

Phila Water Rate Board  
3/23/2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

PHILADELPHIA WATER, SEWER, AND STORMWATER  
RATE BOARD  
PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, March 23, 2023  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Zoom Teleconference

HELD BEFORE: HONORABLE MARLANE R. CHESTNUT,  
Hearing Officer

LEXITAS LEGAL - PHILADELPHIA  
54 FRIENDS LANE, SUITE 16  
NEWTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA 18940  
(215) 504-4622 FAX (215) 504-7155

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Good evening,  
2 everybody. Thank you for showing up and attending this  
3 session.

4 My name is Marlane Chestnut, M-A-R-L-A-N-E C-H-  
5 E-S-T-N-U-T. And I am the Hearing Officer that is  
6 handling this investigation into the Philadelphia water  
7 company -- sorry -- Philadelphia Water Department's  
8 proposed rate increase.

9 Now this is one of the public hearings that have  
10 been scheduled by the Philadelphia Water, Sewer, And  
11 Stormwater Rate Board, or the Rate Board, to give the  
12 Board a chance to hear directly from you, the people who  
13 will be obviously directly affected by whatever decision  
14 they make for fiscal years 2020 -- 2024 and fiscal year  
15 2025.

16 The Rate Board is an independent body  
17 established to set rates and charges for water and  
18 stormwater service -- I'm sorry -- water and sewer  
19 service. As part of its mandate to conduct an open and  
20 transparent examination of the proposed rates, the Board  
21 hired Community Legal Services to act as the Public  
22 Advocate in this case and hired me to act as Hearing  
23 Officer to ensure that the hearing process is conducted in  
24 a fair, impartial, and expeditious manner.

1           There is a court reporter who will produce a  
2 stenographic record of this hearing, so please be sure to  
3 speak slowly and carefully.

4           All transcripts and documents of this process  
5 are posted on the Rate Board's website under the rate  
6 proceeding tab, and look for the -- the item on the left  
7 that's marked 2023 General Rate Proceeding. All of the  
8 recent rate decisions are posted there, so make sure that  
9 you look for the current one, which is 2023 General Rate  
10 Proceeding.

11           Now, before we get to hearing from you, I will  
12 introduce the representatives from the Water Department  
13 and the Public Advocate who will briefly explain their  
14 role and the position they've taken in the case.

15           Ms. Stoner?

16           MR. DASENT: She needs to be unmuted, Steven.

17           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Could you --

18           MS. STONER: Oh, thank you, Steven.

19           Good evening, Your Honor. Sarah Stoner on  
20 behalf of the Philadelphia Water Department. Glen Abrams  
21 is Deputy Commissioner for Communications and Engagement  
22 for the Philadelphia Water Department, and he will provide  
23 an opening statement.

24           MR. ABRAMS: Thank you. Good evening, everyone.

1 As Sarah said, my name is Glen Abrams. I'm Deputy  
2 Commissioner of Communications and Engagement at the  
3 Philadelphia Water Department. And today I am speaking on  
4 behalf of the department in this proceeding.

5 We first want to thank you all for joining the  
6 hearing to share your views about the rate increase  
7 request that the Water Department has filed with the  
8 Philadelphia Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Rate Board. The  
9 Water Department provides water, sanitary, sewer, and  
10 stormwater services to residential, commercial,  
11 industrial, and institutional customers within the City.

12 These services are essential and the foundation  
13 of public health in Philadelphia. We have recently  
14 requested an adjustment in rates and charges so that we  
15 will have sufficient resources to continue current and  
16 planned programs and to pay significantly increasing  
17 operating costs in fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Additional  
18 revenues are needed to ensure that clean water is  
19 delivered -- is delivered as safely and reliably as  
20 possible and that wastewater treatment and stormwater  
21 management services meet your needs.

22 If the Rate Board approves the Water  
23 Department's full request, a typical residential customer  
24 using 450 cubic feet, or 3,366 gallons of water per month

1 would see their bill increase by about 11.8 percent in  
2 fiscal year 2024 and 8.3 percent in fiscal year 2025, or  
3 approximately \$8.16 per month beginning on September 1,  
4 2023, and an additional \$6.45 beginning on September 1st,  
5 2024.

6 As explained in the Department's testimony, rate  
7 relief is necessary now to sustain our operations. The  
8 Department needs additional revenues to pay significant  
9 increases in operating expenses. Costs for labor,  
10 chemicals, materials, and supplies are rising, along with  
11 increased costs for regulatory compliance combined with  
12 capital program needs. PWD also continues to invest in  
13 much needed upgrades to critical water and wastewater  
14 infrastructure.

15 All projects planned for fiscal years 2024 and  
16 2025 are critical investments to ensure the utility can  
17 support its operations and continue to provide safe and  
18 reliable service to current and future customers with a  
19 well-maintained water and wastewater system you can count  
20 on.

21 One of the ways PWD is working to save customers  
22 money and reduce costs is by applying for low-interest  
23 loans from state and federal sources to lessen the burden  
24 of capital program costs. We are also pursuing grant

1 opportunities where feasible. PWD has been successful in  
2 its application for federal support for water system  
3 upgrades as announced by President Biden on February 3rd.

4 PWD also worked with the Department of Revenue  
5 and other city partners to help our customers achieve  
6 nearly \$14,000,000 in debt relief from water bills since  
7 January 2022, by working to connect people with the  
8 Temporary Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program  
9 created by the federal government in response to the  
10 COVID-19 pandemic. We are currently campaigning in  
11 Harrisburg and Washington, DC to make a program like this  
12 available in the future.

13 Finally, we want you to know that Philadelphia  
14 has robust and comprehensive customer assistance programs  
15 which help low-income customers pay their bills. These  
16 programs include the Tiered Assistance Program, or TAP,  
17 senior citizen discounts, and other programs that are more  
18 flexible than ever. If you are experiencing hardship, we  
19 want to help. You can use our one application for TAP,  
20 the senior citizen discount, or other programs available  
21 to assist households.

22 These programs are accessible through our  
23 website at [www.phila.gov/waterbillhelp](http://www.phila.gov/waterbillhelp) or by calling  
24 (215) 685-6300 Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and

1 5:00 p.m.

2 I would also note if you have specific billing  
3 questions or other service issues that you would like  
4 assistance with, please let us know and we will have a  
5 customer service representative contact you as soon as  
6 possible. Tonight, you can use the chat function to  
7 identify yourself or let us know that you would like to  
8 speak in a breakout room to exchange contact information  
9 or receive some additional information.

10 This evening, Saterria Kersey from the  
11 Philadelphia Water Department's Public Affairs Division is  
12 here to provide assistance. But please do not share any  
13 personal account information in the public chat.

14 Now, the purpose of today's session is to hear  
15 from you, our customers. We appreciate you taking the  
16 time to share your views with us today, and we look  
17 forward to hearing from you. Thank you.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Mr.  
19 Abrams.

20 Ms. Price?

21 MS. PRICE: Hi. Good evening. My name is  
22 Joline Price. I'm an attorney at Community Legal  
23 Services. We serve as Public Advocate in this case. I  
24 want to explain what that means and encourage you to reach

1 out if you have any questions.

2 In rate cases heard by the Public Utility  
3 Commission, agencies such as the Office of Consumer  
4 Advocate and the Office of Small Business Advocate  
5 participate to represent the interests of residential and  
6 -- or small business customers. These agencies are funded  
7 by annual assessments that all of the utilities pay. This  
8 allows the agencies to do things like hire witnesses to  
9 help thoroughly investigate the utility's request for  
10 higher rates.

11 Philadelphia Water Department is not regulated  
12 by the Public Utility Commission, so those agencies don't  
13 participate in our rate cases. Instead, the City has  
14 created an analogous position, and that's us, the Public  
15 Advocate. The Public Advocate's job is to represent the  
16 interests of residential and small business customers by  
17 investigating PWD's proposed rate increase and  
18 challenging, if appropriate, the assumptions that underlie  
19 it.

20 CLS serves as Public Advocate pursuant to a  
21 contract which requires us to independently and forcefully  
22 represent the interests of approximately half a million  
23 customers. The CLS attorneys will work with the expert  
24 witnesses we have retained, and we will submit written



1 testimony and participate in the technical hearings and  
2 briefing to inform the Board of what we think the Board  
3 should do. We welcome your input today because the  
4 information you provide us can help inform us and our  
5 experts.

6           What have your experiences with your water bill  
7 been like? How would a higher bill impact your family?  
8 Do you have concerns about customer service or other  
9 operations of the Water Department? If you have any  
10 questions or would like any assistance following up  
11 regarding PWD's proposed rate increase, you can call us at  
12 (215) 227-9988 or email [publicadvocate@clsphila.org](mailto:publicadvocate@clsphila.org).

13           This is not your only opportunity to be heard.  
14 After the hearings today, you can submit any information  
15 to the Board that you think it should have before making a  
16 final decision. We will be happy to help you with that.  
17 Thank you. And please know that your voices here today  
18 will be heard by all involved.

19           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Ms. Price.

20           I'd like to note that also participating in this  
21 proceeding are the Philadelphia Water Revenue Board, which  
22 is the agency that does the actual billing and collection  
23 for the Water Department, PECO, a group of large users  
24 collectively known as the Philadelphia Large Users Group,

1 and two individuals, Michael Skiendzielewski and Lance  
2 Haver, who are appearing on their own behalf.

3 Mr. Haver, did you want to make an opening  
4 statement?

5 MR. HAVER: Yes. Thank you. My name is Lance  
6 Haver. I am not a lawyer, but like many consumers, I'm  
7 fed up with and angry that my water bills continue to go  
8 up. And I want to just state the obvious, that what the  
9 Water Department has told us is untrue. They may believe  
10 they need more money, but instead of getting it from our  
11 pockets, they could simply save the money and make a rate  
12 increase unnecessary. So when they say they need more  
13 rates, that simply isn't true. It isn't proven, and it  
14 should not be accepted.

15 I have been a participant in this and in  
16 previous rate cases. I urge everyone who's online today  
17 to participate, and tell your stories, and demand the  
18 Water Department do everything it can to innovate, cut  
19 costs, and find other sources of funds. But I want to  
20 warn you, don't be confused by what is happening. The  
21 Philadelphia Water Department doesn't expect to get what  
22 it has asked for. It is a game it plays that allows the  
23 Public Advocate, who was hired by the Rate Board, the  
24 Hearing Examiner, and the Rate Board itself to claim they

1 have done something to help us by cutting some of the rate  
2 increase.

3           While the Water Department may not be looking  
4 out for us, it's not run by stupid people. They know that  
5 politically they cannot expect every penny they ask for,  
6 and therefore they ask for more than what they need.

7           The body that makes this decision, the  
8 Philadelphia Water Rate Board that hired the Public  
9 Advocate that hired the Administrative Law Judge, is  
10 comprised of five members. Two are real estate developers  
11 and two ran utilities. One is the former water  
12 commissioner who is sitting in judgment of her own staff,  
13 the people she hired, and is now deciding whether their  
14 recommendation should be accepted. The other is the  
15 former chief legal counsel for the Philadelphia Gas Works.  
16 In her professional career at PGW, she has never opposed a  
17 rate increase. There is only one consumer representative.  
18 The Business and Utility Control Board hires the Hearing  
19 Examiner and the Public Advocate.

20           Don't be confused as to the role of the Public  
21 Advocate either. As the business dominated Rate Board  
22 itself wrote, the public is not the client of the Public  
23 Advocate, nor is the Public Advocate hired by an  
24 independent body, as is the state consumer advocate that

1 Judge Chestnut made reference to. The consumer advocate  
2 that is before you today was hired by the Rate Board that  
3 is going to decide if rates should go up. The ratepayers  
4 have no control over what positions the Public Advocate  
5 takes.

