

FILE

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF:

THE APPLICATION OF OHIO AMERICAN
WATER COMPANY TO INCREASE ITS RATES
FOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICE.

Case No. 11-4161-WS-AIR

Public Hearing

March 07, 2012

6:00 p.m.

Taken at:

Ashtabula Township Clerk's Office

2718 North Ridge Road, East

Ashtabula, Ohio

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<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p>1 APPEARANCES:</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 KATIE L. STENMAN, ESQ.</p> <p>4 TODD A. SNITCHLER, CHAIRMAN</p> <p>5 Public Utilities Commission of Ohio</p> <p>6 180 East Broad Street</p> <p>7 Columbus, Ohio 43215</p> <p>8 (614)466-0114</p> <p>9 katie.stenman@puc.state.oh.us</p> <p>10 todd.snitchler@puc.state.oh.us</p> <p>11</p> <p>12 MELISSA THOMPSON, ESQ.</p> <p>13 Ohio American Water Company</p> <p>14 155 East Broad Street</p> <p>15 Columbus, Ohio 43215</p> <p>16 (614)224-3911</p> <p>17</p> <p>18 KYLE KERN, ESQ.</p> <p>19 CHRIS VERICH, ESQ.</p> <p>20 Residential Customers of Ohio</p> <p>21 American Water Company</p> <p>22 10 West Broad Street</p> <p>23 Suite 1800</p> <p>24 Columbus, Ohio, 43215</p> <p>25 ~ ~ ~ ~ ~</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p>1 on behalf of Ohio American Water Company with</p> <p>2 the firm Whitt Sturtevant; 155 East Broad</p> <p>3 Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215. Thank you.</p> <p>4 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.</p> <p>5 MS. KERN: Thank you, Your Honor.</p> <p>6 On behalf of the residential customers of Ohio</p> <p>7 American Water Company, the office of the Ohio</p> <p>8 Customers' Counsel, Bruce J. Weston, interim</p> <p>9 customers' counsel; 10 West Broad Street,</p> <p>10 Columbus, Ohio, 43209. I'm Kyle Kern,</p> <p>11 assistant consumer counsel. Also with me this</p> <p>12 evening is Chris Verich from our office. And</p> <p>13 we will be available to answer questions after</p> <p>14 the hearing, if you have any.</p> <p>15 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Are there</p> <p>16 any other interveners present with us tonight?</p> <p>17 Okay. Moving on.</p> <p>18 Ohio American Water Company filed</p> <p>19 this application for a rate increase in August</p> <p>20 of 2011. In its application, Ohio American</p> <p>21 requested a 22 percent revenue increase for</p> <p>22 water service and a 12 percent increase for</p> <p>23 wastewater service.</p> <p>24 The PUCO staff report was issued in</p> <p>25 January of this year. For Franklin County,</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p>1 MS. STENMAN: Let's go on the</p> <p>2 record. The Public Utilities Commission of</p> <p>3 Ohio is assigned for public hearing at this</p> <p>4 time and place. Case Number 11-4161-WS-AIR,</p> <p>5 which is captioned In the matter of: The</p> <p>6 application of Ohio American Water Company to</p> <p>7 increase its rates for water and sewer service.</p> <p>8 My name is Katie Stenman and I'm</p> <p>9 one of the attorney examiners assigned by the</p> <p>10 commission to hear this case. Also presiding</p> <p>11 with me tonight is Chairman Todd Snitchler.</p> <p>12 In addition, Lawrence Hampton,</p> <p>13 representing our service monitoring and</p> <p>14 enforcement division, and Matt Schilling from</p> <p>15 our public affairs department are also present</p> <p>16 with us tonight.</p> <p>17 We're all available after the</p> <p>18 hearing if you have any questions regarding any</p> <p>19 utility matter other than the application that</p> <p>20 is the focus of tonight's hearing.</p> <p>21 At this time I would like to take</p> <p>22 appearances on behalf of the parties, starting</p> <p>23 with the company.</p> <p>24 MS. THOMPSON: Thank you, Your</p> <p>25 Honor. My name is Melissa Thompson, I'm here</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 5</p> <p>1 staff recommended an approximate 10 to 12</p> <p>2 percent increase over current revenues for</p> <p>3 water service and an approximate 7 to 9 percent</p> <p>4 increase over current revenues for wastewater</p> <p>5 service.</p> <p>6 Staff also recommended lowering the</p> <p>7 customer charge from the current 9.51 to 8.55.</p> <p>8 The staff report is a recommendation only and</p> <p>9 the five PUCO commissioners may implement some</p> <p>10 of the suggestions and reject others.</p> <p>11 The purpose of this evening's</p> <p>12 public hearing is to receive comments from the</p> <p>13 public regarding Ohio American's application in</p> <p>14 this case. It is not a question and answer</p> <p>15 session, but it is your opportunity to let the</p> <p>16 commission know what you think about Ohio</p> <p>17 American's request.</p> <p>18 The local public hearing scheduled</p> <p>19 in this case is only one aspect of the process.</p> <p>20 An evidentiary hearing is also scheduled to</p> <p>21 commence on March 26, 2012 at the commission</p> <p>22 offices in Columbus.</p> <p>23 When you arrived, you were offered</p> <p>24 an opportunity to sign up to testify. After I</p> <p>25 finish with my introduction, we will begin</p>

