's important that you came
2 tonight because it's easy to talk about
3 customers generally or as a class. It
4 helps to have a human face instead of
5 just saying, the customers, and the
6 customers this, and the effect on the
7 customers is that.

8 We can all agree that it's hard
9 for people to pay more rates. And for a
10 lot of people it's very hard, especially
11 in these times. So I very much
12 appreciate that you took the time to
13 come.

14 And the reason that these
15 public hearings are held when they are in
16 the process is so that the parties can
17 listen to what you say and hopefully
18 incorporate it into their testimony.
19 That's the process.

20 Now, in terms of the hearing
21 itself tonight, as you know, you were
22 asked to register. And people did
23 register. And we will call people in
24 order that they registered. But if there

1 are people who have not registered and
2 would like to make comments, that's fine.
3 I will take you in whatever order we can.

4 If you are on Zoom, if you are
5 on a video, then raise your hand. And I
6 have never done this, but I think it
7 should work, that if you are on a
8 telephone connection and you do
9 star-nine, that apparently unmutes you
10 when I ask if anybody else would like to
11 give a statement. So we are going to try
12 that.

13 Like I said, this is being
14 conducted remotely. We did one this
15 afternoon, that was my first time doing
16 this via Zoom so I hope it went well.
17 And I hope this will go well too.
18 Because this is an important part of the
19 process.

20 I do want to say, though, this
21 isn't your only opportunity to comment or
22 to express your concerns. You can also
23 e-mail or send a letter to the Rate Board
24 or directly to the company or to the

1 Public Advocate. Ms. Pickens can give
2 you the e-mail address to use for the
3 Public Advocate. And I guess Mr. Dasent
4 can do the same for the company. But I
5 read every e-mail that is sent to the
6 Rate Board. It's all posted and it's all
7 there for everybody to see.

8 When it's your turn I will ask
9 you to give and spell your name. I will
10 ask you to give your address and if
11 you're appearing on your own behalf or on
12 behalf of a group.

13 And I'm also going to ask you
14 how you heard about this. The Public
15 Advocate and the Water Department did a
16 lot of outreach and it would be nice to
17 know what worked and maybe what didn't
18 work or maybe where there should be some
19 additional efforts. So if you can think
20 about that, if you saw -- if you got an
21 e-mail or if you heard from word of mouth
22 or you went to the website and saw the
23 notice of this hearing, that would be
24 great.

1 I will ask you to confine your
2 remarks, if you can, to the issue in this
3 hearing which is the proposed rates. As
4 Mr. Abrams said, if you have a billing
5 issue or a particular issue that affects
6 you, we can arrange for the company to
7 meet with you in a breakout room so that
8 you don't have to disclose your personal
9 information and they can get information
10 and resolve your concerns. And I expect
11 that Mr. Dasent will report back to me on
12 the results of that.

13 Let's see. After you have
14 given your statement I will ask the
15 participants if they have questions for
16 you. This is not cross-examination.
17 It's not to embarrass you or to trip you
18 up. It is to ask more clarifying
19 questions in connection with that.

20 Let's talk about the nature of
21 this procedure. It is not litigation.
22 It is not like a civil case where there
23 is a determination of liability and
24 damages. It's not a criminal case where

1 there's a determination of guilt or
2 innocence.

3 This is a collaboration, or at
4 least the way I approach it is a
5 collaboration. Because the customers and
6 the company both want the same thing.
7 Which is, the customers don't want to
8 have to pay more for their service than
9 they can afford. The company doesn't
10 want you to pay more for your service
11 than you can afford because they don't
12 want to have to collect from you and
13 terminate your service, that's expensive.
14 I'm sure they would rather spend the
15 monies on the salaries and the equipment
16 and the supplies that they need. So from
17 that perspective, it's in the company's
18 interest to keep rates low.

19 Now, from a customer
20 perspective, you want to keep your rates
21 low, obviously, but you also want the
22 company to have enough money to do a
23 decent job to provide you the service
24 that you're entitled to. You want safe

1 service. And the company does need a
2 certain amount of money to do that. So
3 the point is, that we have to find that
4 common ground.

5 And I'm sure the parties have
6 been tired of me telling them that I
7 expect consensus in pretty much
8 everything. My objective in this case is
9 not to make any decisions. I would like
10 the parties to resolve things -- the
11 participants, excuse me -- to resolve
12 things among themselves. And that goes
13 from procedural issues like the schedule
14 or discovery disputes, to the substantive
15 issues. Because, as far as I'm
16 concerned, these people are in the best
17 position to know how to address these
18 concerns. The company knows how much it
19 could give a little and the Public
20 Advocate knows what would really be in
21 the best interests of the people that its
22 representing. So really, I urge them to
23 work together.

24 And I'm urging all of you here

1 today to think of this, not as an
2 adversarial thing, but as an opportunity
3 to express your concerns, have those
4 concerns heard, and also perhaps see it
5 from the company's perspective too and
6 think how can we deal with this together.