6 In the last rate case, the Public Advocate  
7 agreed to not one, but two separate rate increases, two  
8 consecutive rate increases. That's what the Public  
9 Advocate agreed to. And in return, the Public Advocate  
10 was given not one, but two contract renewals.

11 And understand, the Business dominated Rate  
12 Board hires a Hearing Examiner who directs those of us  
13 opposing the rate increase to use a spreadsheet to make  
14 our arguments. On that spreadsheet, there is no place for  
15 cost savings. There's no place for innovation. And  
16 there's no place to say how much the Water Department  
17 should actually be collecting from real estate speculators  
18 and people who are flipping homes.

19 Just as an example of how skewed it is, earlier  
20 today, a consumer came to this hearing and asked a very  
21 simple question. Is the Water Department renovating its  
22 headquarters in Center City? The Hearing Examiner allowed  
23 the Water Department, with all of its lawyers and its  
24 deputy commissioner here today to say they don't know.

1 That's how weak the Hearing Examiner is in protecting the  
2 interests of consumers. She didn't ask the Water  
3 Department to find out whether it's renovating its own  
4 headquarters. She let them say they don't know, something  
5 that is completely unbelievable.

6           The only way for us to force the Water  
7 Department to cut costs and seek funding from COVID  
8 dollars so no rate increases is necessary is for us to  
9 demand it. We cannot stop the Public Advocate from  
10 settling this case as it did the last two cases. We  
11 cannot force the Hearing Examiner to get the information  
12 out of the Water Department, as we saw earlier today. We  
13 have to do it on our own, and we have to do it by putting  
14 pressure on our elected officials to demand that the water  
15 commissioner withdraw this rate increase and seek the  
16 money that's necessary from the federal, state, and city  
17 money that's available to cost cut and innovative so rates  
18 don't have to go up.

19           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Are you done?

20           MR. HAVER: Yes.

21           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

22           Let me give you an overview of the process and  
23 talk about the schedule. The Rate Board's regulations  
24 provide that the Rate Board's review of the department's

1 filing needs to be completed within 120 days from the date  
2 of the formal notice, which is the filing that contains  
3 the proposed rates and charges.

4 This filing contains a substantial amount of  
5 supporting statements, exhibits, and documents. The other  
6 participants have had an opportunity for them and their  
7 experts -- are having the opportunity now -- for them and  
8 their experts to review this filing and ask for further  
9 information to support -- I'm sorry -- ask for further  
10 information to support the Water Department's claims.

11 This is all posted on the Rate Board's website.  
12 These requests for further information, which are called  
13 information requests, are posted under the tab marked  
14 discovery, and there you'll find the questions and the  
15 answers provided for all of this discovery.

16 Then, after this period of discovery, the Public  
17 Advocate, and any other non-Water Department participant  
18 files its own testimony and exhibits containing their  
19 opinion about the proposed rates. This is not the  
20 spreadsheet. This is not the model. The model is used to  
21 calculate the revenue impact, but it doesn't take the  
22 place of testimony, it doesn't take the place of briefs.

23 After this filing, responding to the Water  
24 Department's filing, everybody has a chance to respond to

1 everybody else's testimony, and then we will have what are  
2 called technical hearings on that written testimony. Now,  
3 these hearings will be held sometime between May 2nd and  
4 May 5th.

5 Each side will present its witnesses and any  
6 experts for cross-examination in on-the-record  
7 proceedings. These hearings will be held virtually, and  
8 the actual dates will be posted on the Rate Board's  
9 website. You are welcome to observe.

10 After these hearings are concluded, each  
11 participant has the opportunity to submit written briefs,  
12 which is a written statement of their position, citing to  
13 the record to support their position as to what the Rate  
14 Board should do with respect to the company's filing.

15 I expect that my -- now, I will issue a report  
16 which contains my recommendation on the proposed rates and  
17 charges. I will evaluate each company, each participant's  
18 position, and I will file what's called a rate report.  
19 And I expect that will be issued sometime around the  
20 end -- middle or end of May, and the Rate Board will make  
21 its decision sometime about mid-June. All of these  
22 documents, as I said, will be posted on the Rate Board's  
23 website, so that's the best source of information about  
24 this case.

1           Now, with respect to this particular hearing,  
2 thank you very much for taking the time to attend. It's  
3 so important for the Rate Board to hear directly from you,  
4 the people who are directly affected by any change in  
5 rates.

6           Sometimes in the rate making process, we talk  
7 about customers as a group. We talk about the residential  
8 class or other subgroups, or like that, or groups. We  
9 don't talk about individuals. So we have to remember that  
10 this class is made up of actual real people. That's why  
11 it's so important to put a face on the customers, which  
12 are you. We need to hear your voices.

13           The reason why the Rate Board's regulations  
14 provide that these public hearings are held early in the  
15 process is that participants are able to consider your  
16 comments and suggestions and can incorporate them into  
17 their testimony that they will be filing.

18           In terms of how I will conduct this hearing, I  
19 will call on people who have registered. Now, if you have  
20 not registered and want to comment, that's fine. We'll  
21 get to you. Everyone will have a chance to participate in  
22 this if they wish, or you can send a letter or an email to  
23 the Rate Board. We will post all these emails and  
24 letters, and I promise you that I have read or will read



1 every single one of them.

2           When it is your turn, I will call your name and  
3 Steven will unmute you. I will ask your name, and I will  
4 ask you to give and spell your name for the benefit of the  
5 court reporter. I will ask if you are a customer of the  
6 Philadelphia Water Department, and if you are appearing on  
7 behalf of a group. Please try to confine your remarks to  
8 the issue in this proceeding, which are the proposed  
9 rates.

10           If you have an individual billing or service  
11 problem, we can direct you, as Mr. Abrams indicated, to a  
12 breakout room. We can talk directly to a representative  
13 from the company who can assist you with your problem. So  
14 if you have an individual issue, please say that, and talk  
15 directly to the Water Department. But again, as Mr.  
16 Abrams indicated, please don't put your personal  
17 information out in the public record.

18           If you have a question about this proceeding,  
19 and if we can answer it quickly here, we will. If not,  
20 somebody will get back to you, either the company or the  
21 Public Advocate.

22           If you have not registered -- okay. Now, if you  
23 haven't registered and want to make a statement, the way  
24 to do that, to let me know, is to raise your hand. To

1 raise your hand, either look for a hand on the bar that  
2 contains the Zoom controls. In my computer, it's on the  
3 bottom of the screen, and it's marked reactions. If you  
4 click on reactions, you get some hand signals, and that's  
5 the way to do it. Or, like I said, if you're using a  
6 different device, you have to -- it may be slightly  
7 different. But look for your Zoom controls where it says  
8 participants and chat, and look for a way to raise your  
9 hand.

10 If you are participating by telephoning in, you  
11 hit the star button and the number nine, and that will  
12 raise your hand. And then when you're called on to unmute  
13 yourself, hit star and six. I'm not going to pose a time  
14 limit unless it looks like we may not have sufficient time  
15 to ensure that we hear from everyone. But please be  
16 respectful of other people.

17 After your statements, I will ask the  
18 participants if they have any questions for you. Now,  
19 this is simply to clarify your statement. It's not for  
20 the purpose of cross-examination. It's not intended to  
21 put you on the spot or embarrass you. When you're done,  
22 you're welcome to stay on, but you certainly don't have  
23 to. You're free to leave at any time.

24 Now, before I hear from you, I do want to make a

1 couple of additional statements. While the primary reason  
2 for having these hearings is to hear from you, your  
3 comments, your suggestions, your concerns, there's another  
4 reason which is that I want you to have confidence in the  
5 process. I want you to see how this case is being done.  
6 I want you to feel comfortable that the Water Department's  
7 proposal is being examined thoroughly, and every aspect of  
8 it will be scrutinized.

9           Now, the role of the Public -- it is true,  
10 believe me. Now, the role of the Public Advocate, I'm not  
11 sure if that really was conveyed to you. The statement  
12 was made that you're not clients of the Public Advocate,  
13 and that's absolutely true. You are not clients of them.  
14 There is no client-lawyer relationship which has its own  
15 set of responsibilities. What they are is your advocate.  
16 That's why the name is Public Advocate. Just like in the  
17 PUC hearings. There's the office of Consumer Advocate and  
18 the office of Small Business Advocate. They also do not  
19 have any kind of legal representational relationship with  
20 the members of their classes. What the Public Advocate  
21 does is advance your interests, promotes your interests as  
22 a group, the group of residential and small business  
23 customers.

24           Now, there's also been some statements about my

1 ability to thoroughly examine the company's filing. And I  
2 have to tell you that my background makes me very well  
3 suited to do this. I was a PUC Administrative Law Judge  
4 for a quarter of a century, and it was over 25 years that  
5 I have done many, many cases like this. I have sat on  
6 hundreds, hundreds of rate cases involving all types of  
7 utilities. Water utilities, electric utilities, gas  
8 utilities, telecommunications, railroads. I know a lot  
9 about rates, how rates are set, and the components of rate  
10 making.

11           What I did as an ALJ was to balance interests,  
12 and I think I've shown that I'm certainly able to do that.  
13 Now, before I became an ALJ, I spent 10 years also doing  
14 regulatory work. I worked for the PUC as a staff  
15 attorney. I was an assistant counsel in the law bureau --  
16 I'm sorry -- in the law bureau. I was an assistant  
17 prosecutor. I spent a couple of years as an assistant  
18 consumer advocate.

19           So I have actually been in the position of  
20 representing the interest, the public interest, the  
21 consumer interest, residential customers' interest. I'm  
22 very good at understanding how this all plays together.

23           And in that context, I want to make a final  
24 remark, which is, please don't think of this as an

1 adversarial process. First off, it's not litigation.  
2 It's not a legal process. Witnesses aren't sworn in.  
3 They don't give sworn testimony. They're not parties,  
4 they're participants. You don't need a lawyer. They're  
5 really -- isn't like that. It's not like the PUC, which  
6 is a quasi-legal process.

7           But please don't think of this as an adversarial  
8 type of proceeding. It's not the customers against the  
9 Water Department. You both want the same thing.  
10 Customers don't want to pay more than they have to pay for  
11 their water service, which is an essential service. They  
12 need rates that are affordable for everybody. And believe  
13 me, the Water Department doesn't want to set rates so high  
14 that you can't pay them. They don't want to be collecting  
15 from people who want to pay their water bills and can't.  
16 They'd really rather focus on going after those people who  
17 can pay their water bill, but don't. And there's a big  
18 difference in those two classes of people.

19           Now, you know, I analogize this to the customers  
20 on one side of a river -- and not a river -- a stream  
21 maybe, and the Water Department on the other. And there's  
22 a bridge, and we can meet maybe in the middle. And  
23 there's some question about where that meeting point would  
24 be. But the fact is everybody wants the same thing. They

1 want to have a decent, adequate, safe supply of water  
2 provided at reasonable, affordable rates. And that is my  
3 objective in this case. And I would think it's the Rate  
4 Board's as well. Okay.

5 I think we should then -- let's go off to the  
6 list of people who have signed up to speak at this  
7 session.

8 Steven, can you go to the first person?

9 MR. LIANG: Oh, I don't have the list in front  
10 of me.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, that would be  
12 Beverly Holmes Reddick (phonetic). I don't see that as a  
13 name. Is Beverly Holmes Reddick here?