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1 calling witnesses forward that have signed up
 2 on the sign-up sheet. I would ask that you
 3 come up to the table and face the court
 4 reporter so that he can transcribe your
 5 comments.
 6 Before you give your comments, I'll
 7 ask you to state your name and your address.
 8 And before you present your testimony, I will
 9 also ask you to take an oath that the testimony
 10 that you are about to give is the truth. Your
 11 testimony will be considered part of the
 12 official record in this case and it will be
 13 reviewed by the commission before they make
 14 their final decision on the application.
 15 Additionally, the parties to this
 16 case and I will be permitted to ask you
 17 questions. Should you decide that you do not
 18 want to testify when your name is called, you
 19 may simply pass.
 20 Also, once you've finished
 21 testifying or if you're just here to observe,
 22 you are free to leave at any time. If you did
 23 not sign up to testify, I will take additional
 24 testimony after we complete the list of people
 25 that have signed up.

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1 As I previously mentioned,
 2 tonight's hearing is being transcribed by a
 3 court reporter, so please try to speak plainly
 4 and clearly and I will need you to come up
 5 front and face the court reporter when you give
 6 your statement. Also, if you brought a written
 7 copy of your statement, please provide that to
 8 the court reporter when you're finished.
 9 The commission appreciates your
 10 participation tonight and we hope to hear from
 11 everyone who would like to testify, so please
 12 keep your comments to a reasonable length and
 13 try to be respectful to others when they're
 14 speaking.
 15 At this time, we'll begin calling
 16 witnesses forward.
 17 MR. SNITCHLER: Our first witness
 18 tonight is Phil Bartone.
 19 MR. BARTONE: Right here.
 20 MS. STENMAN: Can you please raise
 21 your right hand.
 22 PHIL BARTONE, of lawful age, having
 23 been first duly sworn, was examined and
 24 testified as follows:
 25 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Please

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1 state your name and address for the record and
 2 then go ahead.
 3 MR. BARTONE: Phil Bartone, 4340
 4 Lake Road, North Kingsville.
 5 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 6 MR. BARTONE: In my other life,
 7 over 50 years ago as an electrical engineer and
 8 electrician, I have never received a raise of
 9 23 percent never yearly; never. And this is
 10 about a year the last time. That's a pretty
 11 high percentage raise, plus the fixed fee is
 12 raised.
 13 The gas company has the same thing
 14 running, the electric company has the same
 15 thing. No matter what, even if I cut back, I
 16 can't save any money because they want to get
 17 their hands in my pocket by raising this fixed
 18 fee up. Okay.
 19 I just feel that maybe they ask for
 20 23 percent and they'll be happy with ten. But
 21 I know as a profession that I worked in all of
 22 my life, for over 50 years, I never, ever
 23 received an increase yearly of 23 percent plus
 24 having other perks on top of that.
 25 I mean, it makes no sense to me.

