PHILADELPHIA WATER, SEWER AND STORM WATER

RATE BOARD

PUBLIC HEARING

Tuesday, March 16, 2021.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Virtually

HELD BEFORE: MARLANE R. CHESTNUT,

Hearing Officer

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Page 2 1 2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: afternoon, everybody. This is one of 3 four public hearings that have been 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 who will be impacted by the 9 Philadelphia Water Department proposed changes in rates and charges for fiscal 10 11 years 2021 and 2022. 12 The Rate Board is an 13 independent body established to set rates 14 and charges for water and sewer service. 15 As part of its mandate to conduct an open and transparent examination of the 16 proposed rates, the Board hired Community 17 Legal Services to act as the Public 18 Advocate in this case. And selected me 19 20 as Hearing Officer to ensure that the 21 hearing process is conducted in a fair, 22 impartial and efficient manner. 23 Due to the ongoing public health emergency caused by the Covid 24

- 1 pandemic, this and all hearings will be
- 2 conducted remotely either online or
- 3 telephonically. All transcripts and
- 4 documents are posted on the Rate Board's
- 5 website. There is a court reporter who
- 6 will produce a stenographic record of
- 7 this hearing, and that also will be
- 8 posted. So please be sure to speak
- 9 slowly and carefully.
- Before we get to hearing from
- 11 the customers, I will introduce the
- 12 representatives from the Water Department
- 13 and the Public Advocate and let them give
- 14 you an overview of the filing and what
- 15 they plan to do in this case.
- 16 Mr. Dasent.
- 17 MR. DASENT: Yes. Glen Abrams
- 18 of the Public Affairs Department of the
- 19 Water Department will be giving a brief
- 20 statement to sort of convene us and to
- 21 instruct participants as to how we view
- the case.
- 23 Glen.
- MR. ABRAMS: Thank you, Andre.

Page 4 1 MR. DASENT: You're welcome. 2 MR. ABRAMS: And, Your Honor. 3 And good afternoon, everyone. My name is 4 Glen Abrams and I am speaking on behalf of the Philadelphia Water Department in 5 6 this proceeding. We first want to thank you all 7 8 for joining this hearing this afternoon 9 to share your views about the rate 10 increase request that the Water 11 Department has filed with the Philadelphia Water, Sewer and Storm Water 12 13 Rate Board. 14 As you know, if the Rate Board approves the Water Department's full 15 16 request, a typical residential customer using 500 cubic feet of water per month 17 would see their bill increase by about 18 19 11.6 percent in fiscal year 2022 and 20 5.3 percent in fiscal year 2023, or approximately \$7.74 per month beginning 21 22 on September 1st, 2021 and an additional 23 \$3.98 beginning on September 1st, 2022. 24 The Water Department recognizes

- 1 that any increase in rates can be a
- 2 hardship, especially right now. But this
- 3 increase is necessary to address the
- 4 Department's current financial deficit
- 5 and to continue maintaining, upgrading
- 6 and renewing its system to make sure that
- 7 clean water is delivered as safely and
- 8 reliably as possible. And that makes
- 9 water treatment and storm water
- 10 management services continue unabated.
- 11 This system provides essential services
- 12 that are the foundation of public health
- in Philadelphia.
- 14 Importantly, since the Water
- 15 Department is a municipal utility it has
- 16 no shareholders and every dollar that it
- 17 collects is used to support the safe and
- 18 reliable operation and maintenance of the
- 19 utility system. Rate relief is necessary
- 20 now to sustain our operations.
- It should be noted that the
- 22 Water Department continues to invest in
- 23 much needed upgrades to critical water
- 24 and wastewater infrastructure, including

Page 6 replacing aging water mains to reduce the 1 2 occurrence of water main breaks and increase the reliability of water service 3 to customers; extending the life and 4 reliability of the wastewater system by 5 6 making repairs and improvements at treatment facilities and improving 7 8 drinking water treatment; and improving 9 our water conveyance system by rehabilitating critical water 10 11 infrastructure such as pumping stations 12 and water mains; as well as upgrading 13 water and wastewater treatment facilities. 14 All projects planned for fiscal 15 16 years 2022 and 2023 are critical 17 investments to ensure the utility can support its operations and continue to 18 provide safe and reliable service to 19 20 current and future customers with a well 2.1 maintained water and wastewater system 22 they can count on. 23 I would also like to highlight 24 that the Water Department has a robust

Page 7 and comprehensive customer assistance 1 2 program which helps low income customers 3 pay their bills, including the Tiered Assistance Program or TAP, the senior 4 citizens discount program and other 5 6 programs that are more flexible than ever during this difficult time. 7 The Water Department has also 8 9 agreed to extend the shutoff moratorium for residential customers through 10 11 April 1st, 2022. And has paused 12 enforcement activities for our most 13 vulnerable residential customers. 14 If you are experiencing 15 financial hardship, we can help. 16 encourage to you apply for TAP, the senior discount, or other programs that 17 are available to assist households with 18 payment difficulties. These programs are 19 20 accessible through website www.phila.gov\waterbillhelp or by calling 21 22 215-685-6300 Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. 23 24 I would also note that if you

- 1 have specific billing questions or other
- 2 service issues that you would like
- 3 assistance with, please let us know and
- 4 we will have a customer service
- 5 representative contact you as soon as
- 6 possible. Please use the chat function
- 7 to identify yourself or let us know that
- 8 you would like to speak in a breakout
- 9 room to exchange contact information.
- The purpose of today's session
- 11 is to hear from you, the consumers. We
- 12 appreciate you taking the time to share
- 13 your views with us today. And we look
- 14 forward to hearing from you.
- 15 Thank you.
- 16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 17 thank you.
- 18 Ms. Scott, did you want to give
- 19 an introduction on behalf of the Public
- 20 Advocate?
- MS. SCOTT: Yes. Thank you.
- 22 Good afternoon. My name is
- 23 Kinteshia Scott and I am an attorney at
- 24 Community Legal Services.