14 Do you see that, Steven?

15 MR. LIANG: I do not.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. The next  
17 person I have then is Carmelo Santiago (phonetic). I  
18 don't see a Carmelo Santiago. If you're here, raise your  
19 hand, please. Now, there's a telephone number, but I'm  
20 not sure what that is, Steven.

21 MR. LIANG: I'm not sure either.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. How about  
23 Katherine Lupton? And I'm calling out these names and not  
24 just looking at tiles, because sometimes people do use

1 other people's devices to log on, and I've found that the  
2 names that are shown aren't always the actual person. So  
3 Katherine Lupton? Did I hear something -- did I hear  
4 that?

5 Steven, is that somebody?

6 MR. LIANG: I don't believe so.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh, okay. How about  
8 Lira Israelova (phonetic)? B. Jonesy (phonetic)? How  
9 about Aaron Horton (phonetic)? Doris Lynch (phonetic)?  
10 Alexander Cereal (phonetic)? Well, I see two people with  
11 just telephone numbers. Maybe one of them are one of  
12 these people?

13 Steven, could you -- could you check on that?

14 MR. LIANG: Unmuting or I'm trying to unmute new  
15 number.

16 MS. LUPTON: Hello?

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hello. Who are you,  
18 please?

19 MS. LUPTON: Yes. This is Katherine Lupton.  
20 I've been trying to unmute myself for a few minutes now.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

22 MS. LUPTON: No. I kept getting a message that  
23 I could not unmute myself. So I'm in now, so that's all  
24 that matters, I guess.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, good. Well,  
2 I'm glad. Could you please give and spell your name for  
3 the benefit of the court reporter?

4 MS. LUPTON: Sure. This is the Philadelphia  
5 Water Department's hearing. My name is Katherine Lupton.  
6 Katherine with a K-A-T as in Tom, H-E-R-I, N as in Nancy,  
7 E. Last name Lupton, L-U, P like in Paul, T like in Tom,  
8 O, N like in Nancy.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
10 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

11 MS. LUPTON: I am.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing  
13 on behalf of a group or an organization?

14 MS. LUPTON: No. I am representing my interests  
15 and the interests of every other senior citizen in this  
16 city.

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, great. Go  
18 ahead then, please.

19 MS. LUPTON: As a citizen of Philadelphia for  
20 the past 65 years, I am appalled that the Philadelphia  
21 Water Department will consider imposing a 21 percent rate  
22 increase on city residents, especially now with inflation  
23 being so high and the cost of living constantly going up.

24 It is also my understanding that Philadelphia is



1 the poorest among large cities in the United States. As a  
2 senior citizen who is still working full-time, I am most  
3 concerned for my peers who are on fixed incomes and for  
4 struggling families. I also understand that the City  
5 received funding under the American Rescue Plan Act and  
6 has the flexibility of choosing how these funds will be  
7 spent.

8           According to Philadelphia dot gov's web page on  
9 the City's plan for how these funds will be used, the City  
10 budgeted \$250,000,000 of these funds in fiscal year 2022,  
11 and \$335,000,000 of these funds in fiscal year 2023. In  
12 fact, Philadelphia received a total of \$1.4 billion in  
13 funds which must be used by 2024. With that much money  
14 coming into the City, why can't a portion of it be  
15 allocated to cover the water rate increase?

16           In my mind, it makes no sense that this burden  
17 should fall to residents of the poorest, largest city in  
18 the country. I am angry and frustrated that neither the  
19 Mayor's office nor City Council will take the Water  
20 Department to task on this. While taxes continue to  
21 increase, City services continue to decrease. It is  
22 shameful and needs to be addressed by our city government.  
23 Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express my  
24 concerns here tonight.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Ms.  
2 Lupton. I very much appreciate your remarks. And I'll  
3 tell you the truth, just speaking generally. If there's  
4 an external source of funds for the Philadelphia Water  
5 Department to use, I think we're all in favor of that.  
6 And we'll certainly press the Water Department to make  
7 sure that there are no funds that it hasn't received or  
8 sought, because that, to me, is such a win-win where the  
9 Water Department gets whatever money it needs, plus the  
10 burden is lifted from the ratepayer. So that's something  
11 we will be exploring in great detail in our technical  
12 hearings. Does anybody have any questions for Ms. Lupton?

13 MR. HAVER: I do.

14 MR. DASENT: If I might add a comment -- if I  
15 might add a comment. Thank you very much, Ms. Lupton, for  
16 your comments. We want every external source of funds  
17 that we can get our hands on. We've applied for various  
18 forms of funding from the federal government. The  
19 president has recently been here and indicated that he or  
20 the federal government is helping with funding support  
21 that will help lower our borrowing costs. And those loans  
22 which we have to repay are low-interest loans, so there  
23 are savings represented by that. And rate relief is the  
24 last resort for the Water Department. And, you know, we

1 want every possible other resource to help relieve  
2 customers and ease your burdens however we can. And just  
3 recognize that it's an ongoing conversation -- (Connection  
4 lost.)

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms. Price, did you  
6 want to say something?

7 MS. PRICE: Yes. I just wanted to thank you for  
8 testifying and sharing your -- your thoughts. And just,  
9 you know, let you know that we are definitely going to be  
10 looking very closely at the -- at the rate request from  
11 the Water Department with our experts to look to what  
12 other sources of funding might be there, might exist, and  
13 what -- you know, whether the Water Department's  
14 assumptions are correct. So thank you again for, for  
15 coming out and speaking.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mr. Haver?

17 MR. HAVER: Ms. Lupton, are you aware that 14 of  
18 the 17 City Council members sent a letter to the Water  
19 Department asking the Water Department to withdraw this  
20 rate request and to meet with City Council to access those  
21 funds?

22 MS. LUPTON: No. I was not aware of that.

23 MR. HAVER: And are you aware the Water  
24 Department refused to withdraw the rate request?

1 MS. LUPTON: I am aware of that.

2 MR. HAVER: Are you aware that the Hearing  
3 Examiner has not met, nor has the Public Advocate met with  
4 any member of City Council to figure out how we can go  
5 ahead and have this rate increase request withdrawn and  
6 seek those funds?

7 MS. LUPTON: No. I wasn't aware of that, but  
8 that certainly doesn't surprise me either.

9 MR. HAVER: Thank you.

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

11 MS. LUPTON: I just want to -- with the City  
12 having all of this money flowing through it, why can't the  
13 Water Department go to the City and demand that they get  
14 the money they need to cover this rate increase? If the  
15 City can use these federal dollars however they deem  
16 necessary, why is that not a possibility?

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, we're going to  
18 be looking at that, so thank you. Okay.

19 The next person, Steven?

20 MR. LIANG: Freyda Kornblum (phonetic), raised  
21 their hand. I'm not sure if they're one of the people  
22 that you mentioned, so I'm going to ask them --

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, you're the  
24 Workers Benefit Council, right? Steven, you can unmute

1       them, I guess.

2                   MR. LIANG: I have asked them to unmute.

3                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Do they have to do  
4 that? Okay. Now, who's going to be speaking for you?

5                   MR. CHAMBERS: Oh, I am. I am.

6                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. That's fine,  
7 but could you give and spell your name for the record?

8                   MR. CHAMBERS: Yes. Good evening, City and  
9 everyone. My name is Terrence Chambers. My name is  
10 spelled T-E-R-R-E-N-C-E (Indiscernible.) of 1418 North  
11 Felton Street, West Philadelphia. I am speaking on behalf  
12 of the Philadelphia Workers' Benefit Council this evening.

13                   HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I'm sorry. Sir,  
14 could you speak up a little more? It's hard for me to  
15 hear you.

16                   MR. CHAMBERS: I represent -- I'm speaking for  
17 the Workers' Benefit Council this evening. The Workers'  
18 Benefit Council represents thousands of low-income working  
19 families in the City of Philadelphia. We're absolutely  
20 opposed to this rate hike. I've been a PG -- I've been a  
21 Water Department customer for many years, and on occasion  
22 I have had some close calls when it comes to my water --  
23 my water shut offs due to my inability to pay past water  
24 bills.

1                   Now, currently, I have no problem with my water  
2 services whatsoever. However, working people in  
3 Philadelphia are going through tremendous financial  
4 hardships due to various factors for job security, job  
5 loss, the state of the economy, and the pandemic, chief  
6 among them.

7                   And, you know, adding insult on a wound is that  
8 the program citizens are received due to the pandemic have  
9 been discontinued altogether. As well, staff benefits  
10 have been reduced or cut completely for everybody. And  
11 there's so much uncertainty as it is. Considering that  
12 people are trying to keep roofs over their heads and feed  
13 their families, and now the news that the Water Department  
14 is considering raising the rates on people's water bills,  
15 which makes a bad situation worse.

16                   The Workers' Benefit Council is demanding that  
17 the rates should not be raised, you know, that the Water  
18 Department put in like a year-round moratorium of water  
19 shut offs or for any households at, or below 300 percent  
20 of the federal poverty level, or discontinue water shut  
21 offs entirely.

22                   Furthermore, we also demand that lower rates,  
23 those at 300 percent of the poverty level or below, to no  
24 more than 6 percent of their income per federal standards

1 household budgets, as well as the same policies to those  
2 above 300 percent of poverty level who can demonstrate  
3 financial hardships. Debt relief should be provided for  
4 those who are falling behind in their water bill.

5           In addition, we demand that the government put  
6 on running sustainable development goals, which the US  
7 government adopted in words back in 2015. One of these  
8 goals, goal number six to be precise, is that the --  
9 states that the government should provide clean and water  
10 and sanitation. You know, the bare-bones of the whole  
11 thing is that water is life, and no one should have to  
12 live without their water and homes due to circumstances  
13 beyond their personal control.

14           In that regard, I think about the children and  
15 senior citizens who need water for everyday use, just like  
16 the rest of their family members. You know, by not  
17 raising the rates, the Water Department will be doing a  
18 service to the general public in a great -- in a great  
19 way. Should the Water Department raise their rates when  
20 we're already facing record inflation? Results will be  
21 devastating for low-paid or a lot of the workers in the  
22 City of Philadelphia, possibly in the long run.

23           Finally, in conclusion, the last thing anybody  
24 wants to do is constantly choose between, you know paying

1 a rent or mortgage, groceries, or the utilities. And we  
2 asked that the Water Department to please do not raise the  
3 water rates. You know, see all these hardworking citizens  
4 as living and breathing human beings, not dollar signs.  
5 That's it for now, and I thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you for your  
7 statement. I really appreciate it. Does anybody have any  
8 questions for Mr. Chambers?

9 MR. HAVER: I'd like to thank Mr. Chambers and  
10 his organization for continually coming out and fighting  
11 for the right of low-income workers. I believe you to be  
12 commended for continuing that fight for so many years, and  
13 I wish you the best of luck. And I hope that you'll be  
14 joining us in asking, why is the Water Department redoing  
15 their offices with our money? And why are they forcing us  
16 to pay Center City real estate prices when they could  
17 easily move into the neighborhoods, help the neighborhoods  
18 out, and keep our costs down?

19 MR. CHAMBERS: Thank you.

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, Steven, next  
21 person?

22 I'm sorry. Ms. Price --

23 MR. DASENT: If Your Honor, please?

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Wait, wait, wait.



1 MS. PRICE: Sorry. I just wanted to -- I just  
2 wanted to thank the -- thank them for testifying, that's  
3 all. Thank you.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you. Okay.  
5 Steven?