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1 I'm being squeezed from everywhere. The
 2 highway situation is the same now because
 3 people conserve on gasoline, consequently the
 4 roads are bad because they're not getting a
 5 tax. We're getting squeezed every way you can
 6 turn around. And I feel that if the -- I have
 7 to pay for my septic tank to get emptied, I
 8 don't have wastewater or sewer. Okay. I see
 9 their raise is a little higher on the sewer,
 10 but it makes no sense to me.
 11 It's just -- if there's other
 12 improvements that have to be made in other
 13 areas other than Ashtabula County, they should
 14 pay for it, not me. Okay. They're hitting
 15 just the residential; I'm glad they're not
 16 hitting the industrial people because that's
 17 going to knock some jobs off. We have enough
 18 problem with jobs.
 19 But that's the way I feel about the
 20 whole thing, whether I'm right or wrong, I
 21 wanted to say what I wanted to say. Thank you.
 22 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 23 MR. SNITCHLER: Our next witness
 24 tonight is Steve McClure.
 25 MS. STENMAN: Please raise your

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 10</p> <p>1 right hand.</p> <p>2 STEPHEN MCCLURE, of lawful age,</p> <p>3 having been first duly sworn, was examined and</p> <p>4 testified as follows:</p> <p>5 MS. STENMAN: Please state your</p> <p>6 name and address for the record.</p> <p>7 MR. MCCLURE: Stephen McClure, 2718</p> <p>8 North Ridge East, Ashtabula Ohio, 44004.</p> <p>9 I would just like to start by</p> <p>10 saying I love turning the tap on and having</p> <p>11 water come out. I'm not one to begrudge</p> <p>12 anybody or raise this within moderate means,</p> <p>13 but this rate increase is so out of bounds with</p> <p>14 reality that it is ludicrous. We have school</p> <p>15 levies on the ballot every election cycle</p> <p>16 that's defeated time after time. We can't</p> <p>17 educate our kids, but yet the water company</p> <p>18 wants a 22 percent increase for -- I guess, to</p> <p>19 fix the lines.</p> <p>20 And I've been reading the paper,</p> <p>21 the last time we had a rate increase in this</p> <p>22 area, most of the money went to another area.</p> <p>23 And another thing they need to do is get some</p> <p>24 of these corporate -- the people at the top of</p> <p>25 the ladder, their salaries in line. I'm not</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 12</p> <p>1 MS. STENMAN: Please state your</p> <p>2 name and address for the record.</p> <p>3 MR. PETE: Joseph J. Pete, 3301</p> <p>4 Stevens Road, Ashtabula Township, Ohio.</p> <p>5 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.</p> <p>6 MR. PETE: I'm one of the Ashtabula</p> <p>7 Township trustees for 13 years now, along with</p> <p>8 Steve and Bambi Paulchel sitting right there.</p> <p>9 You know, I've been around a long time, I'm a</p> <p>10 street person, I've talked to a lot of people</p> <p>11 in the township and I haven't heard anybody</p> <p>12 saying that they are for this crazy increase of</p> <p>13 23 percent.</p> <p>14 So, you know, yesterday two of our</p> <p>15 levies failed in this area. Two of them</p> <p>16 failed. This is a high unemployment area,</p> <p>17 people don't have much money. There's a lot of</p> <p>18 senior citizens living in this Ashtabula area;</p> <p>19 sometimes they have to choose between eating or</p> <p>20 drugs or paying their bills.</p> <p>21 So I just got a few words. I think</p> <p>22 I'd like to give our letter that we sent in</p> <p>23 September to the PUCO. I'm glad you're here</p> <p>24 opposing the increase. That was in September.</p> <p>25 But I'm hear to testify against the Ohio</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 11</p> <p>1 100 percent sure what the chairman of the board</p> <p>2 of Ohio American Water makes, but I know the</p> <p>3 guy from CEI makes at least \$5 million a year.</p> <p>4 If they can get these salaries in control,</p> <p>5 maybe we wouldn't be so upset with such a rate</p> <p>6 increase. I would hate for that to go -- who</p> <p>7 in the world. I mean, it's just like the</p> <p>8 baseball players. They're so out of touch with</p> <p>9 reality and I -- and corporate salaries are the</p> <p>10 same way now. I mean, who is worth \$5 million</p> <p>11 to run a company? Can anybody answer me that?</p> <p>12 That's just a rhetorical question. It's</p> <p>13 ludicrous and that's all I'd like to say.</p> <p>14 Thank you.</p> <p>15 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.</p> <p>16 MR. SNITCHLER: Our next witness --</p> <p>17 I apologize in advance, I'm going to get your</p> <p>18 last name wrong, but it's Joseph Pete.</p> <p>19 MR. PETE: Yup, that's me.</p> <p>20 MR. SNITCHLER: Great.</p> <p>21 MS. STENMAN: Please raise your</p> <p>22 right hand.</p> <p>23 JOSEPH PETE, of lawful age, having</p> <p>24 been first duly sworn, was examined and</p> <p>25 testified as follows:</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 13</p> <p>1 American proposed rate increase, which I must</p> <p>2 add is the fourth request in six years.</p> <p>3 They were last granted an increase</p> <p>4 in 2010, when their overall revenues were</p> <p>5 increased by 7.1 percent. It's my</p> <p>6 understanding at this time they are asking for</p> <p>7 a 22 percent increase when all of us are faced</p> <p>8 with increased gas prices, food prices,</p> <p>9 healthcare prices, retail prices and many other</p> <p>10 inflation issues, not to mention that many of</p> <p>11 our senior citizens are looking where they can</p> <p>12 get their next meal.</p> <p>13 If this increase is granted, the</p> <p>14 monthly bill for residential customers will go</p> <p>15 up an estimated \$13 a month, which is \$156 a</p> <p>16 year. Where will the people get the money to</p> <p>17 pay for this increase? I hope the PUCO finally</p> <p>18 evaluates this proposal, with an understanding</p> <p>19 that last year's rate increase led to a</p> <p>20 substantial increase in revenue for the</p> <p>21 company.</p> <p>22 My questions to the PUCO are as</p> <p>23 follows -- and I don't expect an answer, but</p> <p>24 how much of the past rate increases paid for</p> <p>25 infrastructure improvements and other costs</p>