7 This is a difficult time for
8 everybody. And that includes the
9 utilities as well because they depend on
10 the financial well being of their
11 customers. So we will hopefully get
12 through this and come up with a result
13 that's fair and reasonable and in
14 everybody's interests.

15 Now, at the session this
16 afternoon I made a statement that I
17 consider myself to be the most
18 knowledgeable person in the state when it
19 comes to utility regulation. Now, I did
20 that obviously to get your attention.
21 But I think it's true.

22 Because I do have 25 years
23 experience as an Administrative Law Judge
24 with the Public Utility Commission I have

1 done all kinds of cases. I have done
2 hundreds of rate cases. I have done rate
3 cases for utilities of all kinds in all
4 parts of the state. I have done non-rate
5 cases. I have done mergers and
6 acquisitions. I have done rail cases. I
7 have done everything. But the most,
8 well, the greatest number of cases have
9 been individual complaints, either
10 service complaints or ability to pay. So
11 I'm very conscious of the effect of
12 utility rates on individual people.

13 I spent a lot of my career in
14 the public interest. Before I became an
15 Administrative Law Judge I worked for the
16 Commission in various capacities
17 representing the public interest. I
18 worked for the Office of Consumer
19 Advocate which represents commercial --
20 excuse me, residential customer
21 interests.

22 So, yes, I'm very aware of all
23 aspects of utilities, how they affect
24 people, the rate making process, and how

1 to handle it. In fact, I will even say
2 that after I retired from the Public
3 Utility Commission I did a little work
4 for utilities in Philadelphia, mostly
5 customer service related issues. But,
6 yes, I see it from a utility perspective
7 as well.

8 But most of my work has been
9 done in Philadelphia. So I'm very
10 conscious of the particular facts of
11 Philadelphia. Expenses are high in
12 Philadelphia and incomes are low.
13 There's just no getting around that. But
14 I'm saying this to make you aware that
15 I'm very sensitive to your concerns and
16 the Board is too.

17 Mr. Popowsky was the State
18 Consumer Advocate for many years. His
19 whole career has been in the public
20 service. And the other Board members
21 also are distinguished in their own
22 areas.

23 So I hope this makes you feel
24 better about the process. Because really

1 my objective is to have a fair, equitable
2 process, because you have an equitable
3 process, you're going to have an
4 equitable result.

5 And so far, I really commend
6 all the participants. They work so well
7 together. And have shown nothing by
8 professionalism and good will. And I
9 feel encouraged that this will be a
10 productive use of everybody's time.

11 Okay. Any remarks you want to
12 make on that, Mr. Dasent or Ms. Pickens?
13 Or Mr. Haver, for that matter, since I
14 know you like to chime in.

15 If not, then we will get to the
16 people who signed up to talk. And,
17 again, if you can confine your remarks to
18 the subject so that we can be sure to get
19 everybody in. I'm not going to put time
20 limits now, I think we can accommodate
21 people, but let's see how it goes.

22 Again, I will stress if you
23 have a particular individual issue, that
24 could be handled and we will deal with

1 that.

2 Or if you have comments about
3 the notice or how this is being
4 conducted, please tell us. Like I said,
5 this is my first experience doing these
6 via Zoom. And I'm better at Zoom than I
7 was maybe a year ago, but it's a learning
8 process and I'm certainly open to
9 constructive suggestions. Okay?

10 All right, then we will get
11 started. Steven, do you want to tell us
12 the first person?

13 MR. ABRAMS: You're on mute,
14 Steve.

15 MR. LIANG: Sorry about that.
16 The first person who registered
17 was Barbara Panzano.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Is
19 Barbara Panzano here?

20 No?

21 Okay, well, we will come back
22 to her.

23 MR. LIANG: Next up is Daniela
24 Ascarelli if she's here.

1 MS. ASCARELLI: Yes, yes, I'm
2 here. Dani is the nickname. So my name,
3 my first name is Daniela, D-A-N-I-E-L-A.
4 And the last name is A-S-C-A-R-E-L-L-I.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
6 your address, please?

7 MS. ASCARELLI: 1116 Ellsworth
8 Street. And the zip is 19147.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
10 are you on behalf of yourself or a group?

11 MS. ASCARELLI: I am on behalf
12 of myself.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
14 how did you hear about this?

15 MS. ASCARELLI: I think I saw
16 some Facebook stuff, I saw stuff on Plan
17 Philly and I think you also e-mailed me.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: So
19 social media and e-mail, I guess?

20 MS. ASCARELLI: Sure, I will
21 say that. You may have put something --
22 yeah, I don't -- yeah.

23 I guess I'm here to say I'm a
24 little concerned that you're looking for

1 a rate increase in the middle of a
2 pandemic when we are the poorest large
3 city in America.

4 I think what also concerns me
5 is, I haven't seen anything from the
6 Water Department to try and control costs
7 or to find alternatives to deal with
8 their storm water run off. And I guess
9 before I would feel about good about a
10 70 percent rate increase, which is quite
11 a large rate increase, I'd want to know
12 what they're doing to control these
13 costs.