6 MR. LIANG: I believe it's the phone number.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

8 MR. LIANG: 515-2136.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah. You have to  
10 unmute yourself.

11 Right? You've unmuted them, Steven? They have  
12 to do it themselves?

13 MR. LIANG: Yes.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Press star six  
15 is my understanding. Okay. Are you --

16 MS. FRIEND: Is it okay for me to talk?

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah, sure. Hi.  
18 Could you give and spell your name for the record, please?

19 MS. FRIEND: Laverne Friend. L-A-V-E-R-N-E.  
20 F-R-I-E-N-D.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
22 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

23 MS. FRIEND: Yes, I am.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing

1 on behalf of a group or an organization?

2 MS. FRIEND: Well, individually for right now,  
3 yes. But I am a part of NORWAC, North of Washington  
4 Avenue Coalition. But I'm coming personally right now.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. That's fine.  
6 Go ahead, Ms. Friend.

7 MS. FRIEND: Okay. I'm calling because as  
8 previous callers have already made this statement, but I  
9 do understand that the Water Department has gone up  
10 consecutively the last two years, 2021, 2022, and they are  
11 proposing to go up about 21 percent 2023. And I just  
12 think that is appalling. I do understand that our  
13 president came to Philadelphia leaving some -- I forget  
14 what they call the monies -- but I understand it's like  
15 three streams of money.

16 One was supposed to be some leftover money from  
17 the COVID, infrastructure money, and I forgot what the  
18 third stream of money was. And I'm stating this third  
19 stream from Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore Richardson. I  
20 remember her saying it was three streams of money.

21 And I don't understand. And one of the answers  
22 that was given that I heard was that it was supposed to be  
23 for the stakeholders, and I thought we were stakeholders.  
24 I don't know the Water Department to have been sold to

1 anyone. So my question is, has the department of -- the  
2 Water Department been sold? And are we customers, the  
3 stakeholders?

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Let me just answer  
5 that, which is the Water Department is a City department.

6 MS. FRIEND: Right. That's what I thought.  
7 That's exactly what I thought. And I just think that's a  
8 bit much on the, you know, on the consumer. You know,  
9 everybody is hitting one pocketbook, you know, just from  
10 everywhere, retail, and the food industry, and you name  
11 it. Everybody is just tackling that one entity, and I  
12 think also it's a part of gentrification in my point of  
13 view as well.

14 So I -- I think that they need to really, really  
15 hold off on this. I really think they need to rethink  
16 this and find another way to -- to get whatever monies  
17 they think the Water Department think they need. Because  
18 I believe with the three streams of monies, if I'm  
19 correct, and correct me if I'm wrong, I don't see any  
20 need. I don't see a great need at this time. I really  
21 don't.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, thank you.  
23 Because that is exactly the issue we're looking at. Do  
24 they need this money, and do they need it from the

1 customers? I do want to correct --

2 MS. FRIEND: Yes.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I do want to just  
4 clarify something I think I heard you say, which is that  
5 this would be a 20 percent increase for 2023, and I don't  
6 think -- that's not the case. It's 20 percent over two  
7 years. It's 11 percent, and I guess 8 percent.

8 MS. FRIEND: Okay.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms. Price or Ms.  
10 Stoner, you can correct me on that.

11 MR. DASENT: That's correct.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: But it's not 20  
13 percent --

14 MS. FRIEND: But right now -- but right now, I  
15 think any percentage for right now is just too much. Any  
16 percent. It's just too much on, on the consumer at this  
17 time. We're being pressed from all sides, and it's just  
18 coming from one purse. You know, it's just too much right  
19 now. It's just too much. And I think they need to think,  
20 you know, rethink this on, you know, on the consumer right  
21 now. This is too much.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

23 MS. FRIEND: And that's -- that's what I just  
24 want to present. And I am going to write a letter. I do

1 want to write a letter as well. And I do understand that  
2 our City Council is going to hold some hearings, public  
3 hearings on this, and I intend to be a part of that as  
4 well. Thank you.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you very much  
6 for your -- for your comments. And I'm sure we're all in  
7 sympathy with them.

8 MS. FRIEND: Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Any questions for Ms.  
10 Friend?

11 (CROSSTALK.)

12 MR. HAVER: I have a question.

13 MR. DASENT: I would like to --

14 MR. HAVER: So here -- here's the choice that  
15 the Mayor is making. Should he release the COVID money so  
16 the rates don't go up, or should he keep the COVID money  
17 so he can lower business taxes? Which of those two  
18 choices would you prefer? Would you prefer the money  
19 being allocated to the Water Department, so rates don't  
20 have to go up --

21 MS. FRIEND: Yes.

22 MR. HAVER: -- or you prefer the money being  
23 allocated to lower business taxes?

24 MS. FRIEND: Keep the money so that we don't

1 have to spend any more money --

2 MR. HAVER: Thank you.

3 MS. FRIEND: -- for us, the consumer.

4 MR. HAVER: Yes.

5 MS. FRIEND: Thank you.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

7 MR. DASENT: If Your Honor, please, I have a  
8 comment also. Ms. Friend should understand we are seeking  
9 out federal funding at the Water Department, and that we  
10 have been successful in getting loans so far, and looking  
11 for grants as well to lessen the burden on customers. And  
12 we want every possible resource to make the burden lighter  
13 on customers.

14 But with the PennVEST loans are like cheaper  
15 loans, but still have to be repaid. And there are other  
16 operating costs, like chemical costs going up  
17 dramatically, labor costs going up in a very large amount,  
18 and materials and supplies that hits us also. So we're  
19 doing our best to juggle these two things, and we are  
20 asking the administration for money to support us. But  
21 they also have police, and fire protection, and  
22 recreation, and every other thing the City does to take  
23 into account. So we're asking -- we're in the middle of  
24 that conversation right now.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Thank you.

2 MS. FRIEND: But what about the infrastructure  
3 money? That's not enough? And that third stream of money  
4 that the Councilwoman spoke about?

5 MR. DASENT: The infrastructure money is used to  
6 lower our borrowing costs, basically, because if you, for  
7 example, have a, you know, a very large construction  
8 program and because you have a grant or a loan, you can  
9 finance that at, you know, a lesser cost, or it chips away  
10 at the overall cost. But it does not get away from our  
11 operating costs because you have to have the chemicals to  
12 treat the water. You have to have the chemicals for  
13 wastewater. You have to pay your personnel. All these  
14 things are sort of non-discretionary costs that are coming  
15 due.

16 MR. HAVER: Now, you know why --

17 MS. FRIEND: What about that third stream --

18 MR. HAVER: -- lawyers make so much money.

19 MS. FRIEND: -- of money?

20 MR. HAVER: Mr. Dasent continues to talk about  
21 federal and state dollars while you're asking about city  
22 dollars. You're saying why doesn't the Water Department  
23 use the money the city has? You're not talking about --  
24 federal or state. You're asking specifically about the

1 city dollars.

2 And Mr. Dasent just said he's discussing that  
3 with the Mayor. What he doesn't -- why has he asked for a  
4 rate increase before he has that answer? Look, let's be  
5 honest. If the Water Department gets all this rate  
6 increase, why would the Mayor give a single cent to the  
7 Water Department? The Mayor's not involved --

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Thank you.  
9 That's enough argument -- you know -- I think we've --

10 MR. HAVER: -- path of least resistance --

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I think we've  
12 discussed this issue quite a bit, which is that we do  
13 expect the Water Department to make every effort to find  
14 available sources of money. It's not a simple thing,  
15 asking and getting, so we can talk about this in the  
16 context of the case. This is really the appropriate  
17 subject for -- for testimony. We can go into detail about  
18 it. But here, we're here to hear people and answer  
19 questions and some of these answers just are wrong. Okay?

20 MS. FRIEND: Now, the other -- now, what about  
21 that third stream of money that we were talking about? I  
22 forget what she called it. It's um -- I didn't really get  
23 that third stream of money. I know she said  
24 infrastructure money, COVID money, and that third stream



1 of money. I don't remember what it was, though. Would  
2 anybody know what I'm talking about?

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Andre, do you know  
4 what that is?

5 MR. DASENT: It could be LIHEAP grants, which we  
6 have tried to get. They go directly to customers and help  
7 support them. Those are running out -- or run out at this  
8 point, but that helped during the pandemic. That may be  
9 what she was referring to.

10 MS. FRIEND: I don't think so. This was monies  
11 that the company --

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, Ms. Friend, if  
13 you --

14 MS. FRIEND: -- that the Water Department would  
15 get it. Mm-hmm.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

17 MS. FRIEND: Go ahead. I'm sorry.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: If you find out  
19 further information, feel free to contact us. Send us an  
20 email.

21 MS. FRIEND: Okay. I certainly will.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay? Sure.

23 MS. FRIEND: Okay. Thank you so much.

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

1 MS. FRIEND: Thank you.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, Steven?

3 Steven? Next person?

4 MR. LIANG: The next person is Aquanetta

5 Harrison.

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

7 MR. LIANG: I'm asking them to unmute.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Let's see where that

9 is.

10 MS. HARRISON: Okay. Can you hear me?

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I can. I can.

12 MS. HARRISON: Hello, everyone.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Could you spell

14 -- could you spell your name for the record, please?

15 MS. HARRISON: A-Q-U-A-N-E-T-T-A. Aquanetta is

16 the first name. Harrison is the last name H-A-R-R-I-S-O-

17 N.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a

19 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

20 MS. HARRISON: I'm a customer, and I'm speaking

21 on behalf of my neighborhood, approximately 20 people, 30

22 people in my neighborhood. We're opposed to this rate

23 hike. We're paying astronomical -- astronomical amount of

24 money anyway for the water bill. I mean, it's, it's going

1 up and up and up and up. And that wasn't even -- they  
2 didn't even say they were having a rate -- a rate hike.  
3 Now, all of a sudden, this new rate hike is happening?  
4 It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous. The water is high  
5 already. Did you hear me?

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I did, yes.

7 MS. HARRISON: And I would like to -- now, who  
8 are you taking this information back to?

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: The Rate Board.

10 MS. HARRISON: Okay. Could you tell the Rate  
11 Board that Aquanetta Harrison is opposed as a customer?  
12 I'm paying astronomical -- I'm sorry, what?

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Go ahead.

14 MS. HARRISON: I'm paying a lot of money already  
15 for water that I try to conserve already. And, you know,  
16 I'm paying like 100 and something dollars. And I don't  
17 even use my water that much. I'm scared to use it. I'm  
18 rationing my water. I don't -- you know -- the water bill  
19 is -- it's ridiculous. My neighbors are, you know,  
20 they're opposed to it. Their water is high. It keep  
21 going up and up and up for no reason at all.

22 I have -- they -- a water man had came to my  
23 house. I think it was a third party. And they use a  
24 third party -- I think he said something about third party

1 -- to change my -- to upgrade my meter. Upgrade my meter  
2 for what? They told me if I didn't upgrade my meter, they  
3 would shut my water off. This is ridiculous. I had to  
4 get an evening appointment because all they had was  
5 mornings. I had to, you know, to keep calling them back.  
6 It's like a hassle. It's a hassle with the water company.

7           Then he told me that the President gave all this  
8 money for them to do all these changes in people's houses  
9 as far as upgrading water meters, and stuff like that.  
10 And if you don't do it, they're going to cut your water  
11 off. It's just ridiculous. It's like they're holding you  
12 accountable for something that you don't, you know, that  
13 you don't have -- I can't even -- I'm so upset.

14           But as I was saying, he said the President gave  
15 all this money for them to do all this. So what is the  
16 rate increase for if the President gave all this money to  
17 the water company? I don't understand it. Can you please  
18 tell them for me that me and my neighbors, I live in the  
19 Mount Airy section of Philadelphia, are opposed to this?  
20 We cannot afford it. Thank you so much.