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1 locally in Ashtabula, Ohio? How much of an
 2 increase will Aqua Ohio ask for once the sale
 3 of the company is completed?
 4 The last thing I would like to
 5 state that these rate increases are helping to
 6 destroy our local economy and continue to hurt
 7 residents all over the State of Ohio. Thank
 8 you very much.
 9 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 10 MR. SNITCHLER: Our next witness is
 11 -- and I'm going to pronounce their last name
 12 wrong -- Paulchel.
 13 MS. STENMAN: Please raise your
 14 right hand.
 15 BAMBI PAULCHEL, of lawful age,
 16 having been first duly sworn, was examined and
 17 testified as follows:
 18 MS. STENMAN: Please state your
 19 name and address for the record.
 20 MS. PAULCHEL: Bambi Paulchel, 3316
 21 Blair Avenue, Ashtabula. I would like to read
 22 a letter that us three township trustees
 23 addressed to the PUCO in September of last
 24 year.
 25 And it says, "We, the Ashtabula

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1 Township Trustees, passed a motion at our last
 2 regularly scheduled meeting held on Wednesday,
 3 September 14, 2011 to unanimously oppose the
 4 proposed 22.26 percent increase for the Ohio
 5 American Water Company. Our population base is
 6 heavily populated with senior citizens who are
 7 on fixed incomes and many individuals who are
 8 without work in the severe recession we are all
 9 faced with at this time. The residents of
 10 Ashtabula Township would be hard-pressed to
 11 have to absorb this proposal. Nonetheless,
 12 residents are still trying to catch up with
 13 inflation from the Ohio American Water Company
 14 rate increases in past years, let alone taking
 15 on this additional increase.
 16 "Our board requests that you
 17 understand the severity of this rate increase
 18 and the current economical situation our county
 19 is faced with at this particular moment in
 20 time. Please fully understand the issue at
 21 hand and deny this request for the common good
 22 of all residents of Ashtabula County and
 23 Ashtabula Township.
 24 "Thank you in advance for your
 25 cooperation and consideration on this matter.