14 If I may give just a very
15 simple example. I pay my water bills
16 electronically the same way that I pay my
17 credit card bills. The credit card bills
18 years ago stopped sending me an envelope.
19 I get one from the water company every
20 single month. Stunning to me.

21 So I guess that's my primary
22 concern. I understand the need, you
23 know, our challenges with storm water
24 runoff, but I haven't seen the city do

1 anything about it. I haven't seen the
2 Water Department do anything about it.
3 They haven't done anything to make the
4 building of green roofs easier. I'm
5 aware of their storm -- you know, what
6 they're doing for residential folks, but
7 I haven't seen a lot of ease in making
8 green roofs for new buildings.

9 I sent an e-mail as well so
10 that's probably somewhere in the record,
11 when you guys sent me this, when I signed
12 up.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does
14 that complete your statement?

15 MS. ASCARELLI: It does.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does
17 anyone have any questions for
18 Ms. Ascarelli?

19 MR. HAVER: I do, Ms. Chestnut.

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

21 MR. HAVER: Hi. My name is
22 Lance Haver. I would like to ask if you
23 would support using some of the money
24 from the American Recovery Plan Act as

1 opposed to raising rates?

2 MS. ASCARELLI: Absolutely. I
3 would like to see that, some way to use
4 the recovery money to keep rates low.
5 And also then use some of that money to
6 make some substantial long term changes,
7 whether it's, you know, infrastructure or
8 processes or something like that, yes.

9 MR. HAVER: Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does
11 anybody else have anything for
12 Ms. Ascarelli?

13 No?

14 Well, thank you very much, Ms.
15 Ascarelli. I appreciate your taking the
16 time and making your comments. I can
17 assure you they were heard.

18 MS. ASCARELLI: Thank you.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
20 Steven.

21 MR. LIANG: Okay. Next up is
22 Amanda Basard.

23 PARTICIPANT: You have Amanda
24 here.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I do
2 not see an Amanda Basard.

3 Amanda, are you here?

4 Okay, we'll go back to her.

5 MR. LIANG: The last person
6 then is Andrew Rosenthal. I believe I
7 saw him.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.
9 Andrew Rosenthal?

10 MR. ROSENTHAL: I'm just here
11 to attend. I just wanted to watch.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
13 sure.

14 Okay, does somebody want to
15 make a statement? Then why don't you
16 raise your hand.

17 Yes, Richard. Did we see you
18 earlier?

19 MR. OBLEK: Excuse me?

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Did
21 we see you earlier?

22 MR. OBLEK: No. I have been on
23 here just since you started, the evening
24 one.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I
2 thought I saw you this afternoon.

3 MR. OBLEK: No. I have had
4 some discussions with the Water
5 Department on a separate issue, but
6 not --

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
8 sure. Why don't we -- can you give and
9 spell your name for the record then,
10 please?

11 MR. OBLEK: Sure. Last name is
12 Oblek, O-B-L-E-K. Address is 9820 Red
13 Rambler Drive here in Philadelphia. Zip
14 is 19115.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
16 Mr. Oblek, how did you hear about this?

17 MR. OBLEK: Actually, in my
18 first attempted contacts with the water
19 meter issue I sort of crossed these
20 hearings in their web page. Which
21 started me very late down the line here
22 and I had a few things I wanted to bring
23 up so I decided to take a dive in and see
24 if I can make some comments.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Sure
2 go right ahead.

3 MR. OBLEK: First one, as
4 Mr. Haver had mentioned too, was the
5 American Rescue Plan that we have in
6 process developing. I know cities and
7 states are getting billions of dollars to
8 help assuage all the losses that everyone
9 suffered. Will the Water Department in
10 some way, shape or form get any of that
11 money from the federal government? Which
12 would help lower the cost for everybody
13 if they're eligible for some funding.
14 And as the other young lady had mentioned
15 earlier, to set up some sort of concrete
16 plan to make sure that there is a rolling
17 process of doing this without coming back
18 every second or third year and surprising
19 us.

20 In fact, Mr. Haver, I had
21 written him a couple of times in the past
22 when he was working for the city as a
23 consumer advocate, was it? And asked him
24 about these -- one of the things that

1 bothered me is a service charge. Monthly
2 right now I think it's \$12.22 per
3 property. And if there's roughly 500,000
4 properties in the city, and if you
5 extrapolate that into a year, that
6 figures out to about, on a good year,
7 \$73 million just for monthly service
8 charges.

9 That's a heck of a bundle of
10 money. And what is it used for? We've
11 never really known. There's something on
12 the back of one of the forms that says
13 for billing purposes. We are in the
14 computer age. We are not with -- you
15 know, trying to be sarcastic, we don't
16 have scribes doing everything with pens
17 in a back room, this is all done
18 electronically. So why do we need
19 constant increases in service charges?