21           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you for your  
22 comments, and I think we're all in sympathy.

23           MS. PRICE: Your Honor, may I comment?

24           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Sure.

1 MS. PRICE: As Mr. Abrams indicated earlier this  
2 evening, the department needs additional revenues to pay  
3 significant increases in operating expenses. We are  
4 sympathetic to your concerns, and I want to offer to you  
5 that we're happy to acquaint you with customer assistance  
6 programs that the department offers, and to answer any  
7 questions you may have regarding those programs. So --

8 MS. HARRISON: May I add something to that?

9 MS. PRICE: Sure.

10 MS. HARRISON: Okay. I work three jobs, you  
11 know, to make ends meet. I'm not -- how should I say  
12 it -- I can't -- I make too much money to be on those  
13 programs, so what's going to happen now?

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, you know, Ms.  
15 Harrison, perhaps if you talk directly to them, they could  
16 find some other way of helping you or the Public Advocate.  
17 There are other programs beside the TAP program, which is  
18 income based. So there may be other sources that might be  
19 helpful to you. Would you like to talk to them directly?

20 MS. HARRISON: Yes, I would. Thank you so much.  
21 Yes, I would.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And I know it's  
23 frustrating working your way through. So if they talk to  
24 you directly, you're going to be cutting out a lot of,

1 hopefully a lot of aggravation. So how would you like to  
2 do this? Do you want to contact Ms. Stoner or Ms. Price,  
3 or have them contact you?

4 MS. HARRISON: I'll contact them. Can they put  
5 their information in the chat?

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: In the chat? Sure.

7 MS. HARRISON: Thank you.

8 MR. DASENT: Judge, if Your Honor, please? My  
9 name, Andre Dasent, is in the chat, my gmail address, and  
10 you're welcome to reach out to me, Ms. Harrison. And we  
11 look forward to your call.

12 MS. HARRISON: Okay. Thank you. Thank you so  
13 much for hearing me.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Great. Thank you.

15 MS. PRICE: I'll send my information to Steven.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

17 MS. PRICE: And thank you for your testimony,

18 Ms. Harrison.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

20 Steven, who's the next person?

21 MR. LIANG: That would be Angela.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, Angela?

23 MS. FOSTER: Okay. Am I unmuted?

24 MR. LIANG: Yes.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes. Yes, you are.  
2 Could you please give and spell your name for the record?

3 MS. FOSTER: Yes. My name is Angela Christine.  
4 So that's A as in apple, N-G-E-L-A. Christine. C as in  
5 cat, H as in Harry, R-I-S-T-I-N-E. Foster. F as in  
6 Frank, O-S-T-E-R.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
8 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

9 MS. FOSTER: Yes, I am.

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing  
11 on behalf of a group?

12 MS. FOSTER: Yes. So I am endorsing the demands  
13 of the Philadelphia Workers' Benefit Council.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. You don't have  
15 to say it again because we did hear the prior statement  
16 from Mr. Chambers. Did you have something to add to that?

17 MS. FOSTER: Yes. Well, I actually made a  
18 statement in chat. I had wrote something in the chat room  
19 basically. I couldn't, you know, because of my, my, my  
20 medical conditions and so forth, I couldn't get everything  
21 out from a neurological standpoint. I couldn't get  
22 everything out that I wanted to say. So I thought it  
23 would be best if I put it in the chat room.

24 I am an individual who advocates for those with

1 special needs. It could be children, it could be babies,  
2 it could be teens, adults, seniors, anyone who needs  
3 assistance. The numbers for such individuals is growing.  
4 It continues to grow since I started my personal journey  
5 47 years ago when I was nine years old. And I have a  
6 significant neurological history, medical history of so  
7 far, 15 neurosurgeries and 20 medical conditions -- 22  
8 medical conditions, and through the grace of God, I'm  
9 still here advocating for many individuals like myself,  
10 along with myself.

11 I'm struggling. I'm on SSDI. I've been on SSDI  
12 since I was 20 -- 20 -- no -- 30 years old. My doctor  
13 highly recommended, and I'm now 56. So I've been on SSDI  
14 for a long time. I've seen a lot. And I'm really  
15 disgusted with the utilities, how they continually  
16 increase, knowing that people are struggling, especially  
17 those with special needs, and their families, and the  
18 children who are undergoing unprecedented situations that  
19 break my heart.

20 I continue -- like I said, I continue to  
21 advocate as much as I possibly can, but I have to be aware  
22 of my own personal journey, medical journey. But it  
23 breaks my heart. And what's going to happen is you're  
24 going to start hearing some really horrific stories that



1 are going -- that's going to be on the news because the  
2 children are not getting what they need. Their needs are  
3 not being met because of lack of utilities, or their  
4 utilities been cut off for one reason or another.

5 Most of them are being cut off because they just  
6 don't have the funds. These are low-income people like  
7 myself, on extremely tight budget, constantly rebudgeting  
8 every month, and -- and they're just -- they're just  
9 struggling. They're struggling on a monthly basis. And  
10 like I said, you're going to hear some horror stories  
11 eventually if -- if such things occur. Because I could  
12 have swore that the Water Department raised these rates  
13 within the last -- I would say within the last 10 years.  
14 I could have swore they raised their rates within the last  
15 -- within the last 10 years.

16 And so much is going on that at this particular  
17 time, you know, it -- it's just not feasible for this to  
18 occur. And, like, we're struggling so -- we're  
19 struggling. We're literally mentally, emotionally,  
20 physically, financially struggling to make ends meet, to  
21 keep moving forward to the best of our ability.

22 And every time you turn around, it's like you're  
23 getting a punch in the face or a slap in the face. You  
24 know, it seems like every time you turn around,

1 something's occurring that you just can't get ahead. No  
2 matter what you do, you just -- you just can't get ahead.  
3 And, you know, you're hoping and praying that somebody  
4 will listen to you and hear your voice, you know, because  
5 there's so many of those people who don't have a voice.

6           You have so many special needs children and  
7 teens and adults that don't have a voice, and they need to  
8 be heard. And that's what I do. I mean, I try to do it  
9 as much as I possibly can, but I also have to be aware of  
10 my own medical conditions. But there are so many people  
11 that don't have a voice, and they're asking, please listen  
12 to me. I need this. I need my utilities to take care of  
13 certain medical conditions that I'm going through  
14 personally or on a daily basis. You know, so I need these  
15 things and nobody's listening.

16           You know, and I'm just appalled as to what's  
17 going on in the City right now. I mean, there are --  
18 every time I turn around, I'm going downtown, and there's  
19 so much -- so much revitalization, and we have these  
20 buildings. You know, these new buildings, and there's so  
21 many different changes going on in the city. There's so  
22 many people from out of state, from other states coming  
23 into the city.

24           I'm thinking, with all these different changes,

1 you know, why, why is there -- why is the -- are the  
2 utilities increasing and you have more people coming into  
3 Philly? I mean, this is a blessing. You have more people  
4 coming into Philly, so that's more revenue coming into  
5 Philly. So why is there an increase? That makes no sense  
6 to me.

7           You know, obviously, the City is getting money  
8 from somewhere, I mean, you know, and -- because you see  
9 all the changes happening in the City. I mean, it looks  
10 beautiful. It looks absolutely beautiful. So why in the  
11 world would you raise the rates? And I'm not just talking  
12 about water. I'm talking about electric and -- and gas,  
13 you know, because you had low-income like myself that  
14 receiving shut off notices, but yet you know my medical  
15 history. But yet I'm receiving shut off notices  
16 back-to-back.

17           You know, and I'm, like, okay, so if something  
18 happens to me, then what? Can I sue? Can my family sue?  
19 Because it is crucial. It is crucial for me to have all  
20 my utilities because of my medical conditions. It's  
21 vitally important -- vitally important for me to have all  
22 my utilities because of my conditions, on top of my son,  
23 who is 15 years old, and he's autistic with the same  
24 amount of medical conditions -- almost the same amount of

1 medical conditions that I have. He has 20, 25. I have  
2 22. But because we're so high functional, it doesn't  
3 really matter. You know, and these low-income programs,  
4 they don't benefit low-income as far as I'm concerned.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, Ms. Foster, we  
6 very much appreciate you taking the time and making the  
7 effort to express your concerns. And, you know, I think  
8 it might be helpful if you talk directly to Mr. Dasent or  
9 the Public Advocate who can maybe find some other ways to  
10 help you, and other people.

11 MR. DASENT: We would be happy to discuss it  
12 with her, Judge Chestnut.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: There are a lot of  
14 other resources that beyond the TAP program that may be --  
15 that may be helpful to you. Are you willing to talk to  
16 them?

17 MS. FOSTER: Sure.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Great. Ms. Price,  
19 would you like to agree to talk to Ms. Foster, too?

20 MS. PRICE: Sure. Our information is in the  
21 chat, or if you want to provide us with your information,  
22 we can -- we can reach out.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Do you want to do  
24 that, Ms. Foster? Are you able to get the contact

1 information from the chat or some other way?

2 MS. FOSTER: Yes, ma'am.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes. You can get it  
4 from the chat, or, you know, the chat goes away after this  
5 session?

6 MS. FOSTER: Right. So I'm trying to put my  
7 information. I'm trying to put my information in there  
8 right now.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, great. If you  
10 can. If not --

11 MR. DASENT: Your Honor.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- you could send an  
13 email to the Rate Board, and we will forward it.

14 MS. FOSTER: No. I'm afraid that is --

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No? Okay. Well,  
16 whatever, whatever works for you.

17 MS. FOSTER: Right. Okay. Like I said, I'm  
18 trying to -- I'm not fast when it comes to this. That's  
19 why I wanted to put a lot of what I needed to say in chat  
20 room. I'm getting there. I'm putting my information in  
21 now, but I'm pretty much finished what I have to say.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay, great. Thank  
23 you. Thank you very much.

24 MS. FOSTER: You're welcome.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Steven?

2 MR. LIANG: Next is Keith Jackson.

3 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

4 MR. JACKSON: Can you hear me?

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes.

6 MR. JACKSON: Great.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I can, hi.

8 MR. JACKSON: I was listening a little bit  
9 yesterday and just wanted to hear more today and really  
10 had no idea what I --

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Wait, wait, wait.  
12 I'm sorry. We didn't do the preliminaries with you.

13 MR. JACKSON: Oh, sure.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Could you give and  
15 spell your name for the record, please?

16 MR. JACKSON: K-E-I-T-H. J-A-C-K-S-O-N.

17 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
18 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

19 MR. JACKSON: Absolutely.

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing  
21 on behalf of a group or an organization?

22 MR. JACKSON: No.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. I'm sorry, Mr.  
24 Jackson. Go ahead.

1 MR. JACKSON: Well, it's okay, because I really  
2 had no idea how I was going to add value to this  
3 conversation. You know, I just wanted to voice my concern  
4 that I think that an increase right now could be deemed  
5 later to be devastating to the City, especially as I've  
6 listened to, you know, a number of my neighbors here on  
7 this call.

8 I believe, given that things like interest  
9 rates, food, and other complementary costs like had been  
10 talked about a few moments ago, it's just going to be an  
11 amalgam of despair for the City that, you know, we really  
12 haven't taken into account. And as we were talking, you  
13 know, I was just looking on the Internet just to find out  
14 what have other municipalities done when faced with, you  
15 know, this type of thing.