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1 "Sincerely, the Ashtabula Township
 2 Trustees and Fiscal Officer Stephen McClure,
 3 Joe Pete, Bambi Paulchel and Robert Dille."
 4 Thank you.
 5 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 6 MR. SNITCHLER: Thank you. And I
 7 may be 0 for 3 on pronunciations. Is it Ageve
 8 Laab?
 9 MS. STENMAN: I don't know.
 10 MR. SNITCHLER: I can't make it
 11 out. A-g-e-v-e, L-a-a-b.
 12 MS. STENMAN: Can you please raise
 13 your right hand.
 14 MR. GEVELAAR, of lawful age, having
 15 been first duly sworn, was examined and
 16 testified as follows:
 17 MS. STENMAN: Would you please
 18 state your name and address for the record.
 19 MR. GEVELAAR: 3110 Blake road,
 20 Ashtabula, Ohio.
 21 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. You can
 22 go ahead, and just try and make sure that the
 23 court reporter can hear you.
 24 MR. GEVELAAR: Well, I didn't know
 25 there was a meeting here. Usually there's a

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1 township meeting here. So with the water
 2 company, as what Joe Pete and McClure said,
 3 people are out of work here and are having a
 4 hard time and the water company keeps raising
 5 the prices.
 6 It's not only the water company,
 7 it's the CEI, the gasoline, there are no jobs.
 8 So, you know, most of the people have a hard
 9 time here. So I don't care what you guys are
 10 going to do, those people are going to go ahead
 11 and set the price and set the price at what
 12 they want. It's like the stock market.
 13 So I'm glad that the people came
 14 out here, but I'm just one person. And I want
 15 to see everything lowered, especially the gas
 16 prices, but I'm just one person, you know.
 17 Somebody making money in the gas prices.
 18 The water lines here in Ashtabula
 19 and Ashtabula Township and the city, they're
 20 real old. Because I worked for the water
 21 company one time and in the wintertime they
 22 break and when they fix their roads up here and
 23 you see where the spots are. They dig it out,
 24 you know, and they fill it back in and they
 25 damage the road.

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1 So you know -- but I thank the
 2 people that came out. And this gentleman here,
 3 tell the truth. So that's all I got to say.
 4 Okay.
 5 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 6 MR. SNITCHLER: Thank you.
 7 MS. STENMAN: Lawrence, did anybody
 8 else sign up? Would anyone who has not signed
 9 up like to make a statement?
 10 MR. NAZOR: I would.
 11 MS. STENMAN: Okay. Come on
 12 forward. Please raise your right hand.
 13 DERYL NAZOR, of lawful age, having
 14 been first duly sworn, was examined and
 15 testified as follows:
 16 MS. STENMAN: Please state your
 17 name and address for the record.
 18 MR. NAZOR: My name is Deryl Nazor,
 19 I live at 2306 Walnut Boulevard in Ashtabula.
 20 THE NOTARY: Can you spell your
 21 last name?
 22 MR. NAZOR: N-a-z-o-r.
 23 In looking over the fact sheet here
 24 I notice here that you say that -- for
 25 instance, incorrect figures were used by the

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1 staff in calculating Ohio American Water's
 2 federal income tax. That would lower the PUC
 3 staff's recommended rate increase by more than
 4 \$1 million. I say that's a significant error.
 5 I think a company that makes that
 6 kind of error needs close scrutiny by the PUCO.
 7 I think it's safe to assume there were probably
 8 other errors made and these errors were
 9 probably made in their favor. So I would like
 10 that consideration made in rate increases.
 11 Also, notice in here that part of
 12 the reason they're doing it is because of
 13 decreased water usage. What business would
 14 charge more when people are buying less of what
 15 they offer? It makes no sense.
 16 Another thing that I would say,
 17 it's a monopoly, there is no competition. The
 18 only thing that holds their prices in check is
 19 the oversight of the PUCO. So I think it
 20 requires very close scrutiny. This is not like
 21 other businesses where competition actually
 22 contains the prices.
 23 So I'm just very concerned that
 24 this is an extremely large amount of an
 25 increase. And the other thing is I think I

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1 would safely assume that when the company buys
 2 -- is bought out, the next company is going to
 3 ask for a rate increase within a year. I would
 4 just tell them no to the increase and say,
 5 we'll wait and deal with the other company when
 6 we know what they think is wrong and they can
 7 tell us what they want to do. So that's all I
 8 have to say.
 9 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can I ask a
 11 question?
 12 MS. STENMAN: There will be time at
 13 the end of the meeting and everyone will stick
 14 around and answer some questions for you.
 15 Is there anyone else that would
 16 like to give testimony? Come on forward.
 17 Please raise your right hand.
 18 JANET GILLICH, of lawful age,
 19 having been first duly sworn, was examined and
 20 testified as follows:
 21 MS. STENMAN: Please state your
 22 name and address for the record.
 23 MS. GILLICH: Janet Gillich, 4922
 24 Dwight Avenue in Ashtabula, Ohio.
 25 First of all, I wondered where our