20 And I haven't seen that yet in
21 whatever paperwork I managed to cross as
22 far as the percentage increase, is there
23 a service charge increase and what will
24 it be? That would, you know, concern me

1 a lot too. Because that's a permanent
2 charge. Like PGW, PECO and everybody
3 else has these, as I call them, charges
4 in perpetuity. Makes no difference what
5 the water, gas or electric costs, you're
6 paying that fee.

7 And that would concern me to
8 have a very honest reckoning of where
9 that money goes. What are they doing
10 with all the literally millions on a good
11 year that come in? Even this year if
12 they said a third of the people were
13 having a bit of difficulty paying their
14 bills, they probably still pulled in
15 somewhere around \$50 million in service
16 charges. Even if people were unable to
17 pay, the ones who could gave them a large
18 surplus to deal with again. And where
19 does the money go?

20 And as I said, my earlier
21 question about the -- has anybody made a
22 clear picture of will the Water
23 Department here in the city get any
24 funding from the federal government?

1 Which would make a substantial difference
2 in what these charges that are being sent
3 on to the public would be. And it would
4 be nice if we knew it ahead of time so we
5 could have a more rational discussion
6 about it.

7 And there was one other thing,
8 if you don't mind, bear with me a second,
9 it's a little dark, I don't want to make
10 it look like I'm something from Christmas
11 Carol and, you know, Jacob Marley. I
12 just wanted to make sure. Service
13 charge, right, the American Rescue Plan,
14 and I did want to make that a very clear
15 comment about how much is taken in by
16 those monthly service charges. They're
17 two of my main concerns that really
18 trouble me with this.

19 Anybody else has any
20 suggestions or better ideas, I'm open.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.
22 Oblek, thank you. I can tell you the
23 cost of service is obviously a very large
24 issue that is looked at intensively. And

1 the customer charge has components that
2 we won't go into now, but it is a
3 function of rate making that you have
4 equipment available to provide service to
5 you, even if you're not using that
6 service at the moment.

7 So I don't want to get into
8 that. But if you have questions about
9 that I think Mr. Dasent might be able to
10 address them or Ms. Pickens, if you
11 contacted her, they can give you an
12 explanation of how the cost of services
13 derive and the components of it.

14 I think in terms of the federal
15 money issue, I think we would all love to
16 have federal money to help out here. I'm
17 not sure if the company is in a position
18 to make plans on it yet or how far along
19 that is, but, yeah, of course that would
20 be great to lessen the burden on
21 everybody.

22 Now, Brooke, who are you? I
23 see you have your hand up.

24 MS. WILLIAMS: I would like to

1 make some comments.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You
3 want to make a comment next?

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I
6 didn't know if this was related to
7 Mr. Oblek or not because we're not quite
8 done with him yet. But okay, sure.

9 Does anybody have any questions
10 for Mr. Oblek?

11 MR. OBLEK: Well, I had one
12 other clarification, if I may make it?

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

14 MR. OBLEK: If it's possible,
15 many, many years ago there were no such
16 thing as service charges on any of our
17 accounts, to my knowledge. I have lived
18 in the city my entire life. And if they
19 were, they were minimal, not -- again, we
20 are talking \$12 dollars a month, \$144 per
21 household per year, \$73 million.
22 Calculator gives me that information no
23 problem. And that's why I want to see in
24 the paperwork, is there a service charge

1 increase built into this request for
2 higher rates?

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
4 thank you very much, Mr. Oblek.

5 Mr. Dasent.

6 MR. DASENT: Yes, Judge, we can
7 provide to Mr. Oblek a written response
8 that deals with the service charge, how
9 much it's going up and what those
10 components or costs that make that
11 service charge up. It's in PWD's
12 Statement 7A in the filing. But we can
13 give you a response that gets right to
14 your direct question without reading the
15 hundred pages. And if that will satisfy
16 you, we're pleased to do it.

17 MR. OBLEK: That will get me on
18 the right track. Because, as I
19 mentioned, when I talked to Mr. Haver
20 about this a few years back, it was the
21 same situation, trying to read a hundred
22 pages of paperwork, very deep and dark in
23 there, service charge. Never clear as a
24 bell where you can see it.

1 MR. DASENT: And I will need
2 your e-mail address, unless I can get it
3 from Steven.

4 MR. OBLEK: No, I could give it
5 to you right now if you want it.

6 MR. DASENT: Okay.

7 MR. OBLEK: It's my last name,
8 O-B-L-E-K, first initial R, so it's
9 Oblekr@yahoo.com.

10 MR. DASENT: @yahoo, okay. I
11 will get back to you. And it's Andre
12 Dasent. And somebody from the Water
13 Department will be in touch.

14 MR. OBLEK: Thank you.

15 MR. HAVER: If I may,
16 Ms. Chestnut?

17 For the purpose of this
18 hearing, sir, are you saying that you're
19 opposed to raising the service charge?
20 And if there is a need for additional
21 money, it come from the Rescue Plan or
22 from some other source, and that the
23 service charge not go up?