16 I was really dismayed to hear that the Mayor has  
17 this slush fund but is reluctant to use it. But still, I  
18 found out that there were a number of studies done, and  
19 again, this was just while I got on the call and came in,  
20 you know, 15 -- 20 minutes ago. Bain & Company had done a  
21 lot of studies, or done a major study reviewing  
22 alternatives that public utilities can use for sustained  
23 growth and curbing operating costs without raising rates.

24 And I found that the state of Michigan had done

1 the same thing with strategic partnerships. And even some  
2 -- I never heard of Palm Coast, city in Florida, but even  
3 they came up with some innovative strategies, it appears,  
4 to cut or mitigate costs for its utility customers. So I  
5 hadn't heard it mentioned either yesterday or so far  
6 today. What measures has the City taken in order to have  
7 outside consultants or really done some studies as to  
8 strategic partnerships or -- or anything of that?

9           Like, I mean, I'm not a water person  
10 professional. I don't know what they can do. But what  
11 has the Water Department done in order to find alternative  
12 strategies or innovative approaches like Palm City,  
13 Michigan, and what Bain was talking about in order to, to  
14 curb what may be inevitable, but at the very least, what  
15 may be premature costs by the -- by the City Water  
16 Department?

17           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, I think they're  
18 excellent points, and I would think that the expert  
19 retained by the Public Advocate, who is very, very  
20 experienced in examining utilities, not just in  
21 Pennsylvania, but really all over, would be able to shed  
22 some light on that.

23           Did you want to say something about Mr. Morgan's  
24 background, Ms. Price or?



1 MS. PRICE: I don't think I need  
2 (Indiscernible.) I think you pretty much covered it. You  
3 know, obviously, we have a -- we have a couple of  
4 different experts that will be -- that are already looking  
5 at everything that you talked about, Mr. Jackson, and --  
6 and all of the ways that, you know, whether there's  
7 opportunities for -- for cost savings and cost recovery  
8 and looking very closely at the assumptions that the Water  
9 Department has made in saying that it needs this \$240 --  
10 \$240,000,000 rate increase. So just, just wanted to, to  
11 underscore that we will be looking very closely and making  
12 recommendations based on our expert's analysis.

13 MR. JACKSON: Great. If I could follow up?

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: So, Mr. Jackson, what  
15 I would suggest is, if you continue to be interested in  
16 this, the schedule provides that the testimony of the non-  
17 water company participants will be filed April 12th. And  
18 like I said, that will be posted on the Rate Board's  
19 website, so you can look at that testimony yourself.

20 MR. JACKSON: Oh, great.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay?

22 And then the rebuttal testimony which responds  
23 to it will be filed April 25th.

24 MR. JACKSON: And who gives that rebuttal?

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: The other -- the  
2 other participants respond to each other.

3 MR. JACKSON: Okay.

4 MR. HAVER: Mr. Jackson, for clarity, I'd like  
5 to ask, is it your recommendation that the Water  
6 Department withdraw this request for a rate increase and  
7 seek other solutions before raising rates?

8 MR. JACKSON: I am saying that. I'm saying that  
9 inevitably it may be necessary to raise rates. But just  
10 in a little bit of time, and I mean, since I've been on  
11 this call, I've been able to find consultant companies  
12 that have addressed the issue. A state -- I'm not a fan  
13 of Gretchen Whitmer, but Michigan did something right in  
14 finding some alternatives. And some city that I've never  
15 heard of, Palm Coast, whatever it is, in Florida, also did  
16 the same thing, finding alternatives.

17 And if we have a dearth of studies in that  
18 regard with respect to something as -- a city as large as  
19 Philadelphia, we're really doing this city of Philadelphia  
20 residents a great disservice if we don't take the time to  
21 do that. So ultimately it may be necessary. But in the  
22 absence of having those types of studies done, I think at  
23 best we're being premature for something that would  
24 undoubtedly be devastating in ways we haven't thought

1 about for the residents of the City.

2 MR. HAVER: Thank you.

3 MR. JACKSON: And I was really concerned, if I  
4 can follow up with just one more point. Again, I thought  
5 I had nothing to say. I guess I do. If the Mayor is  
6 reluctant to use those funds, well then on what is he --  
7 for use the COVID funds that he has, then I would assume  
8 that there are ramifications to existing businesses that  
9 will preclude him from doing that.

10 But if he can publicize that, I mean, we should  
11 have some say there. If he doesn't want to use it, then  
12 why? And what are the hard numbers that state that if he  
13 uses this, it's going to impact businesses that they're  
14 going to leave, and not only now do we have higher water  
15 rates, but we have less businesses that are functioning in  
16 Philadelphia, and it's ultimately going to cost more  
17 money. Does that make sense?

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Absolutely.

19 MR. JACKSON: So, you know, if he doesn't want  
20 to use it and just want to use it as a slush fund, that's  
21 criminal -- because this really is going to cause a lot of  
22 devastation in the City that given the other complementary  
23 costs that I just briefly mentioned, I think are really  
24 going to cause a lot of pain in this city that folks may

1 not be thinking about.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, don't forget  
3 the Water Department is one of ten City departments, and  
4 I'm sure there's a lot of competition for whatever money  
5 is out there. So it's not always as simple as it seems on  
6 the surface. But yeah, of course we expect the Water  
7 Department to make every effort to seek out whatever  
8 external funds are available. And let's face it, the  
9 Mayor is political.

10 MR. JACKSON: Yeah. Thanks for letting me  
11 say --

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: These are political  
13 decisions, which is why the Rate Board was established to  
14 provide more of an objective kind of look at the filing.  
15 Okay? Anything else, Mr. Jackson?

16 MR. JACKSON: Nothing. Thanks for giving me the  
17 opportunity to speak.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. We appreciate  
19 you taking the time and your thoughts. Thank you.

20 And like I said, feel free to look at the Rate  
21 Board's website. The testimony that the Water Department,  
22 not just testimony, but actually lots of supporting  
23 documents and exhibits has already been filed. It's  
24 already posted on there. And then the other participants

1 will give their testimony and thoughts and that will be  
2 posted also. But really go to the Rate Board's website.  
3 That's the best way to look at this. Okay. Thank you.

4 Steven, who's next?

5 MR. LIANG: It's the phone number 215549 (sic).

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Do they need  
7 to unmute themselves?

8 MR. LIANG: Yes.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Can you --  
10 okay, you've done that I see. Hello?

11 MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening. Hello. Good  
12 evening.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Could you give  
14 and spell your name for the record, please?

15 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes. My name is Freida Williams.  
16 Freida, F-R-E-I, D as in dog, A. Williams, W-I-L-L-I-A, M  
17 as in mud, S as in Sam.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
19 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: I am.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing  
22 on behalf of a group or an organization?

23 MS. WILLIAMS: Only for those who are similarly  
24 situated.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Go ahead then,  
2 please.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. So thank you for the  
4 opportunity.

5 I'd like to clarify one thing, though. On the  
6 website, I saw a date of April 25th, that people could  
7 submit testimony up through that date, but then I also  
8 heard a date of April 12th. So could you clarify that for  
9 me?

10 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I'm not sure about  
11 April 26th, what our -- what the schedule --

12 MS. WILLIAMS: 25.

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- what the schedule  
14 in this case is, is that the testimony from the non-water  
15 company participants -- they are the people opposing the  
16 rate increase --

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- the proposed rate  
19 increase, that's due April 12th.

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Yes.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: That's due April  
22 12th.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: So if you --

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And then the rebuttal

1 to all of that, which is the response to that testimony,  
2 is due on April 25th.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: So for -- so just for clarity  
4 purposes. For instance, I'm on the phone, but I may wish  
5 to also write a letter, or friends who were not able to  
6 participate on the Zoom or on the telephone -- via  
7 telephone, they can write a letter and submit it or an  
8 email up through April 12th?

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You can submit it  
10 anytime. I mean, I'll be honest. We'll accept it.

11 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. I just want to be clear.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. That's fine.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah. This is really  
15 for the formal testimony that we're going to have the  
16 hearings on, but if somebody wants to send a letter or an  
17 email, that's fine. Anytime.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. And it will be reviewed by  
19 the same parties, yourself and the other -- the water rate  
20 rep?

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Absolutely.  
22 Absolutely.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right. So with regard  
24 to my comment, I actually have more questions than

1 comments, but I will start with saying that I am a senior.  
2 I am a long-term resident, and I -- I think I'm -- I'm  
3 puzzled, and I think I'm almost insulted by this water  
4 rate request.

5           One reason is that no matter how you couch it,  
6 you're talking about 20 percent increase between this  
7 year, and it says 2024. And I'd like to know who receives  
8 a 20 percent increase in their -- in their income in that  
9 type of period of time? As a person who receives Social  
10 Security, I received an increase after I don't know how  
11 many years, but it certainly didn't approach 20 percent.  
12 As a person who receives a pension, my pension does not  
13 increase by any 20 percent.

14           So I want to know -- well, I really don't want  
15 to know -- I'm just making a comment that a 20 percent  
16 increase is beyond ridiculous. I also think that the 20  
17 percent is almost like a bait and switch. We're asking  
18 for 20. We know we're not going to get that, so maybe  
19 we'll go for, I don't know, 15, maybe 13, maybe 12. I  
20 don't know. But again, I think it's insulting.

21           The other piece is, I'd like to know where the  
22 information is, or is someone there who can answer this?  
23 The date of the last rate increase, the percentage of the  
24 last rate increase, and the amount in dollars and cents?



1 That's one question.

2           The second question is, does the Water  
3 Department have what would be considered, whatever kind of  
4 words you want to use for it, a surplus? Meaning that if  
5 they had money, just like any individual, you have a  
6 budget, you have expenses, or you anticipate expenses,  
7 sometimes you spend more, sometimes you spend less. So if  
8 you didn't spend all the money that you thought you were  
9 going to spend, whether it's cumulative or not, is there a  
10 surplus that the Water Department has access to? If so,  
11 how much is it? And if nobody knows, who does know? So  
12 that's just the start of my questions. I have some other  
13 ones, but I'm just, you know, I'm starting with --

14           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. I'll take a  
15 crack -- I'll take a crack at those two.

16           MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you so much.

17           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: With respect to your  
18 first question about prior rate cases --

19           MS. WILLIAMS: Yes, yes.

20           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: If you go to the Rate  
21 Board's website under rate proceedings, and if you look  
22 down the left-hand side, it will give you each case. So  
23 you can go look directly. You can see what happened in  
24 2022, what happened in 2021, what happened in 2020,

1 etcetera. So if you look for the rate determination,  
2 which is the Rate Board's final -- final report, that will  
3 tell you what happened.

4 MS. WILLIAMS: Mm-hmm.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Now, the most recent  
6 one was 2022. There was a special rate proceeding. That  
7 was not an increase. That was a decrease to the already  
8 approved rates from a prior year. But I guess 2021, was  
9 the rate determination of the last full rate case. And if  
10 you look there, that will give you what happened to their  
11 request. Does that answer your question?

12 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, basically what you did was  
13 you told me to go to the -- you didn't answer my question.  
14 You told me to --

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, I can't answer  
16 it directly. I don't remember, to be honest. I don't  
17 remember at this point.

18 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, I think that's a legitimate  
19 question, and that this is what I think. I could be  
20 incorrect, but I think that in preparation, it's not a  
21 question that would be unusual for anyone to ask,  
22 particularly since you're asking for one increase and to  
23 say, okay, well, what was your last one? And I understand  
24 what you said, but you also do know, I'm sure, that

1 everybody is not computer literate, and some people may  
2 have difficulty trying to, you know, kind of suss out that  
3 information. So that was, you know --

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Well, let me  
5 see if I can answer it more directly then. And please,  
6 Ms. Stoner, Ms. Price, feel free to correct me on this.  
7 The last rate determination was the \$3,000,000 decrease.