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1 city representatives were today. I live in the
 2 city and I understand that the wastewater
 3 treatment plant is in really bad shape in the
 4 City of Ashtabula. And they were told that
 5 they couldn't get a grant to fix it because
 6 their water bills were too low in this area.
 7 And I think a lot of this is behind a water
 8 rate increase because if they raise our rates,
 9 they can get this wastewater treatment plant,
 10 they can get the grants to fix it.
 11 They've splurged this money for
 12 years and years and years and now we've got
 13 other people in office and they've got to fix
 14 this plant or they have to sell it or they have
 15 to do something. But that is not the
 16 consumer's fault. We have been paying the
 17 water bills. We have been paying the sewer
 18 bills, and now our sewer bills and our water
 19 bills are going to go up?
 20 And my heart goes out to the
 21 seniors, but there are people with families and
 22 they're going to get more than \$13 a month
 23 increase. And I think that there's a lot more
 24 behind this than is coming out here. And I
 25 just wonder where our city representatives are.

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1 MS STENMAN: Thank you. Anyone
 2 else that would like to give testimony?
 3 MR. PATTERSON: I will.
 4 MS. STENMAN: Okay. Come on
 5 forward. Please raise your right hand.
 6 JOHN PATTERSON, of lawful age,
 7 having been first duly sworn, was examined and
 8 testified as follows:
 9 MS. STENMAN: Please state your
 10 name and address for the record and spell your
 11 last name.
 12 MR. PATTERSON: My name is John
 13 Patterson, 78 East Beech Street, in Jefferson.
 14 MS. STENMAN: Thank you.
 15 MR. PATTERSON: P-a-t-t-e-r-s-o-n.
 16 Okay. I just was thinking out loud in my mind
 17 here -- Joe Moroski, you're sitting over here,
 18 has the state cut your budget?
 19 MR. MOROSKI: Yes.
 20 MR. PATTERSON: Do you have less
 21 money to operate on as the county commissioner
 22 now than you did a few years ago?
 23 MR. MOROSKI: I think every county
 24 in this --
 25 MR. PATTERSON: Correct. Your

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1 money has been cut. Bambi, Joe, Steve, your
 2 funds have been cut from the state.
 3 Every township, every municipality,
 4 every school district has suffered cuts from
 5 the state and now we're supposed to engage in
 6 economic development. And one of the key
 7 components of economic development is
 8 infrastructure and that includes water usage,
 9 wouldn't you say? To have affordable water
 10 usage.
 11 And if we're going to stimulate
 12 economic development, if we're going to provide
 13 hope to the people in Ashtabula County, we have
 14 to have jobs, we have to have affordable water.
 15 And while the state is cutting us, they're
 16 increasing our water rates. That can't happen.
 17 It's blasphemy.
 18 And I would oppose this and I would
 19 challenge the state to rethink this. If we're
 20 making sacrifices on the local level, they had
 21 better make sacrifices on the state level.
 22 Thank you.
 23 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Anyone
 24 else?
 25 MR. RETTINGER: Yeah.

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1 MS. STENMAN: Come forward. Please
 2 raise your right hand.
 3 ED RETTINGER, of lawful age, having
 4 been first duly sworn, was examined and
 5 testified as follows:
 6 MS. STENMAN: Please state and
 7 spell your name for the record and please give
 8 your address.
 9 MR. RETTINGER: Ed Rettinger of
 10 North Gainesville, Ohio. I'm one of the
 11 village councilmen and we did file a petition
 12 against the last rate and we will against this
 13 one. First of all, the infrastructure, they
 14 knew that when they put it in. We have to take
 15 care of ours, as Bambi says, Steve says, we
 16 have to take care of it with less money. They
 17 better learn how to do the same thing. Maybe
 18 they should have been doing it all along
 19 instead of waiting until it all starts falling
 20 apart.
 21 People like myself that's retired,
 22 that are on Social Security, it didn't go up.
 23 If you ever see a 7 percent increase on Social
 24 Security, I'll probably pass away. You know,
 25 you're liable to see a 3 percent and then they