Page 9 CLS has been appointed to serve 1 2 as Public Advocate to represent the interests of residential and small 3 commercial customers in this rate 4 proceeding. We are working with a team 5 of experts to examine the Water 6 Department's proposal and to present our 7 8 analysis to the independent Water, Sewer 9 and Storm Water Rate Board that will make a determination of whether, and if so, 10 11 how much PWD's rates are allowed to 12 increase. 13 The Water Department has 14 proposed to raise typical residential 15 water bills by 17 and-a-half percent over two years. That would cost you an 16 17 average of about \$140 more per year. have concerns about the Water 18 Department's proposal and we would like 19 20 to hear from you. 2.1 Should the Water Department 22 raise your rates during a pandemic or 23 should it look for other ways to lower

costs? What about the estimated

24

- 1 \$1.1 billion in local government recovery
- 2 funds that Philadelphia is going to get?
- 3 Shouldn't the City use that money to
- 4 support the Water Department instead of
- 5 increasing your rates? What would it
- 6 mean to your family to have to pay
- 7 significantly more money for water right
- 8 now? And has the Water Department done
- 9 everything it can do to help you get the
- 10 assistance that you need?
- 11 Please share your views. What
- 12 you share will be an important part of
- 13 the record in this rate case. And the
- 14 Board needs to hear from you and
- 15 understand what you think about the Water
- 16 Department's request to increase your
- 17 water bills. Thank you for making time
- 18 to participate in this process.
- 19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 20 thank you.
- 21 And I mentioned that the Rate
- 22 Board is the independent board that will
- 23 be making the decision concerning the
- 24 Department's request for the proposed

- 1 rates. And the chairman of the board is
- 2 present, Mr. Popowsky.
- 3 Other participants in this case
- 4 include the Philadelphia Large Users
- 5 Group, the Water -- what is --
- 6 the Philadelphia Water Revenue Bureau, is
- 7 that the right name?
- 8 MR. DASENT: That's correct.
- 9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: They
- 10 are the ones that actually do the billing
- 11 and the collection on behalf of the
- 12 Department. And there's a number of
- 13 individuals as well.
- 14 Okay. Let me give you a little
- 15 overview in terms of the process. There
- is a schedule that's mandated by the Rate
- 17 Board regulations in terms of how long
- 18 the time is available to do this case.
- 19 And it has certain milestones.
- The parties got together and we
- 21 did have a conference and adopted a
- 22 schedule. And as you know, the public
- 23 hearings are this week. The parties will
- 24 continue to work on their testimony and

- 1 do discovery. They're going to -- I
- 2 guess the non-company parties will be
- 3 filing written testimony. And the
- 4 company will -- and I guess they will
- 5 respond to other parties' written
- 6 testimony as well.
- We have a block of time set
- 8 apart for technical hearings at which
- 9 these witnesses will be presented to
- 10 discuss their testimony. That will be in
- 11 April. Probably the mid to end of April.
- 12 I will try and have my written report
- issued by the end of May so the Board can
- 14 do its deliberations in June, which will
- 15 give the Department sufficient time to do
- 16 whatever the Board directs before the
- 17 proposed effective date of September 1st.
- 18 Now, as I indicated, every
- 19 document in this case is posted on the
- 20 Rate Board's website, and the schedule is
- 21 posted there as well. So if you need any
- 22 information about this case, that really
- 23 is your best source.
- With respect to today's public

- 1 hearing it's very important that the
- 2 Board hear directly from you. Because I
- 3 think we can all agree that things are
- 4 hard. It's hard for people to pay higher
- 5 rates. And it's really hard for a lot of
- 6 people.
- 7 And I think sometimes when
- 8 we're involved in the rate setting
- 9 process we get used to talking about
- 10 customers generally. The customers this,
- 11 the customers that, the impact on the
- 12 customers. But it's very important to
- 13 put a face on that term and see that.
- 14 As I'm sure that the
- 15 participants can tell you, I'm always
- 16 saying to them, at the end of the day
- 17 these are real people. We have to keep
- 18 that in mind. And that's why these
- 19 public hearings are really important.
- 20 And it's really good that you
- 21 took the time to participate. Because it
- 22 is, it's true everybody is a real person
- and they have family commitments, we have
- 24 all been impacted by the current pandemic

- 1 and it's important to know that you're
- 2 not going to be treated poorly as a
- 3 result of this process.
- 4 So in terms of this particular
- 5 hearing, I think you obviously are aware
- 6 of it. People have signed up. And I
- 7 will take people in order of
- 8 registration. And there will probably be
- 9 time, if you haven't registered but want
- 10 to make a comment, we will accommodate
- 11 that. But you can also send an e-mail or
- 12 a letter to the Rate Board with your
- 13 concerns. And I promise you that I will
- 14 read everything that anybody submits.
- 15 And these e-mails and letters also will
- 16 be posted on the Rate Board's website.
- When it's your turn, I will say
- 18 your name and Steven will unmute your
- 19 microphone. I'm not sure of the process
- 20 if you haven't registered, but we'll work
- 21 that out in terms of proceeding in an
- 22 orderly fashion so that everybody has a
- 23 chance to give a statement if they wish
- 24 to.

- 1 You may not wish to. You may
- 2 wish to register -- you may want to think
- 3 about it and just register for another
- 4 session, that's fine too. There are lots
- 5 of options and we're very interested in
- 6 hearing from you.
- 7 When it's your turn I will ask
- 8 you to give and spell your name for the
- 9 record, give your address and whether you
- 10 are appearing on behalf of a group.
- 11 I'm also going to ask you how
- 12 did you hear about this. Did you get an
- 13 e-mail? Did you see it on the website?
- 14 Did you see it in the newspaper? Was it
- word of mouth from somebody? We're very
- 16 interested in making sure that there is
- 17 maximum outreach so that people are aware
- 18 of it. And any help you can give us, we
- 19 appreciate.
- I'm going to ask you to confine
- 21 your remarks, though, to the issue which
- 22 is the proposed rates. As Glen
- 23 indicated, if you have a particular
- 24 service or billing issue, that's fine, we

- 1 can direct you to the company and they
- 2 can get your contact information and
- 3 resolve it for you. But that's not
- 4 really the purpose of this. And you
- 5 don't want to put your personal
- 6 information out in the public record
- 7 anyway. But please try and talk just
- 8 about the rate increase and how it will
- 9 impact you and what your suggestions are
- 10 for the company.
- 11 After you've given your
- 12 statement, and I'm not going to impose a
- 13 time limit unless it looks like we are
- 14 going to have a time crunch, but I will
- 15 ask you to keep it brief and on point, I
- 16 will ask the participants if they have
- 17 questions for you. This is not
- 18 litigation. This is not
- 19 cross-examination. It's just questions
- 20 to clarify what you have told us.
- When you're finished you're
- 22 welcome to stay and listen to the rest of
- 23 it. You certainly don't have to. You
- 24 can leave at any time.