24 MR. OBLEK: Yes, to a degree

1 and not. I don't have the details of
2 what's going on. I do not know what the
3 Water Department -- do they have a
4 hundred people on their staff that do the
5 billing? What do they have to do, spend
6 \$20, \$30 million dollars a year for
7 computers? Where is the money going?
8 How is it used? That is my interest.

9 And it's not only with water, I
10 have seen it with PECO and I have seen it
11 with PGW.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
13 thank you very much, Mr. Oblek. Like I
14 said, if you have further questions I
15 suggest you contact the Public Advocate.
16 They are looking into every aspect of
17 this rate case.

18 MR. OBLEK: Okay.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
20 there is a ton of material. Like
21 Mr. Dasent said, you can get overwhelmed,
22 frankly, with all the materials. So
23 perhaps the Public Advocate can help you
24 sift through that and answer your

1 questions. Okay?

2 MR. OBLEK: Okay.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And,
4 Brooke, who are you?

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Sure. My name
6 is Brooke Williams.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Can
8 you spell that for the record, please?

9 MS. WILLIAMS: W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.
10 And Brooke, B-R-O-O-K-E.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
12 your address?

13 MS. WILLIAMS: 2527 Ingersoll
14 Street. Zip code 19121.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are
16 you appearing on your own behalf for
17 yourself or for another group?

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Myself.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
20 how did you hear about this?

21 MS. WILLIAMS: I think I got an
22 e-mail.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Go
24 ahead.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: I think mine is
2 a little bit of a piggyback off the last
3 comments. However, you know, just based
4 on limited knowledge of what I can see
5 online and through records, it does seem
6 that the systems used today are likely
7 antiquated, probably some legacy systems
8 that support the Water Department.

9 And, you know, I think before
10 we look to raising the rates of our, you
11 know, the customers, I would really love
12 to see more effort put into optimizing
13 efficiencies within the business itself
14 and the operations through better
15 technologies that can automate a lot of
16 processes.

17 Frankly, there's so much that
18 you can do, even from call service
19 perspective these days. And that, you
20 know, automation I think would be great
21 savings or whether that's even, you know,
22 looking at how you pay your vendors.
23 There's a lot of ways to really save a
24 lot of money there.

1 So I would love to see them
2 look first at those opportunities before
3 raising money or costs to the customers
4 of the city.

5 I do think that from experience
6 and living in other places the cost of
7 water here has been much higher than I
8 expected when I moved to the city. I was
9 pretty surprised when I got my first
10 water bill. I remember moving to the
11 city and was pretty surprised by it. So
12 it's already, I think, pretty high in
13 comparison to other places I have lived.

14 And those are my comments.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: We
16 appreciate that.

17 Does anybody have any questions
18 to ask?

19 MR. OBLEK: Well, again, if I
20 may just interject for a second?

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No,
22 Mr. Oblek. This isn't like a back and
23 forth with people. That's just not --
24 you have had an opportunity and --

1 MR. OBLEK: The thing about
2 computers --

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No,
4 no, Mr. Oblek, you have to stop, okay.
5 This isn't for you to respond to. She's
6 asking questions of the company and the
7 participants.

8 MR. OBLEK: Okay.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.
10 Dasent, Ms. Pickens, Mr. Haver, do you
11 have any questions for Ms. Williams?

12 MR. DASENT: We are happy,
13 Ms. Williams, at the Department to
14 provide you with explanations as to how
15 we are trying to save money, effect
16 deficiencies, as you mentioned, and all
17 the steps that we have taken to avoid
18 raising rates, including withdrawing the
19 rate case in 2020 last year.

20 So we're happy to engage in
21 that dialogue. And if you give me your
22 e-mail address, if you share that with
23 me, we are happy to give you the
24 information and direct you to those

1 places in the filing where you can see
2 how we are trying to justify the rate
3 increase and indicate the savings we
4 tried to realize in the last year or two.

5 MS. WILLIAMS: Sure. I can put
6 it in the chat, if that's easiest.

7 MR. DASENT: That's fine.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

9 MS. PICKENS: I will put the
10 Public Advocate e-mail in the chat as
11 well, if people want to reach out to us
12 with questions. Our expert testimony is
13 due this coming Monday and so you will
14 have an opportunity to see the
15 recommendations the Public Advocate is
16 making regarding the Department's
17 proposal and where we think there can be
18 cost savings.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
20 thank you. I think everybody is able to
21 see that.

22 MR. HAVER: Ms. Chestnut, could
23 I ask Ms. Williams a question?

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes,

1 quickly.

2 MR. HAVER: I'm wondering if
3 you are aware that the Water Department
4 doesn't do the billing or collections?
5 That's done -- are you aware that's done
6 by a different organization?

7 MS. WILLIAMS: I was not aware.
8 It makes a lot of sense based on the
9 sign-up process for billing. I think I
10 did remember having to go through a
11 couple different steps to do that. And I
12 imagine if somebody else is doing
13 billing, that's a huge expense, other
14 than doing it in-house.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: It's
16 not an outside group, which is what I
17 think you're thinking, it is another city
18 agency, part of the Department of
19 Revenue.