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1 take more out for Medicare, so you're not
 2 getting this kind of raise.
 3 And I know that the consumer
 4 counsel is probably going to go against it too,
 5 but you know, we, as the people, have to go
 6 against it. And we have. But you know, we
 7 don't get a lot of say in it.
 8 The PUCO is going to rule on it and
 9 hopefully they listen to the people who come
 10 and talk to them because they can't afford it.
 11 I don't care if you're working -- and there's
 12 not a whole lot of people working because they
 13 lost the good-paying jobs and now we've got
 14 Burger King and McDonald's. So you know, that
 15 knocks that down.
 16 When you're looking at 23 percent
 17 when they already gained 7.1 percent or a
 18 million dollars on their raises and they're in
 19 the black by big time. I was looking at it
 20 today on the computer and it's a conglomerate,
 21 you know, American Water Company that I think
 22 their -- if I remember correctly, around \$700
 23 million was their profit margin. There's
 24 nobody around here making that kind of money
 25 and nobody is going to. And I don't think it's

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 26</p> <p>1 right to come and ask the people that are in 2 the down economy for that kind of rate increase 3 when you just got one last year. That's all I 4 have. Thank you. 5 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Is there 6 anyone else? Come on forward. Please raise 7 your right hand. 8 JOE MOROSKI, of lawful age, having 9 been first duly sworn, was examined and 10 testified as follows: 11 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Please 12 state and spell your name for the record and 13 give your address. 14 MR. MOROSKI: County Commissioner 15 Joe Moroski, 25 West Jefferson Street is my 16 work address; 598 Keefus Road, Conneaut, Ohio, 17 is my home address of record. 18 In listening to the comments here, 19 the board of commissioners has routinely stood 20 up for the people of the county with respect to 21 water increases, with respect to gas -- natural 22 gas increases and other electric utility 23 increases recognizing, you know, where we are 24 as a county and how we're situated and what our 25 local economics are.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 28</p> <p>1 rate increases, I know that frequently you 2 factor in the money in building the rate case, 3 but it's been spent over a large area or 4 region, you know, in determining the rates. 5 It just seems to me that there 6 needs to be a better system, something in 7 change of a model so that we could recognize 8 that many of these water systems, whether 9 they're publicly owned, you know, by a local 10 government, be it a municipality or a county, 11 or whether they're privately owned, so that 12 they can provide safe, you know, potable 13 drinking water and service to the citizens of 14 the region but at a reasonable cost. And 15 there's got to be a way to take these peaks and 16 valleys that you get in these rate cases and 17 smooth it out in a fashion that makes a little 18 bit more sense for everybody. 19 As the gentleman said over here 20 working in the private sector, he never saw, 21 you know, that kind of increase, you know, in 22 his personal revenue stream. And I question 23 whether it makes a lot of sense in these issues 24 to do likewise. 25 So I would hope that you would</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 27</p> <p>1 Also, the county owns a water 2 company and, of course, we are the purchasers 3 of water. And when these increases come down 4 the line and are granted, you know, we have to 5 factor that into our costs. And I've learned 6 more than a little bit about the water business 7 from Larry Meaney and having been involved, you 8 know, with the water company over -- over the 9 last several years. 10 And just some food for thought for 11 the commission. I mean, one of the problems 12 that we have throughout this county, and 13 throughout the state for that matter, is that 14 in many places we have infrastructure that is 15 old. And you can take a look at the estimates 16 on what it would take to fix it and to get it 17 up to date. 18 Larry, since we bought the water 19 company, how many millions of dollars of 20 improvements did you put in it? 21 MR. MEANEY: Upwards of 10 million. 22 MR. MOROSKI: Upwards of \$10 23 million. And we only bought a small section 24 with a couple of lines. And you know, the way 25 you folks are set up, you know, to do these</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 29</p> <p>1 factor some of this into your thinking with a 2 model that maybe makes a little more sense so 3 that the increases that you do give are much 4 more modest and in line with the people's 5 ability to pay; recognizing that the people 6 that run these systems, whether they're 7 government systems or private systems, need to 8 also fix, repair and invest to make sure that 9 the systems are reliable and service the 10 public. Thank you very much. 11 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Come on 12 up. 13 MR. MEANEY: Just to kind of follow 14 up on him -- 15 MS. STENMAN: Please raise your 16 right hand. 17 MR. MEANEY: Lawrence J. Meaney. 18 LAWRENCE MEANEY, of lawful age, 19 having been first duly sworn, was examined and 20 testified as follows: 21 MR. MEANEY: My home address is 22 1174 East Morgan Road; my work address is 25 23 West Jefferson Street. I'm the director of the 24 Ashtabula County Department Environmental 25 Services.</p>