- 1 And I do want to make a
- 2 statement on my own behalf which is that
- 3 there is nobody in Pennsylvania who knows
- 4 more about utility regulation than I do,
- 5 Marcy Chestnut. I was an Administrative
- 6 Law Judge with the Public Utility
- 7 Commission for over 25 years. I
- 8 conducted thousands of cases, a lot of
- 9 rate cases. So I know about how to do
- 10 rate cases and how utilities should be
- 11 run and what rates -- how rates are set.
- 12 And I also did thousands of ability to
- 13 pay cases. So I know what it's like to
- 14 work with individual customers. In fact,
- 15 after I retired from the Commission they
- 16 asked me to stay on for another year and
- 17 help with the inability to pay backlog,
- 18 which I did.
- I have done all kinds of cases,
- 20 all kinds of utilities. I have done
- 21 these cases in every part of the state.
- 22 So I really do have a very good
- 23 understanding of the rates and the rate
- 24 making process.

- 1 And before I became an ALJ I
- 2 had ten years of actual practice with the
- 3 Commission I also spent representing the
- 4 public interests. I spent a couple years
- 5 with the Office of Consumer Advocate
- 6 representing residential interests.
- 7 After I retired I did a little
- 8 work for utilities, mainly customer
- 9 service training and issues. So I really
- 10 do understand about how to balance
- 11 interests and how to produce a result.
- 12 How to conduct an equitable and fair
- 13 process to produce a result that is
- 14 equitable and fair.
- But one point I want you all to
- 16 remember is that you're all on the same
- 17 side here. It's not customers versus the
- 18 Water Department. The Water Department
- 19 wants the same thing customers want,
- 20 which is affordable rates.
- 21 And I may be speaking out of
- 22 hand here, because I'm assuming that the
- 23 utility doesn't want you not to be able
- 24 to afford to pay for your service. They

- 1 spend a lot of money on collections and
- 2 terminations. And I'm sure they would
- 3 rather have that money go directly to
- 4 service to you.
- 5 As a customer, you want your
- 6 rates low and affordable, but you also
- 7 want to have reasonable service. And
- 8 that does require a certain amount of
- 9 money.
- 10 So I don't want you to think of
- 11 this as litigation or a kind of
- 12 adversarial process where there are two
- 13 competing interests because there isn't.
- 14 This is more of a collaboration where we
- 15 should be working together to find a
- 16 result that gives the Department enough
- 17 money to do its job and that makes the
- 18 rates affordable for customers so they
- 19 can pay their rates without it being a
- 20 hardship.
- 21 So I'd just like you to keep
- 22 that in mind. But this is not
- 23 adversarial and we should be trying to
- 24 work together to come up with a result

- 1 that really is in everybody's interests.
- 2 And of course there will be some
- 3 disagreement on that. There is a range
- 4 of where those rates should be, but it's
- 5 a pretty narrow range. And I'm hopeful
- 6 that we can get there.
- 7 Okay. Does anybody want to
- 8 make any comment before we get started on
- 9 actually hearing from customers?
- 10 Mr. Dasent or Ms. Scott or any of the
- 11 participants?
- 12 MR. DASENT: Nothing from us at
- 13 the Water Department. We just want to
- 14 hear the customers.
- MS. SCOTT: Nothing from the
- 16 Public Advocate as well.
- 17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I
- 18 think if somebody needs to be unmuted,
- 19 probably the best thing would be to raise
- 20 your hand and Steven can take care of
- 21 that.
- 22 Steven.
- MR. LIANG: Yep. The first
- 24 person that registered, I believe, was

- 1 Tammie Murphy. I will be unmuting her or
- 2 asking her to unmute.
- 3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 4 Murphy, I see you there.
- 5 MS. MURPHY: Hi.
- 6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 7 Murphy, please give and spell your name
- 8 for the record, please?
- 9 MS. MURPHY: Sure. T-A-M-M-Y,
- $10 \quad M-U-R-P-H-Y$.
- 11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 12 your address?
- MS. MURPHY: 3424 Ainslie
- 14 Street, A-I-N-S-L-I-E.
- 15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Is
- 16 that Philadelphia?
- 17 MS. MURPHY: Yes, 19129.
- 18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 19 are you appearing on your own behalf or a
- 20 group?
- 21 MS. MURPHY: I'm appearing on
- 22 my own.
- 23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 24 how did you hear about this?

- 1 MS. MURPHY: I think I heard
- 2 about it multiple ways. One of the ways
- 3 was through a group called Penn Future,
- 4 and the other way was through Community
- 5 Legal Services.
- 6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
- 7 great. Do you want to go ahead, Tammie,
- 8 and give us your thoughts?
- 9 MS. MURPHY: Sure. I mean, as
- 10 a parent I think that like on average
- 11 income here or even below average income
- 12 \$140 a month is really like the
- 13 difference of a family being able to get
- 14 their groceries or not get their
- 15 groceries. You know, a lot of people
- 16 have like food security issues. It's not
- 17 that they don't eat at all, it's that
- 18 they run out of food before the next
- 19 month comes and an additional \$140 is too
- 20 much. I mean, honestly it's just too
- 21 much for a lot of families that are
- 22 already struggling as they are. To add
- 23 \$140 is to put them over the breaking
- 24 point. And I think there's too many

- 1 people in Philadelphia who would reach
- 2 that breaking point with an additional
- 3 \$140.
- 4 And I would like to know -- I
- 5 haven't had time to study your website,
- 6 that's, you know, in addition to
- 7 everything else that I'm doing, it's not
- 8 something I've had time to do, but I'd
- 9 like to know if you did a needs
- 10 assessment to see whether you need to do
- 11 this increase. And if you did an
- 12 alternative options assessment to see
- 13 what other options there are other than
- 14 raising rates on residents.
- 15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Is
- 16 that it?
- MS. MURPHY: That's all.
- 18 That's my question, yep.
- 19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Your
- 20 question is a good one and it's why we're
- 21 here. We are here to examine whether the
- 22 company utility needs that money and if
- 23 that's the best way to deal with their
- 24 needs, that's exactly what --