20 MR. DASENT: That's correct.

21 MR. HAVER: Right. But I just
22 wanted to know if she was aware that the
23 Philadelphia Water Department doesn't
24 control the people who do the billing and

1 collections.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh,
3 right.

4 MR. HAVER: Even if she is
5 successful at making her point to the
6 Water Department and they want a new
7 system, the Water Department is not
8 empowered to enact that.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: That
10 is a good point, Mr. Haver. And I think
11 there is someone from the Water Revenue
12 Bureau here.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: I think the cost
14 of systems goes beyond just billing and
15 collections. You know, it goes into --

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
17 let's not go back and forth on this,
18 okay?

19 Now, the Workers Benefit
20 Council, did you want to make a
21 statement?

22 MR. LIANG: Yvonne Munyan
23 raised her hand first, I believe.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh,

1 okay.

2 MS. MUNYAN: Hi. I'm here.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
4 Munyan?

5 MS. MUNYAN: This is Yvonne.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Can
7 you please state and spell your name for
8 the record?

9 MS. MUNYAN: My first name is
10 Y-V-O-N-N-E, and my last name is
11 M-U-N-Y-A-N.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
13 your address, please?

14 MS. MUNYAN: 2126 66th Avenue,
15 19138.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are
17 you appearing on your own behalf or are
18 you here for a group?

19 MS. MUNYAN: Myself, yes.

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
21 how did you hear about this?

22 MS. MUNYAN: I received an
23 e-mail.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh,

1 okay.

2 MS. MUNYAN: And my question is
3 actually to piggyback on the woman prior
4 to me is, I guess because I'm process
5 driven, I would like to know, have the
6 Philadelphia Water Department, have you
7 done any studies against any major cities
8 that will help to warrant its price
9 increase? Because right now I am paying
10 quite a bit of money for a single person.
11 And if I'm paying almost \$80 a month, I
12 can only imagine if it's going up
13 70 percent. Like I said, and I'm by
14 myself. I can't imagine families that
15 may have four or five people in the home,
16 what their bills could possibly be.
17 That's my first question.

18 The other thing is the timing.
19 I think that's what so many of your
20 customers are concerned, that many people
21 are not working now. So who's going to
22 pick up the brunt of the cost for this
23 project? Will it be people who are
24 working? Will they have to pick up the

1 slack for people who are not working?
2 Exactly how are you planning to work that
3 out?

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.
5 Dasent.

6 MR. DASENT: Sure, Your Honor.

7 First of all, in the context of
8 the rate increase filing we did do and we
9 provided a comparison with other
10 utilities to show how our rates compare.
11 And we're sort of in the middle, sort of
12 the median line in terms of the price
13 point.

14 In terms of timing, we came in
15 for a rate increase last year right as
16 the pandemic was hitting, early in 2020.
17 We withdrew that rate case because we
18 recognized that folks could not afford a
19 rate hike at that particular time. And
20 we sort of borrowed against the future in
21 terms of drawing down reserves as opposed
22 to raising rates in that particular
23 period.

24 And over the years, as that's

1 happened in '20 and '21, we have run a
2 deficit. As a consequence, now we are in
3 a position where we have to ask for
4 increased rates. And it's not the
5 optimum time, but we have to figure out
6 somehow or another how to balance the
7 interests of the utility and our
8 customer, to find that middle way
9 forward.

10 And the fact that there are
11 monies coming in from the American Rescue
12 Plan Act and other sources may be helpful
13 in finding that middle way.

14 And so we're all looking for a
15 solution that works for all parties, as
16 the Hearing Officer has encouraged us.
17 And I can, if you give me your e-mail
18 address, Ms. Munyan, I can show you where
19 the comparison is that we have made with
20 other utilities and give you that
21 information and direct you to the
22 information which is posted at the Rate
23 Board website.

24 And as to timing, we do speak

1 to that also in the filing. And I know
2 no time is a good time for a rate
3 increase, particularly if you're hurting
4 or without a job. But we're trying to
5 find a sort of a middle way to protect
6 our customers and to make sure the
7 utility can maintain the services on a
8 reliable basis.

9 We've also extended the
10 moratorium on shutoffs for a period, in
11 fact, through 2022, extended protections
12 against enforcement for our poorest
13 customers. And those are all steps that
14 we're taking trying to protect the
15 customer.

16 But at the same time, we have
17 to make sure we can remain a going
18 concern, which requires us to sort of
19 balance both your needs and the needs of
20 operating a utility. Which costs, you
21 know, quite a few hundred million a year
22 incidentally. Because that's come up
23 before, about \$50 million, where is that
24 going? 2,000 employees and an operating

1 budget of \$600 million, it goes to a
2 portion of the way to paying our costs.