1 Just to kind of follow up on what
2 Commissioner Moroski was saying with regard to
3 the PUCO process and, you know, how rates are
4 determined. And I know you have -- basically
5 in working with Ohio American, you will be
6 setting some new residential rates for this
7 system.

8 And then there's also, I believe,
9 special rates that take into account and
10 consideration that we are a bulk water customer
11 of Ohio American. We serve over 5,300
12 accounts, which equates to probably roughly
13 14,000 people in the county. We also sell
14 water to Geneva on the Lake, which represents
15 probably another 6 or 7,000 people in the
16 county. And then we also sell water to the
17 small village of Rock Creek, which is another
18 600 people. So just some consideration when
19 you're looking at the special rates, basically,
20 it's a snowballing effect.

21 And last year when the last rate
22 increased, I believe it was about 7.1, 7.13
23 percent that Ohio American got on their
24 residential rate. I believe the special rates
25 struck closer to 14 percent, 13 or 14 percent.

1 Which as Commissioner Moroski said, we have to
2 pass on to other residential customers. So
3 it's just basically a big impact across the
4 board throughout this county and it's just
5 becoming, you know, unaffordable. Thank you.

6 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Anyone
7 else?

8 MR. GEVELAAR: I want to say
9 something too. I'm talking for the mall. The
10 mall is in bad shape. Sears is going to lay
11 off four people -- 40 people and Kmart, Super
12 Kmart is going to lay off five people, and I
13 know the five people. And Sears is going to
14 close up their store, there's hardly nothing
15 left. Okay.

16 I live in Ashtabula Township and I
17 don't know where all you people live. If the
18 mall is going to close up, we're going to be in
19 bad shape. So if the county commissioner wants
20 to stay here, he better keep an eye on it
21 because those people probably need a tax cut
22 because, you know, they're raising the prices
23 and if you have a business down there, you
24 cannot make it. So I feel sorry for those
25 people.

1 I don't know why they're going to
2 close the store for 40 people, and I know two
3 or three people by Sears. Because Sears is a
4 really good place to go because you buy
5 something and you don't have to pay for it
6 right away. You know, if you go to different
7 stores like Wal-Mart and you want to buy a TV,
8 you're going to pay for it right away, but at
9 Sears they give you a break. You pay more
10 taxes, but -- so you better keep an eye on the
11 mall because the mall is a beautiful place and
12 hardly anybody down there.

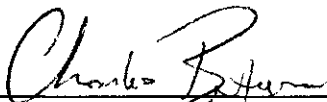
13 MS. STENMAN: Thank you. Is there
14 anyone else who would like to give comment on
15 the application tonight? All right. Hearing
16 no one else, I would like to thank everyone for
17 attending this meeting tonight and this
18 concludes our public hearing.

19 (Hearing concluded at 6:40 p.m.)

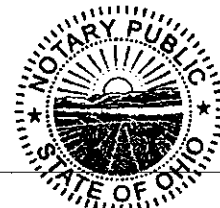
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

1
2
3
4 I, Charles L. Butera, do hereby
5 certify that as such Reporter I took down in
6 Stenotypy all of the proceedings had in the
7 foregoing transcript; that I have transcribed
8 my said Stenotype notes into typewritten form
9 as appears in the foregoing transcript; that
10 said transcript is the complete form of the
11 proceedings had in said cause and constitutes a
12 true and correct transcript therein.

13
14
15
16 
17 Charles L. Butera, Notary Public
18 within and for the State of Ohio
19

20 My commission expires December 23, 2013.



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LAWYER'S NOTES

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