- 1 MS. MURPHY: That's not for
- 2 customers to answer. Customers can't
- 3 answer whether you need that to function
- 4 as an agency or not. And we don't have
- 5 the opportunity, nor the expertise to
- 6 understand what the alternative options
- 7 of funding are. That's not something
- 8 that I'm fit to answer. So that's
- 9 something I'm asking if your agency has
- 10 done a needs assessment and like an
- 11 alternative analysis.
- 12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 13 Scott, you want to jump in here?
- Because, Ms. Murphy, the Public
- 15 Advocate is here to do exactly what you
- 16 just said, which is to represent the
- 17 interests of customers. They have a
- 18 budget. They have retained experts. And
- 19 they examined the utility's filing, which
- 20 we don't expect individual people to do.
- 21 But they're doing it on your behalf.
- Ms. Scott, did you want to say
- 23 something here?
- MS. SCOTT: Right. So I will

- 1 jump in. I will echo what Ms. Chestnut
- 2 has said. The Public Advocate has been
- 3 hired to represent the interests of
- 4 residential and small commercial
- 5 customers. And we have hired a team of
- 6 experts who are looking extensively into
- 7 the Water Department's filing and are
- 8 going to be giving their suggestions. We
- 9 have testimony that's due this upcoming
- 10 Monday.
- 11 And I do want to note, you
- 12 mentioned that there would be \$140, I
- 13 believe you said on a monthly basis. And
- 14 I think that number comes from my initial
- 15 opening statement. I did say that that
- 16 would be \$140 on a yearly basis on
- 17 average.
- 18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does
- 19 anybody have any questions then for
- 20 Ms. Murphy?
- MR. HAVER: I do, Your Honor.
- 22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr
- 23 Haver.
- MR. HAVER: Yes. I was

- 1 wondering if you, Ms. Murphy, would
- 2 support the Water Department looking at
- 3 how it could set aside the rate increase
- 4 by using the money that was just put in
- 5 the American Recovery Plan Act, if you
- 6 would support the Water Department not
- 7 raising rates until it could see how much
- 8 it could get from the \$350 billion that's
- 9 been set aside to help public water
- 10 utilities?
- 11 MS. MURPHY: Yeah, I think that
- 12 makes a lot of sense if that money is
- 13 potentially available. I think that
- 14 delaying it and using that money would be
- 15 better. It's certainly a better use of
- 16 our federal funding than, you know, lots
- 17 of handouts that we have been giving to
- 18 other industries like airlines and oil
- 19 and gas industry. If it's an option,
- 20 yes, please.
- 21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 22 anybody else?
- Okay.
- MS. MURPHY: I quess the

Page 27 1 question that I have --2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: thank you, Ms. Murphy. We appreciate 3 4 your time. MS. MURPHY: I really don't 5 think the question that I have is 6 answered. I mean, what are the 7 alternatives beside the one that was just 9 offered? Are there other alternatives? HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: 10 are not going to go into those kind of 11 That's not the purpose of this. 12 details. But I would suggest that you contact the 13 14 Public Advocate and they can tell you what they're looking at. Or if you want 15 to wait until next week, you can read the 16 Public Advocate's testimony and that will 17 tell you what their proposal is. Okay? 18 Steven, is there another 19 20 person? 2.1 MR. LIANG: The next person was 22 Juliana Martel. 23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: MR. LIANG: She doesn't seem to 24

- 1 have joined the hearing.
- 2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 3 Martel, are you here? Can you raise your
- 4 hand if you are or indicate?
- 5 Okay. No answer. Then we'll
- 6 get back to her then and see, maybe she
- 7 will join later.
- 8 Steven.
- 9 MR. LIANG: Those were our only
- 10 two registered individuals. So now I
- 11 think we can open it up to anyone that
- 12 wants to speak.
- 13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does
- 14 somebody else want to speak? If so,
- 15 raise your hand.
- 16 All right, Ms. Woolford, Steven
- 17 can unmute you.
- 18 MR. LIANG: What was her first
- 19 name?
- 20 MR. DASENT: Sallie Denise
- 21 Woolford.
- 22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hang
- 23 on.
- MS. WOOLFORD: Yes, hi.

- 1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 2 Woolford, hold on a second, let me get
- 3 you logged in here.
- 4 Could you please state and
- 5 spell your name for the record?
- 6 MS. WOOLFORD: S-A-L-L-I-E,
- 7 W-O-O-L-F-O-R-D, Woolford.
- 8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 9 your address, please?
- 10 MS. WOOLFORD: My real name is
- 11 Denesta Smith.
- 12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You
- 13 can use whatever name you want to here,
- 14 whatever -- however you want us to list
- 15 you.
- MS. WOOLFORD: I'm using
- 17 Sallie's iPad to get online.
- 18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh.
- MS. WOOLFORD: Yeah, because I
- 20 think this meeting is very important
- 21 because --
- 22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
- 23 before you do that, could you hold up
- 24 just a second?

Page 30 So what name should I use for 1 2 you? 3 MS. SMITH: Denesta Smith. 4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And could you spell that, please? 5 6 MS. SMITH: D-E-N-E-S-T-A, Smith, S-M-I-T-H. 7 8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And 9 your address, please? 10 MS. SMITH: 1341 Colwyn Street, 11 C-O-L-W-Y-N. 12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And 13 that's Philadelphia? 14 MS. SMITH: Well --15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Is that Philadelphia? 16 MS. SMITH: Yes, Philadelphia, 17 Pennsylvania, 19140. 18 19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And 20 how did you hear about this, Ms. Smith? 21 MS. SMITH: Wydia Gardner told 22 me about it, which is my neighbor in back 23 of me. She told me about it. And I just 24 feel like it's time for us as a people to