8 MR. DASENT: That's right.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: The one prior to that  
10 was the settlement of the general rate piece where the  
11 company received 57 million, I guess, out of the 114  
12 request -- no, that's not right.

13 Mr. Dasent, maybe you can -- you can fill in  
14 these numbers for me? Or Ms. Price?

15 MS. PRICE: I -- I just looked -- I just went to  
16 the website. But it said that the original request was  
17 141 million, and it went down to 57.4 million. It was the  
18 approved request as part of the settlement.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay?

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you very much. So  
21 they asked for twice as much as they -- as they actually  
22 got? Whether or not there was as much as they needed, we  
23 don't know. Okay. I appreciate that. So my other  
24 question was, is there a surplus? Does the Water

1 Department have a surplus on its books?

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Well, that's kind of  
3 hard to answer.

4 MR. HAVER: No, it's not. It's absolutely --

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. Mr. Haver, stop  
6 interrupting.

7 MR. HAVER: There's a rate stabilization fund.  
8 There is a rate stabilization fund, their slush fund that  
9 has almost \$130,000,000. You're simply being misled by  
10 the Judge. There were two rate increases in the past two  
11 years that the Public Advocate agreed to. There's now  
12 stabilization fund that has \$130,000,000 in it. There's  
13 additional cash that it has online, and part of the  
14 proposed rate increase is to increase its surplus up to  
15 145 million. These are all in the documents, and for the  
16 Judge to say it's a hard question to answer is insulting.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. All right.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. Wait, wait.  
19 Stop, stop, stop. That's -- that's not correct, Mr.  
20 Haver, and you know it. You know it's not a simple  
21 question.

22 MR. HAVER: It's absolutely a simple question.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: You can't call it a  
24 slush fund --

1 MR. HAVER: There's \$130,000,000 sitting in the  
2 rate stabilization fund, as we speak tonight. That's what  
3 the filing says. That's what the filing is.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And you don't  
5 understand the purpose of that rate stabilization fund,  
6 obviously, if you're referring it to a slush fund.

7 (CROSSTALK.)

8 MR. HAVER: It is cash-on-hand that can be used.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: If they did not have  
10 those funds available, their capital cost would be much,  
11 much greater. I mean, it's not that simple a question.  
12 Sure, the question is should the right amount be in that  
13 fund? But the fact is they do have that fund.

14 MR. HAVER: And there's \$130,000,000 in it.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Excuse me. Excuse me.  
16 Can we get back to my question? I got it. There's some  
17 excess money that's not being used for ongoing day-to-day  
18 expenses. So what they may choose to use it for today,  
19 tomorrow, in a year, or whatever, but there's some money  
20 there. I don't know how discretionary it is unless  
21 there's a rule that says you have to use it this way or  
22 that way. It sounds like it's -- there's a determination  
23 as to how and when this money might be used. But there is  
24 some money. That's my question, and I think you answered

1 it for me.

2 So my other question is basically -- I also  
3 heard, and, you know, we don't always understand  
4 everything, but I also heard and kind of looked up a  
5 little information about there being some funds that were  
6 being offered that would offset financing. I understood  
7 what you said about that means that there's a loan, so you  
8 get the loan at a lower rate.

9 But the fact of the matter is that there is  
10 money that seems to be kind of underwriting that loan.  
11 And that's for, as I understand it, replacing customers  
12 lead lines, water main replacement, and investments that  
13 might improve pumping and water storage. That's from the  
14 federal government.

15 The state government also has some funds,  
16 somewhere around \$160,000,000 that's supposed to come to  
17 the Water Department. That may have to do with funding  
18 new water mains and the creation of jobs. So there's  
19 money that's coming in. And what I -- again, I don't  
20 know, maybe you're going to refer me back to the, you  
21 know, to the website, but for me and when I do a budget,  
22 my budget certainly is not in the millions of dollars, but  
23 you estimate -- you have several budgets.

24 You have one -- you know what you spent in the

1 previous year. You know what you anticipate to spend in  
2 the coming year, and maybe project what you might spend in  
3 the year after that. And then you got to look at the  
4 sources of income. If the rates stay the same, how much  
5 of what you think you're going to need will you get? So  
6 how much more do you actually need? And that, to me,  
7 should be the basis for a rate increase.

8           And again, I'm going to say to you, a 20 percent  
9 increase is beyond absurd. It's usurious. It's straight  
10 up -- it's almost like white collar crime. But if you  
11 don't even get the 20 percent -- 10 percent, 15 percent is  
12 still too much without your showing precisely to  
13 ratepayers like myself, what cost cutting did you do like  
14 I would have to do as an individual? Where is the fat?  
15 What can I do differently? What other supplier can I use  
16 that has lower costs but perhaps the same quality. What  
17 else can I do to cut costs?

18           Who else has had this problem? The gentleman  
19 who indicated that other municipalities have implemented  
20 -- implemented different kinds of plans so that they could  
21 look at what they could do before they increased rates.  
22 As far as the City is concerned, I think that's an issue  
23 perhaps that citizens need to take up with the Mayor if he  
24 has funds that can, you know, help to subsidize. All well

1 and good.

2           But also, was that a part of the calculations?  
3 Did you anticipate or did you do a budget with an infusion  
4 from the City, from the City surplus and a budget if you  
5 didn't have it? So that's what I need to know. Where are  
6 these comparisons? Where's the work that was really done  
7 as opposed to simply doing an estimate? And I heard what  
8 the gentleman says because he said it several times about  
9 materials, and they've gone up exponentially. Well,  
10 things have gone up for all of us. And what we have to do  
11 is to find out, can we find what we need or what we want  
12 at a lower cost, or can we do without it? Can we use  
13 less?

14           And that's what I need to know as a citizen and  
15 as a ratepayer. And I need someone to tell me where that  
16 information is, or to at least, at the very least, ensure  
17 that the Water Department has taken those steps before any  
18 rate increase can be considered. Do the work. Do the  
19 work. Make your case. It is not enough simply to ask,  
20 and it's not enough to do generalizations about, oh, well,  
21 things have gone up. Yeah, we know that. But what did  
22 you do to see if you could not cut the cost?

23           The other -- the only other thing that I want to  
24 say is that, again, I'm speaking for people like myself



1 and people who I consider to be similarly situated.  
2 Because, again, I'm from a family where we do not qualify  
3 for benefits because we're not eating beans every day, and  
4 we're not sitting outside, and we don't have holes in our  
5 socks. So these customer agreements they don't work for  
6 us.

7           And I also don't think that it should be on the  
8 backs of each individual person in my situation. It  
9 should be the responsibility of the Water Department to  
10 develop rates that are reasonable and that people can pay.  
11 So that's pretty much what I have to say, and I appreciate  
12 your listening. I will be forwarding a letter of  
13 testimony, or whatever you want to call it, my remarks.  
14 I'm also going to be reaching out to every City  
15 Councilperson. And whatever they can do to halt this  
16 until the actual work has been done. And I'm going to ask  
17 every neighbor that I know, every group that I am a part  
18 of, to do exactly the same thing.

19           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you, Ms.  
20 Williams. Would it be helpful to you to talk directly to  
21 Ms. Price at some point, and they can tell you how exactly  
22 they are scrutinizing this filing and what they are  
23 looking for?

24           MS. WILLIAMS: Yeah. That would be fine. So

1 let me just say this. I'm not on a Zoom, and I'm not in  
2 the chat, so I need to contact Ms. Price because I'm not  
3 putting my information out unless --

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. I totally agree.  
5 I totally agree.

6 Ms. Price, maybe you could just say it.

7 And could you write it down, Ms. Williams?

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Certainly, I can.

9 MS. PRICE: Okay. Do you want -- I'll start  
10 with the phone number that you can leave a -- it's our  
11 Public Advocate voicemail, and someone -- one of us will  
12 get it and call you back.

13 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

14 MS. PRICE: It's 215-227 --

15 MS. WILLIAMS: 227.

16 MS. PRICE: -- 9988.

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. And that's a voicemail?

18 MS. PRICE: Yeah. That's the Public Advocate  
19 voicemail. And we'll get the voicemail, and one of us  
20 who's working on the Public Advocate work will get back to  
21 you.

22 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. And, oh. This is my last  
23 question. I know that you can't -- I mean, I know that,  
24 you know, people make points, and sometimes on either

1 side, sometimes you overstate your case. But as the  
2 Public Advocate, can you tell me whether or not you  
3 represented the public? No. Let me not say that. Did  
4 the Public Advocate take the position of supporting these  
5 previous rate increase requests?

6 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: That -- that's a kind  
7 of involved question --

8 MR. HAVER: The answer is yes.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- Ms. Williams. No.  
10 She can talk to --

11 (CROSSTALK.)

12 MR. HAVER: They settled the case --

13 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- she can talk to --

14 MR. HAVER: -- and agreed -- and agreed to the  
15 rate increase.

16 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- she can talk to --  
17 there was a settlement.

18 MR. HAVER: Again, you're just being misled.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: There was a -- okay.

20 MR. HAVER: The Public Advocate agreed --

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Steven, you need to  
22 mute Mr. Haver so I can talk.

23 There was a settlement of the rate -- last rate  
24 case where the company got a lot less of the amount it

1 requested. And also there was two other provisions.  
2 There were a lot of non-rate provisions. For example,  
3 expansion of the TAP program and things like that. And  
4 also that -- that third proceeding, that special rate  
5 proceeding.

6 But it's not correct to say that the Public  
7 Advocate -- well, yes, they agreed to a much lesser amount  
8 than what the water company had requested.

9 MS. PRICE: Just to --

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: But you can call her  
12 --

13 MS. WILLIAMS: I wish -- so that's --

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- later, Ms. Price,  
15 and explain the basis.

16 Ms. -- Ms. Williams, we need to --

17 MS. WILLIAMS: -- my question --

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- we need to move  
19 on. I'm sorry. There are other --

20 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, I'm just saying that, that  
21 answers my question in that it, it leads to the other  
22 questions that I asked.

23 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Ms. Williams, I'm  
24 sorry, but we need to move on. There are other people --

1 there are other people waiting to speak.

2 MS. WILLIAMS: I understand there are other  
3 people, and you did allow other people to speak at much  
4 length, but I am at the end, so thank you.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you.

6 MS. PRICE: Thank you.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Steven?

8 MR. LIANG: Next is Kate S.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Can you unmute  
10 yourself, please?

11 MS. STOLER: Hello?

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

13 MS. STOLER: Can you hear me?

14 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes, I can. Can you  
15 -- can you give and spell your name for the record,  
16 please?

17 MS. STOLER: Yeah, K-A-T-E. And my last name is  
18 S as in Sam, T as in Tom, O-L-E-R.

19 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
20 customer of the Water Department?

21 MS. STOLER: Yes, I am.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you appearing  
23 on behalf of an organization?

24 MS. STOLER: I mean, I guess loosely I can

1 represent my neighborhood. I'm in Kensington.

2 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

3 MS. STOLER: So I want to say thank you to  
4 everyone who shared before me and thank you to PWD for  
5 your service. I've been a homeowner since 2015 -- a  
6 homeowner in Philadelphia since 2015, and, you know, I do  
7 feel like Philadelphia has good water. I appreciate what  
8 a luxury it is to live in an area where we have indoor  
9 plumbing and potable water. I appreciate the services  
10 that are provided, and I've always been fortunate enough  
11 to be able to pay my water bills and pay them on time.