3 But, Ms. Munyan, I'm happy to
4 provide a more detailed answer for you
5 offline, if you'll give me you're e-mail.

6 MS. MUNYAN: Sure. It's
7 Y-V-O-N-N-E-M-U-N-Y-A-N@gmail.com.

8 And the other reason why I
9 asked this is because I work for PSE&G,
10 so I do understand about rate increases
11 and all of that. And they had a rate
12 increase slightly because they repaired
13 all of their gas lines. But the people
14 saw it, the customers saw that. Their
15 plan was initiated and given to the
16 customers about a year or two in advance.
17 So the customers knew exactly where their
18 dollars were being spent.

19 And it wasn't addressed -- it
20 wasn't 70 percent, though, it wasn't that
21 high. So that's why I asked because I
22 have worked in a regulated area, such as
23 PSE&G, and I do understand rate
24 increases. And for me, it's the timing.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
2 wait, Ms. Munyan.

3 MR. LIANG: Are you saying 70
4 or 17?

5 MS. MUNYAN: I thought it was
6 70, 7-0.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No,
8 it's 17.

9 MR. LIANG: 17.

10 MS. MUNYAN: Well, for me, 17,
11 70 is all a bit much for me because my
12 bill is already, as a single person,
13 about \$80 a month. And I'm not using
14 water all day long, so. And I have had a
15 plumber come out to the house to look to
16 make sure, you know, that the water
17 wasn't going anywhere else. But I'm just
18 saying.

19 And I'm not working right now,
20 so like I said, I'm by myself. I can
21 only imagine families who have children
22 and other things of that nature. So, you
23 know, that's why I'm asking.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does

1 anybody have clarifying questions for
2 Ms. Munyan?

3 No?

4 Well, thank you very much,
5 Ms. Munyan. We appreciate you taking the
6 time and your comments.

7 I don't know if I said this.

8 MS. MUNYAN: You're welcome.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You
10 don't have to stay. You're welcome to
11 stay after you have talked or had your
12 fill, but you don't have to, okay? You
13 can leave whenever you want.

14 Okay, who wants to go next?

15 MR. LIANG: Workers Benefit.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: All
17 right, the Workers Benefit Council.

18 MR. CHAMBERS: Good evening.
19 My name is Terrence Chambers. First name
20 T-E-R-R-E-N-C-E, Chambers,
21 C-H-A-M-B-E-R-S, 1418 North Fulton
22 Street, Philadelphia, PA 19151.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
24 are you -- I assume you're here on behalf

1 of a group?

2 MR. CHAMBERS: Yes.

3 Specifically, the Workers Benefit
4 Council.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
6 how did you hear about this?

7 MR. CHAMBERS: From a fellow
8 member, from a fellow member that asked
9 me to --

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
11 do you want to tell me what the Workers
12 Benefit Council is?

13 MR. CHAMBERS: It's a group of
14 service workers, temp, part-time, among
15 other individuals, representing the
16 interests of the majority of workers that
17 make the city run.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
19 great. You want to make a statement
20 then?

21 MR. CHAMBERS: Yes, I do, as a
22 matter of fact.

23 I lived in my residence since
24 June of 2006. And of course I had my

1 fair share of issues with various utility
2 companies, water especially, until I
3 applied for budget programs.

4 But the circumstances of being
5 a low income worker has resulted in my
6 being terminated from budget programs on
7 more than one occasion until the issue
8 was resolved. And the fact that I could
9 be removed from these budget programs yet
10 again due to situations beyond my
11 control, it worries me to a great degree,
12 especially during the pandemic.

13 In that regard, the purpose of
14 this speech is to preventative measures
15 to help the Water Rate Board's proposed
16 rate hike for the sake of low income
17 workers everywhere.

18 As a member of the Philadelphia
19 Workers Benefit Council, and a concerned
20 citizen of Philadelphia, I am taking this
21 time to express my feelings towards the
22 Water Rate Board's attempts to raise the
23 rates of the water bill, which does take
24 advantage of the very hard working

1 citizens who've suffered greatly due to
2 Covid-19 pandemic.

3 The idea that Water Rate Board
4 would shut off Philadelphia residents who
5 are unable to pay their bills due to
6 mitigating circumstances that are beyond
7 their control is a travesty and it's
8 illegal to a certain extent.

9 Now that we're still in the
10 pandemic it gives them leeway to pursue
11 rate increases, especially when it comes
12 to how people are using their water. And
13 this by itself is criminal and it's
14 wrong.

15 You know, it's as simple as
16 this: People need water to live and
17 survive. They say that ordinary man
18 could live without food for at least a
19 couple weeks, give or take a day. And,
20 however, a person could live without
21 water for only a smaller duration of that
22 time, two or three days at the most.

23 So imagine how water shutoffs
24 would affect low income workers,

1 homeowners who rely on water to drink,
2 bathe, hand washing, or other activities.
3 And those who lost their jobs during the
4 pandemic and/or have complicated health
5 issues, are the ones who it really
6 affects the most. This is practically a
7 death sentence for some people.

8 And the same goes for companies
9 like PGW and PECO. Even though there
10 will be a moratorium on terminations
11 until next year, rate hikes will still
12 present long term ramifications for those
13 still stuck in the rut. And even due to
14 situations that are not their fault. And
15 they are forced to turn to welfare and/or
16 relatives and/or friends to help them
17 make ends meet.