- 1 start speaking out. Because we can't
- 2 afford to pay for the pandemic that has
- 3 happened. And we didn't bring the
- 4 disease in our country. So whoever did
- 5 these things should be the ones that have
- 6 to pay for the high cost of our water
- 7 bill.
- 8 And I also been ripped off from
- 9 the water company. I had to make a loan
- 10 for a leak I had in the middle of my
- 11 street. And they charged me \$4,500. How
- 12 could I afford that on making \$20,000 a
- 13 year?
- 14 So I felt like I have been
- 15 ripped off. Because, I mean, it
- 16 wasn't -- and I had to take a loan out.
- 17 And they didn't put my cement back on my
- 18 property. And what happened, it started
- 19 to crack. So I called the Water
- 20 Department. They treated me nasty. And
- 21 they said they wasn't coming out to fix
- 22 it, I was over the statute of
- 23 limitations.
- You know, when I saw this, the

- 1 sink, I thought in my mind that it wasn't
- 2 going to go any further. But it kept
- 3 sinking and sinking every time it rained
- 4 or snowed. So when I complained about
- 5 it, they didn't help me. And every time
- 6 I went to a higher part of the
- 7 Department, they treated me like, oh, we
- 8 don't have nothing to do with
- 9 Pennsylvania. And, you know, so I felt
- 10 completely ripped off.
- 11 Plus, I paid my bill every
- 12 month. Never missed a month. So I can't
- 13 understand why was I treated like that
- 14 and why was it allowed? I spoke to a lot
- of people within this company and nobody
- 16 wanted to help me.
- 17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I'm
- 18 sure the company people here will take
- 19 that, what you said, to heart and will
- 20 try to --
- MS. SMITH: And I paid the loan
- 22 off, but it was a struggle. You know, I
- 23 had to go without some things to pay this
- 24 loan off. And it just was a struggle.

- 1 PARTICIPANT: So it's not fair
- 2 for them to increase more money when
- 3 people pay their bills anyway, you know.
- 4 MS. SMITH: It just isn't fair
- 5 to pay more money. I felt like I already
- 6 paid.
- 7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
- 8 thank you.
- 9 Does anybody have any questions
- 10 for Ms. Smith?
- MR. DASENT: Judge Chestnut?
- 12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.
- 13 MR. DASENT: If I could, I'd
- 14 like to reach out to Ms. Woolford. And
- if you'll go in the chat and leave me
- 16 your contact information -- I have your
- 17 address -- but I'd like to get your phone
- 18 number and see if we can follow up
- 19 because --
- MS. SMITH: Okay.
- 21 MR. DASENT: -- we want to
- 22 treat our customers well. And I'm sorry
- 23 to hear what you have been through. Was
- 24 that a HELP loan also?

Page 34 1 MS. SMITH: Yes, that's what it 2 was. 3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And, 4 Steven, can you break them in a breakout room so they can exchange information? 5 6 MR. DASENT: Thank you. 7 MS. SMITH: Thank you. 8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: 9 Smith, we are going to put you directly 10 with the company so they can get your 11 information to follow up on this. 12 MS. SMITH: Okay, thank you. 13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes, 14 sure, thank you. 15 Okay. While that's going on, Ms. Lasker, I see you have your hand up, 16 do you want to make a comment? 17 18 Steven, wait, wait, wait. Hold 19 on. 20 MR. LIANG: I'm asking her to 2.1 unmute. 22 MS. LASKER: Now you can hear 23 me? 24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT:

Page 35 1 now we can hear you. Did you want to 2 make a statement? 3 MS. LASKER: Yes, I would. HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay 4 first off then can you please state and 5 6 spell your name for the record? 7 MS. LASKER: My name is 8 Katherine, K-A-T-H-E-R-I-N-E, Lasker, 9 L-A-S-K-E-R. 10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And your address, please? 11 12 MS. LASKER: 815 Magee, that's M-A-G-E-E Avenue, Philadelphia. 13 14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And 15 the zip? 16 MS. LASKER: 19111. 17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And 18 how did you hear about this? 19 MS. LASKER: I got a direct 20 e-mail from the Department. HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay 21 22 great. Is Mr. Dasent back yet or is he 23 here? I can't see.

MR. LIANG: I don't believe

24

- 1 he's back yet.
- 2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I
- 3 think he should listen to what it is you
- 4 have to say.
- 5 Mr. Abrams, you can take care
- 6 of Ms. Smith now so that Mr. Dasent could
- 7 rejoin us.
- 8 MR. ABRAMS: Yes.
- 9 I don't know, Steven, if it's
- 10 possible to put me into the breakout room
- 11 so that Mr. Dasent can come out?
- 12 MR. LIANG: Just one second,
- 13 I'm trying to.
- Okay, he entered the room.
- 15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are
- 16 we still waiting for Sonny? I mean, not
- 17 for Sonny, for Andre, excuse me.
- 18 Okay. Great. Ms. Lasker,
- 19 sorry for the delay but I'm sure you
- 20 wanted the company attorney to hear what
- 21 it is you want to say.
- MS. LASKER: So recently I have
- 23 been getting correspondence from City
- 24 Council suggesting that I give my money

- 1 away to a private water department, the
- 2 American Water organization, I forget
- 3 their exact name, suggesting I purchase
- 4 insurance from them. And I've gotten
- 5 this directly from members of the City
- 6 Council.
- 7 So my first part is, what is
- 8 the relationship with City Council or the
- 9 Water Department with this private
- 10 for-profit water company? The other part
- 11 of that is, if you have Philadelphia
- 12 citizens giving away their money every
- 13 month to an organization, a corporation,
- 14 and now you're telling us you don't have
- 15 enough money, it seems that the answer to
- 16 that is you provide the insurance and you
- 17 collect the money and then you won't be
- 18 out of money.
- 19 So I don't understand the
- 20 relationship between these two, why
- 21 you're advocating for a private
- 22 corporation. And I feel that this is a
- 23 way you can solve your money problems.
- 24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.