12 So, yeah. All that being said, I have noted  
13 that already \$31 of every monthly bill goes towards  
14 service charges and stormwater management and adding \$15  
15 to those additional charges would make it 45 or 46 bucks a  
16 month going towards these, like, abstractly listed  
17 concepts.

18 Like, I know this is a small scale observation,  
19 but \$45 is a week's worth of groceries for me at this  
20 point. I also know that many of my elderly neighbors,  
21 like, as was shared, are already in arrears with their  
22 water bills and on payment plans, and I just feel like  
23 this major increase in rates would really put a lot of  
24 people deeper into debt.

1 Further, I live in Kensington, and quite  
2 frankly, like, I don't see the stormwater management as  
3 something that's actually being taken care of in my  
4 neighborhood. There's large sections of street in my  
5 immediate area that are not even crossable after heavy  
6 rain, like a literal lake, and you have to walk across the  
7 street in order to stay dry.

8 I also spend an extra \$10 a month for water  
9 insurance in case anything occurs to my personal water  
10 lines. And I know that development was mentioned. Due to  
11 heavy construction around my home in 2016, my basement was  
12 flooding regularly, and every time that we had a heavy  
13 rain, I would get several feet of water coming in. So at  
14 that time, I spent 5- or \$6,000 of my own money to put in  
15 my own stormwater service system.

16 Like, I know this is a completely separate item,  
17 but since the City of Philadelphia seemingly is selling  
18 its soul to outside investors and developers, maybe  
19 instead of providing those investors with things like tax  
20 abatements and so forth, we add an additional fee or a  
21 percentage of the sale or project cost or something like  
22 that, for wealthier individuals and groups to contribute  
23 to the well-being and infrastructure of the City that  
24 they're investing in. I don't know.

1           It's just a thought because I feel like if  
2 you're coming to a city who's already one of the poorest  
3 in the country with a rate increase like this very, like,  
4 quickly, it just kind of seems like getting blood from a  
5 stone. Like, let's just put our, our long-term residents  
6 in greater debt. So yeah -- I mean, I know a lot of what  
7 I said was already said, but I just kind of wanted to get  
8 in there.

9           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I appreciate you  
10 taking the time and giving us your thoughts. Sounds like  
11 stormwater may be an issue in your area, and I'm not sure  
12 if that's something the water company should be looking at  
13 or has looked at.

14           MS. STOLER: I mean, I think it's  
15 overdevelopment, but...

16           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I don't know if  
17 there's anything that can be done about that.

18           Mr. Dasent, do you want to -- contact --

19           MR. DASENT: Sure. Stormwater management --

20           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- to Ms. Stoller at  
21 a later date --

22           MR. DASENT: Sure. I'd be happy to.

23           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: -- to talk to her  
24 about it?



1 Is that okay to talk with you, Ms. Stoler?

2 MR. DASENT: I'd be happy to talk with her, and  
3 I'd also tell her that it is a citywide problem, and the  
4 management of stormwater is a big part of the reason that  
5 we have consent decree obligations and different other  
6 things that we've undertaken over the years.

7 And it's very difficult to explain in a sort of  
8 a sound bite, but the costs associated with these programs  
9 as well as our chemicals, and our materials, and supplies,  
10 and other things that are impacted by inflation are part  
11 of the equation here. But I'm happy to talk with you  
12 offline to talk about, you know, flooding in your area and  
13 problems that you're facing because stormwater management  
14 should affect you as well, I mean, in a positive way.

15 MS. STOLER: Yeah. I guess -- my point is kind  
16 of if in my situation, like, I'm just a -- I'm a single  
17 30-something. You know, I -- I do live pretty frugally,  
18 but, like, I can pay these bills. But it would be nice to  
19 see that the money is actually going to something that is  
20 creating a higher quality of life for me and my neighbors.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

22 MS. STOLER: As opposed to just paying it  
23 blindly and expecting something to --

24 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: I think if you can

1 talk to Mr. Dasent, he can maybe work with you on that.

2 Okay?

3 MS. STOLER: Yep.

4 MR. DASENT: My name is in the chat, Judge. My  
5 name's in the chat just so the caller knows where to look.  
6 Andre C. Dasent.

7 MS. STOLER: Thank you very much.

8 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Did you get that, Ms.  
9 Stoler?

10 MS. STOLER: Yep. I'm going to write it down  
11 now.

12 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Great.

13 Okay, Steven?

14 MR. LIANG: There was someone who had their hand  
15 up before. I think it was Marcie, M-A-R-C-I-E. They put  
16 their hand up since.

17 MS. GARFIELD: Hello.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Wait, wait, wait. I  
19 don't see -- oh, here we go.

20 MS. GARFIELD: Hi there.

21 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Could you please  
22 give and spell your name for the record?

23 MS. GARFIELD: Sure. Marcia, M-A-R-C-I-A. Last  
24 name is Garfield, G-A-R-F-I-E-L-D.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: And are you a  
2 customer of the Philadelphia Water Department?

3 MS. GARFIELD: I am -- I am. And I really just,  
4 just wanted to, you know, reiterate the caller -- I  
5 believe her last name was Williams. I definitely believe  
6 in everything that she was stating, especially the fact  
7 that, you know, prior to -- for the water company to try  
8 to do their just on behalf of the customer. Instead of  
9 just saying raising rates, let's look and see what we can  
10 do to offset the cost for the customer due to the times.

11 You know, we already have high increase of  
12 payments for water usage now. And then on top of that,  
13 you want to add additional costs. So let's see what we  
14 can do before, you know, saying we'll just raise the rates  
15 just because. Have we done our just in finding what we  
16 can do on behalf of every citizen wherever they live?  
17 Just find out what you can do to offset the cost before  
18 you just say, oh, let's raise rates.

19 You know, that, that seems like it's such an  
20 easy thing to say, easy thing to let out of our mouths,  
21 but let's say that we've done everything we can. We've  
22 looked at every -- we looked at the surplus, we looked at  
23 even if we do this, if we do that, we have a new Mayor  
24 that's getting ready to tap in. So let's, you know, let's

1 put that to use.

2 We need to use our resources wisely, as we say  
3 that we have, but we aren't using them justfully (sic) for  
4 the citizens. So I would like to see that in place, and  
5 that should be shared. If that's found to be useful,  
6 let's share it. Not just say, oh, we tried it, and it  
7 didn't work. No. Let's find it. Let's share it, and  
8 then let's move from there. So that's all. Thank you.

9 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: No. Thank you. I  
10 certainly think everybody's in agreement with that. I can  
11 tell you that the focus, the whole point of this  
12 investigation is to look at the reasonableness of the  
13 claimed expenses, and to look for areas where there could  
14 be cost savings.

15 MS. GARFIELD: Right. But just not the, you  
16 know, 20 percent out the gate. No. And just like she  
17 said, not 15 and not 10. Let's see what we could do --

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Mm-hmm.

19 MS. GARFIELD: -- to lessen that, you know.

20 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Oh, absolutely.

21 MS. GARFIELD: And I believe we have enough  
22 knowledge between the persons here on the call, even  
23 hearing from those who say they can't afford, they can  
24 possibly afford, they're doing two and three jobs to

1 afford. You know, that all goes into the equation of  
2 getting to a justiful (sic) amount of increase or not  
3 increase. You know, it's there, but we have to find it.  
4 We have to find it.

5 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yes. I couldn't  
6 agree more. I think my experience is that the residents  
7 of Philadelphia really do have a heavy burden when it  
8 comes to utility costs. And that's not just water. I  
9 mean, water is probably not the most expensive part of  
10 your household utility expenses, but electric and gas as  
11 well, they're also high. So altogether, it's very  
12 difficult for people, and I certainly understand that.  
13 Okay.

14 Steven is somebody else? I thought I saw a  
15 hand.

16 MR. LIANG: I don't think I've seen any other  
17 hands, but I can unmute people.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. Is there  
19 anybody else, then, hand or no hand, who would have  
20 something to add? I mean, we've heard a lot of very good  
21 expressions, a lot of very good suggestions. I see  
22 there's a hand.

23 Steven, what is that?

24 MR. LIANG: It's a phone number.

1 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Yeah. Don't they --  
2 do they have to unmute?

3 MS. BATTS: Hi.

4 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Hi. Hello?

5 MS. BATTS: Hello. Hi. My name is Antonia  
6 Batts, and I am a military veteran.

7 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Wait. Can you hold  
8 on? Wait, wait. Sir (sic), sir, you got to hold on just  
9 a second, okay?

10 MS. BATTS: Mm-hmm.

11 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Could you please give  
12 and spell your name for the record?

13 MS. BATTS: Yes. A-N-T-O-N-I-A. And the last  
14 name Batts, B-A-T-T-S.

15 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay. And are you a  
16 customer of the Water Department?

17 MS. BATTS: No, not yet. Not directly.

18 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: What does that mean?

19 MS. BATTS: In other words, I do not have a  
20 water bill coming to my place of residence. It's figured  
21 into my rent.

22 HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Okay.

23 MS. BATTS: Well, I've been back up north here  
24 when I had left the south several years ago, and I had

1 aspirations of trying to acquire a home in due time. And  
2 I have other fellow veterans I have to ask how they go  
3 about hoping to get us a single humble abode, you know, so  
4 that I could hopefully see what I serve my country for,  
5 just like the next person.

6           But it's not only myself that I am calling for.  
7 I'll just briefly say I have people who are civilian  
8 persons who just recently told me that their rate of rent  
9 was being increased by the hundreds. And it wasn't that  
10 you can all blame it on the Water Department, but  
11 according to the landlord, the cost-of-living expenses,  
12 which include utilities, and I'm sure water had been  
13 something that has been very outlandish in the way that it  
14 was imposed on people.

15           So that person will be moving with an underage  
16 child because -- had enough of the property taxes and  
17 everything else that go up, they get hit pretty hard,  
18 regardless if they themselves are a low-income wage earner  
19 trying to work seven days a week, to my understanding.

20           And I'm just calling to appeal for them as well,  
21 because I'm sure if the rate of increase wasn't so  
22 intensely raised amongst the various persons out here who  
23 are imposing these increases through inflation, they will  
24 be willing to try to work it out with the landlord, if it

1 were reasonable.

2           So I am calling on behalf of the Work of  
3 Benefits' Council as well, and I'm just saying that, you  
4 know, I think they have reasonable demands that they're  
5 hoping to have addressed and hearing them out. I say that  
6 it will be nice to, like, re -- let's just say, readdress  
7 the rate of increase that the Water Department was  
8 anticipating. I'm hearing 20 percent, and as a result,  
9 that's pretty much where I stand on that position.  
10 Hopefully that I got my point across. So thank you very  
11 much.

12           HEARING OFFICER CHESTNUT: Thank you very much.  
13 I certainly appreciate your taking the time and your  
14 thoughts. Any questions? No? Good. That's the end of  
15 it looks like anybody wanting to speak.

16           Let me just say one thing, which is that the  
17 transcripts will probably be available in about two weeks.  
18 We're on a two-week turnaround for the transcripts, and  
19 when we get them, of course, they will be posted on the  
20 Rate Board's website for your use.

21           And second, I wanted to thank Steven for doing  
22 such a great job of running this. Steven is our part-time  
23 legal assistant, and he does a great job. So thank you,  
24 Steven. I'm sure we all appreciate that this -- was able



1 to proceed smoothly from a technological point of view.

2           Okay. Well, thank you very much, everybody. I  
3 appreciate you coming out, appreciate your thoughts, and  
4 I'll look forward to seeing you later.

5           (Hearing concluded at 7:57 p.m.)

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

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

*STACY L. RAUB*

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)