18 And stimulus checks are merely
19 a Band-aid, a proverbial slap in the face
20 for those who are hit hard financially,
21 and them who are not. This is an issue
22 someone should be paying strict attention
23 to.

24 Now, living in Philadelphia all

1 my life, I'm currently employed as a
2 security guard, as you can see. Needless
3 to say, my salary is not particularly
4 adequate. I own a home. And I have had
5 my issues with the Water Department in
6 the past. Even given shutoff notices on
7 some occasions. I was barely able to
8 avoid terminations.

9 Now that I'm on the TAP
10 program, yet I still am concerned about
11 future problems that could rob me of
12 being in the low income program. While
13 not behind in my water bills at this
14 time, I still need water for my home. I
15 have a chronic illness, a Type 1 diabetes
16 to be exact, that I'm trying to stay on
17 top of, and water is just one of a
18 certain number of things I need to keep
19 my condition in check.

20 But my heart does go out to
21 those who might be scared to death for
22 the potential rate hikes that could be
23 implemented by the Water Rate Board,
24 which of course would lead to massive

1 shutoffs, whether a pandemic is in effect
2 or not.

3 Perhaps the more disturbing
4 aspect of this is how shutoffs would
5 affect the children. Such a situation
6 would be very unnerving, even
7 traumatizing for younger age groups. And
8 when the winter times do end next year,
9 all the rate hikes will be the nuclear
10 weapon that could financially destroy low
11 income families.

12 So in conclusion of this, I'm
13 making a speech to encourage all minimum
14 wage workers to take a stand and raise
15 their voice and combine your voices and
16 say no to the water rate hikes before
17 they are implemented.

18 No one should have to be
19 punished for his or her -- their very
20 lives. Having water is a right that
21 should never be taken away at all. And
22 there is strength in numbers. So we
23 should let -- we should make our numbers
24 make a difference in our city.

1 I leave with one final thing,
2 as a member of the Philadelphia Workers
3 Benefit Council, we are requesting that
4 the Water Rate Board, number one, stick
5 to the U.N. sustainable development goals
6 are agreed upon by U.S. government, one
7 of the goals is goal number six, clean
8 water and sanitation.

9 Number two, lower rates for at
10 least 300 -- for those at 300 percent of
11 poverty line or below no more than
12 6 percent of income, that's what the
13 federal standards are for household
14 budgets.

15 Number three, apply the same
16 quantities to those above 300 percent of
17 the poverty level who can demonstrate
18 financial hardships.

19 Number four, provide debt
20 relief for those who have fallen behind
21 on their water bill.

22 And, finally, year-round
23 moratorium on utility shutoffs for any
24 household at or below 300 percent of the

1 Philadelphia poverty level.

2 And I will leave with that.

3 And that's all it is. Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
5 thank you very much for your remarks. I
6 think we're all very conscious that water
7 is an absolute necessity.

8 Does anybody have any questions
9 for Mr. Chambers about his statement?

10 No?

11 Well, thank you very much,
12 Mr. Chambers. I'm sure we all appreciate
13 it.

14 MR. CHAMBERS: You're welcome.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does
16 anybody else -- I'm looking to see if
17 anybody has a hand up.

18 If you're on a telephone line
19 and you wish to participate, I do
20 understand that you can hit star-nine and
21 that is some kind of a hands up signal.
22 I haven't tested that myself, so
23 hopefully it works.

24 I don't -- Steven, do you see

1 anything?

2 MR. LIANG: I don't see
3 anything.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No.
5 It looks like then we have come to the
6 end of this.

7 I will ask again for Barbara
8 Panzano, did you join us since the
9 beginning of this?

10 No?

11 Or Amanda, Amanda something.

12 MR. LIANG: Basard.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are
14 you here?

15 No?

16 Does anybody want to make any
17 concluding remarks or --

18 MR. DASENT: Judge, if we
19 could, I just want to tell anyone who's
20 listening, perhaps you're on mute, we do
21 have a hearing on Thursday at 1:00 and
22 also another hearing at 6 o'clock on
23 Thursday, and technical hearings in
24 April.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Good

2 idea to repeat that. Yes, mm-hmm.

3 MR. DASENT: We do our own

4 advertising.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And

6 anybody who hasn't registered, you can

7 certainly register. You can send your

8 comments in. We will have two more

9 sessions on Thursday. And as Mr. Dasent

10 said, probably have the technical

11 hearings, hopefully brief ones, in April.

12 Okay?

13 Well, thank you very much then.

14 I appreciate you took the time to come.

15 And it's so important.

16 So this hearing is adjourned.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. DASENT: Thank you,

19 everyone. Take care.

20 - - -

21 (The hearing was concluded at

22 6:58 p.m.)

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

I, Kimberly A. Wilson, hereby
certify that the proceedings and evidence
noted are contained fully and accurately
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correct transcript of the same.

Kimberly A. Wilson, RMR, CRR,
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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