- 1 Dasent, you want to make a brief
- 2 statement about the aspect of the
- 3 insurance aspect? I'm sure other people
- 4 have that question too.
- 5 Steven, you're going to have to
- 6 unmute him first.
- 7 MR. DASENT: I'm not absolutely
- 8 sure of the insurance company you're
- 9 referring to. I do see ads from time to
- 10 time of independent insurance companies
- 11 that want to insure you against any loss
- 12 with a water main -- with a service line
- 13 break.
- MS. LASKER: But that's not an
- insurance company, it's the water
- 16 company, it's one of the biggest private
- 17 water companies. And they have a
- 18 warranty, a sideshow, a warranty, and
- 19 they're collecting about \$10 a month from
- 20 every customer.
- Now, that's a significant
- 22 amount of money. And so if the Water
- 23 Department was collecting that money,
- 24 there could be a significant difference

- 1 to your budget.
- 2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Let
- 3 me make clear, what this is, this is an
- 4 insurance policy for the part of the
- 5 system that's owned by you that you would
- 6 be responsible for repairing. I don't
- 7 think it has anything to do with the
- 8 Water Department, does it?
- 9 MS. LASKER: They're the ones
- 10 that are issuing it.
- 11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Not
- 12 the Water Department.
- MS. LASKER: No, but City
- 14 Council has been advocating that we give
- away our money, they're telling us to
- 16 purchase this insurance.
- 17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Then
- 18 I think you need to raise it with your
- 19 council person, why they are promoting
- 20 that particular --
- MS. LASKER: It's the
- 22 relationship between what the Water
- 23 Department is doing and what City Council
- 24 is doing.

- 1 MR. DASENT: Well, I think I
- 2 would have to take that as a written
- 3 question and respond to you. And
- 4 basically you want to find out the
- 5 relationship between this private
- 6 insurance company and the City with
- 7 respect to repairs to service lines and
- 8 the sorts of repairs you would do to your
- 9 home?
- 10 You know we have a HELP loan
- 11 program that handles repairs to service
- 12 lines and other home repairs at zero
- 13 interest. So just recognize that that's
- 14 out there as an alternative. But I will
- 15 investigate.
- MS. LASKER: That's not --
- 17 offer me -- I'm not concerned, I don't
- 18 need the money, right. But offering me a
- 19 zero interest loan still means I'm paying
- 20 for it. Meanwhile, my neighbor is giving
- 21 this private for-profit company \$10 a
- 22 month. And my neighbor doesn't need the
- 23 repair. So this is a highly profitable
- 24 enterprise.

- 1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 2 Lasker, we really need to focus on the
- 3 issues here which is, again, the pending
- 4 rate increase. I understand your concern
- 5 about City Council's involvement in
- 6 pushing a private insurance company, but
- 7 that really just isn't anything we can
- 8 get to here.
- 9 Mr. Dasent has offered you some
- 10 information that you convey to your
- 11 neighbors about how to deal with problems
- 12 on their lines. But I'm not sure we can
- 13 get much further than what you have
- 14 already raised here, okay?
- MS. SCOTT: Ms. Chestnut, would
- 16 you mind if I jump in real quickly?
- 17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No.
- 18 sure.
- MS. SCOTT: I'm wondering,
- 20 Ms. Lasker, if you're talking about the
- 21 Philadelphia Energy Authority's program,
- 22 American Water Resources that insures
- 23 customers' lines?
- MS. LASKER: This is the

- 1 American Water Company. It's a private
- 2 company. If you look Google them, they
- 3 control water departments around the
- 4 country. And they have an extremely poor
- 5 reputation.
- 6 MS. SAMUELS: So, I'm sorry,
- 7 this is Charlene Samuels from
- 8 Councilwoman Gym's office.
- 9 So Ms. Scott is right, the
- 10 program that you're talking about is
- 11 American Water Resources, which is a
- 12 program that was started by the City
- 13 Council through the Philadelphia Energy
- 14 Authority to help water customers -- to
- 15 help homeowners really who when they have
- 16 an issue with their sewage, or not the
- 17 sewage, the pipes from the, I believe
- 18 it's from the curb to the street or from
- 19 the whatever.
- MR. DASENT: That's correct.
- 21 MS. SAMUELS: Yeah, for you to
- 22 have that fixed because it's the
- 23 homeowner's responsibility to get it
- 24 fixed. But what Ms. Chestnut is saying,

- 1 yes, the Water Department also has the
- 2 HELP loan. So you have two choices, you
- 3 could either get that low interest HELP
- 4 loan or you can go through American Water
- 5 Resources to pay that \$10 a month so when
- 6 this happens, because most people are not
- 7 sitting on five, six, \$7,000 for a repair
- 8 like that when these pipes, which are
- 9 old, right, just start to go bad, right.
- 10 So that's what that program is.
- 11 So the City of Philadelphia,
- 12 City Council was only, you know, offered
- 13 this to help homeowners, not to hinder
- 14 them, but to help them. Because they
- 15 were hearing so many people who had this
- 16 issue, right, and people who could not
- 17 afford to get their, you know, this
- 18 fixed. Because once you have an issue
- 19 like this the water is shut off. So it's
- 20 a whole lot of things that happens. And
- 21 you have to get it fixed.
- 22 So that's what that program is.
- 23 It's two different programs. So, yes,
- 24 the HELP loan under the Water Department,

- 1 which will help you get your pipes fixed.
- 2 But then if you don't want that, you can
- 3 go to the American Water Resource people.
- 4 MS. LASKER: Well, I completely
- 5 understand that. I'm aware of what you
- 6 just said. That's not my question. I'm
- 7 looking at your budget. I'm looking at
- 8 you're saying you don't have enough money
- 9 and then you're advocating for the water
- 10 customers to give away their money to a
- 11 different company, whereas you could be
- 12 collecting that money. That's what I'm
- 13 talking about.
- 14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 15 Lasker, I think, you know, you have to
- 16 understand that the Water -- we're
- 17 talking facilities that are owned and
- 18 maintained by the Water Department and
- 19 facilities that are your responsibility
- 20 as the customer. And we're talking two
- 21 different things here.
- MS. LASKER: I understand the
- 23 difference. I completely understand.
- 24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Then

- 1 I really don't see that there's any point
- 2 in continuing to talk about this.
- 3 There's not really much that can be said
- 4 about it.
- 5 MS. LASKER: Well, you can
- 6 consider doing what the gas company does,
- 7 which is also a municipal organization.
- 8 And they offer you a warranty and you
- 9 give your money back to the Philadelphia
- 10 group, not to a private corporation.
- 11 They repair things and you buy a warranty
- 12 directly from them. And since -- the
- 13 Water Department could do the exact same
- 14 thing as the gas company does, and they
- 15 keep the money.
- 16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
- 17 thank you very much, Ms. Lasker, we
- 18 appreciate your comments.
- 19 MS. PRICE: Judge Chestnut,
- 20 this is Joline Price, also with the
- 21 Public Advocate.
- 22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.
- 23 MS. PRICE: I think Ms. Lasker
- 24 clarified her question, but I think her

- 1 question is, why isn't the Water
- 2 Department running the program that
- 3 American Water Resources is running? And
- 4 has the Water Department looked at
- 5 whether that would help their budget?
- 6 MS. LASKER: Right, yes.
- 7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I
- 8 don't know, Mr. Dasent, is there an
- 9 answer to this? Isn't the Water
- 10 Department's response to give the HELP
- 11 loan program?
- MR. DASENT: We can give you a
- 13 response. The HELP loan program is our
- 14 option to proceed to help customers. But
- 15 I can also go back to the company and get
- 16 a more detailed response so that
- 17 Ms. Lasker will be satisfied that we've
- 18 taken into consideration her various
- 19 comments. And we thank you for that.
- 20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 21 Lasker, okay?
- 22 MR. DASENT: I will probably
- 23 need an e-mail address, Ms. Lasker. And
- 24 if you share either with Glen Abrams or

- 1 myself that e-mail address, or I can get
- 2 it from Steven possibly.
- 3 MS. LASKER: I can give it to
- 4 you now if you want it.
- 5 MR. DASENT: Okay.
- 6 MS. LASKER: My first initial
- 7 and my last name, K-L-A-S-K-E-R
- 8 @verizon.net.
- 9 MR. DASENT: Great. Thank you
- 10 very much. We will get back to you.
- 11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay
- 12 great. Anybody else wish to participate?
- 13 If so, please raise your hand.
- 14 It looks like nobody else has
- 15 indicated they wish to make a statement
- 16 at this time.
- 17 MR. HAVER: Could I ask a
- 18 housekeeping question, ma'am?
- 19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.
- 20 MR. HAVER: So I filed a motion
- 21 asking for a continuance. I understand
- 22 that the Department wants some more time.
- 23 I'm trying to decide if I should complete
- 24 my testimony that's due on Monday?

- 1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Your
- 2 motion hasn't been granted, so yes.
- 3 MR. HAVER: Right. So I'm just
- 4 wondering about the timeline, if the
- 5 Water Department could let me know when
- 6 they think they might have an opportunity
- 7 to respond?
- MR. DASENT: We are working on
- 9 a response right now. And I imagine if I
- 10 write it tomorrow, because I just
- 11 sketched it out, I think you served it
- 12 last night?
- 13 MR. HAVER: Unlike my normal
- 14 complaints, I'm not complaining, I'm just
- 15 trying to understand what the timeline
- 16 is.
- 17 MR. DASENT: Let's plan on
- 18 Friday. I know I can meet that deadline
- 19 and I'll try to beat that.
- MR. HAVER: So, Ms. Chestnut,
- 21 you said please call you that rather than
- 22 Your Honor, you don't see any way that
- 23 this is going to be resolved until after
- 24 the deadline; is that correct?

Page 49 1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: 2 MR. HAVER: Okay, thank you. HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: 3 do, I don't think it's fair. 4 MR. HAVER: I wasn't debating 5 the issue, just trying to get the 6 timeline so I knew how to respond, that's 7 8 all. Thank you. 9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Does anybody have anything else then before we 10 adjourn and reconvene at 6 o'clock 11 12 tonight? 13 (No response.) 14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: want to thank everybody. I was very 15 16 nervous about this. This is the first time I've ever done a Zoom hearing. 17 I am not a tech person. I'm one of these 18 old people, older people. So thank you 19 20 very much. And I think it went pretty smoothly. But if you have suggestions to 21 22 improve the process, that would be great. 23 I do want to make it as 24 efficient and fair for everybody as

- 1 possible without being burdensome. But I
- 2 do want to especially thank Steven for
- 3 making this all work.
- 4 Anything else from you,
- 5 Mr. Dasent?
- 6 MR. DASENT: Nothing further.
- 7 Thank you also, Steven, I appreciate it.
- 8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 9 Scott?
- MS. SCOTT: Nothing further
- 11 from the Public Advocate.
- 12 Thank you all for
- 13 participating.
- 14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.
- 15 Abrams?
- MR. ABRAMS: Nothing further
- 17 from me, thank you.
- MR. HAVER: Nothing further.
- 19 MS. SAMUELS: I'm sorry,
- 20 Charlene Samuels again from Councilwoman
- 21 Gym's office.
- 22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.
- MS. SAMUELS: Were residents
- 24 notified about these meetings like with

- 1 the water bill, did it come in --
- 2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Why
- 3 don't we take a minute, I'd like
- 4 Mr. Dasent and Ms. Scott to put on the
- 5 record the outreach efforts you made.
- 6 MS. SAMUELS: I appreciate that
- 7 so I can pass it on to the Councilwoman.
- 8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Of
- 9 course.
- MS. SAMUELS: Thank you.
- MR. DASENT: Well, as explained
- 12 at the recent Rate Board meeting, we were
- 13 taking sort of a multi-faceted approach
- 14 for outreach. And we've put ads in the
- 15 Inquirer, Daily News, Al Dia, the Tribune
- 16 beginning March 9th and March 10th. We
- 17 did e-mail outreach through other various
- 18 contacts. We have sort of an our cast
- 19 group that we talk to all the time. We
- 20 used social media. We worked with CLS
- 21 with fliers. And we have done a lot of
- 22 e-mail outreach.
- 23 And we had collaboration from
- 24 Penn Future, I see, and others. As well

- 1 as articles in the Inquirer today. We
- 2 will have radio spots also that will help
- 3 with future outreach for future public
- 4 input hearings that are coming up later
- 5 in the week.
- 6 So we have done, including with
- 7 social media, we have done significantly
- 8 more than we have in the past. And we're
- 9 hoping over time we will have greater and
- 10 greater participation.
- 11 MS. SAMUELS: So nothing went
- 12 through with the bills to folks to say to
- 13 residents that we are having a meeting
- 14 because we are proposing, and I'm
- 15 thinking, what is that, a 16, 17 percent
- 16 rate hike? I'm just saying, yeah --
- 17 MR. DASENT: We did actually
- 18 tell folks that the rate increase was in
- 19 progress. But to announce specific
- 20 hearings on the short timeline, because
- 21 when we set the schedule, the time
- 22 between the setting the schedule and
- 23 these hearings wasn't enough to allow to
- 24 go through the full rotation of our

- 1 customers because mailings don't happen
- 2 sort of instantly, it's sort of an
- 3 old-fashioned way, they roll out through
- 4 the postal service and the like.
- 5 Some things can be posted and
- 6 were posted at the website. And also at
- 7 the Rate Board website.
- 8 So folks are learning of what
- 9 we're doing and we are doing our best to
- 10 do the maximum outreach. And
- 11 particularly with help from CLS, I
- 12 thought we did quite a good job this
- 13 time. But we're always seeking to
- 14 improve.
- MS. SAMUELS: Okay. Thank you.
- MS. SCOTT: Yes, I echo that.
- 17 We did reach out through the various
- 18 channels that Mr. Dasent mentioned. And
- 19 CLS also used our various social medias
- 20 and our lists that a lot of our advocates
- 21 at the organization have to also spread
- the word.
- MR. DASENT: And the
- 24 neighborhood energy centers were another

- 1 source that I think Rob and I were trying
- 2 to utilize this time just to improve our
- 3 outreach.
- 4 So we have done the job we are
- 5 supposed to, but we're always trying to
- 6 do better. So if you have other
- 7 suggestions, we're listening.
- 8 MS. SAMUELS: Thank you so much
- 9 for that.
- 10 So what is -- I think I saw
- 11 where it says the date for these proposed
- 12 hikes is September of this year, am I
- 13 correct?
- MR. DASENT: Yes, September 1,
- 15 2021, yes.
- MS. SAMUELS: And who is going
- 17 to make the ultimate decision? Is that a
- 18 decision -- like, you know, you have the
- 19 PUC as it relates to PGW and PECO, right.
- 20 Who makes that decision for the Water
- 21 Department? Is this something you have
- 22 to come --
- HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms.
- 24 Samuels, there's an independent board

March 16, 2021 Page 55 1 called the Water, Sewer and Storm 2 Water --3 MS. SAMUELS: Water, say that 4 again, Water? MR. LIANG: Water, Sewer and 5 Storm Water Rate Board. 6 7 MS. SAMUELS: Wait, wait. 8 Water? 9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes, 10 Water, Sewer, Storm Water Rate Board. 11 MS. SAMUELS: Thanks. 12 So the independent folks will 13 make the decision if it's going to go 14 through? 15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms. Samuels, I'm the Hearing Officer that 16 the Rate Board has hired to oversee this 17 18 process. 19 MS. SAMUELS: Got you. 20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: will write a report for the Rate Board to 21 22 consider before it makes its decision as

to what to do with the Water Department's

23

24

request.

March 16, 2021 Page 56 1 MR. HAVER: Ms. Samuels, it's 2 Lance Haver. 3 MS. SAMUELS: Hi, Lance. 4 MR. HAVER: How are you? MS. SAMUELS: Fine. How are 5 you? 6 7 MR. HAVER: Okay. So this is a 8 relatively new process. In the bad old 9 days the Water Commissioner ruled on his 10 own rate request. That was changed by 11 City Council. And City Council set up the independent board. The chairman of 12 13 the Board who was on the Zoom conference, I don't know if he's still here. 14 15 MR. POPOWSKY: Still here. 16 MR. HAVER: Is a former public advocate for the State before the Public 17 18 Utility Commission. 19 Ms. Chestnut is the reason why 20 we don't face the problems that the Texas electric utility consumers face. I am 2.1 22 not going to mention her age because that

would be unfair. I can say she was

23

24

retired.

- 1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: It's
- 2 okay, you can say I'm old.
- 3 MR. HAVER: The process has
- 4 been professionalized since the bad old
- 5 days. The current hearing examiner is a
- 6 professional who has proven time and time
- 7 again that she is capable of
- 8 understanding complex issues and making a
- 9 fair recommendation.
- 10 And the Board has professionals
- 11 on it representing different segments of
- 12 our society. And they will make the
- 13 final determination. Even though I don't
- 14 think the rate increase is necessary, and
- 15 I think there are ways to avoid it, it's
- 16 clear that the process is fair and just.
- MS. SAMUELS: So I hear that,
- 18 Lance. But the thing is, is there
- 19 anybody on that Board that lives here in
- 20 the City of Philadelphia, in -- right, is
- 21 anybody on the Board --
- MR. HAVER: They all do.
- 23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: They
- 24 all do.

- 1 MS. SAMUELS: All right. I
- 2 just want to make sure.
- 3 MR. HAVER: The Council
- 4 President wrote the bill, I was there
- 5 when he wrote it. And I would be happy
- 6 to talk with you off line.
- 7 MS. SAMUELS: Appreciate that.
- 8 Thank you, Lance.
- 9 MR. HAVER: I didn't want to
- 10 take up --
- 11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr.
- 12 Haver, thank you.
- 13 And, Ms. Samuels, you can reach
- 14 out to Mr. Popowsky, I'm sure. He is the
- 15 chairman of the Rate Board and would
- 16 certainly be happy to address any
- 17 questions you have as to the function of
- 18 the Rate board and how it fulfills its
- 19 responsibilities.
- MS. SAMUELS: Right. Thank you
- 21 so much, Ms. Chestnut, appreciate that.
- 22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Is
- 23 there anything else from anybody then
- 24 before we adjourn?

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Page 59
               MR. HAVER: Nothing more.
 1
 2
               HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And
 3
     readjourn tonight at 6 o'clock then.
               Thank you all, really. This
 4
 5
     went, I think, relatively smoothly and I
 6
     appreciate it.
 7
               MR. HAVER: Thank you.
 8
               HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: We
 9
     will get back together again at 6:00.
     Thank you.
10
11
               MS. SAMUELS: Thank you. You
12
     all have a good day.
13
               MR. DASENT: Thanks, you too.
14
15
               (The hearing was concluded at
16
     1:54 p.m.)
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