

**THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT OF  
DENISE GIPSON,**

**COMPLAINANT,**

**CASE NO. 17-2541-GA-CSS**

**V.**

**COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC.,**

**RESPONDENT.**

**ENTRY**

Entered in the Journal on January 26, 2018

{¶ 1} Pursuant to R.C. 4905.26, the Commission has authority to consider written complaints filed against a public utility by any person or corporation regarding any rate, service, regulation, or practice relating to any service furnished by the public utility that is in any respect unjust, unreasonable, insufficient, or unjustly discriminatory.

{¶ 2} Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. (Columbia) is a natural gas company as defined in R.C. 4905.03 and a public utility as defined in R.C. 4905.02, and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

{¶ 3} On December 22, 2017, Denise Gipson (Complainant or Ms. Gipson) filed a complaint against Columbia concerning her payment plan. Ms. Gipson states that she has paid a monthly sum that includes current gas charges and arrears. Complainant alleges that, upon examining Columbia's summary of her February 2017 to July 2017 payments, she realized that she has overpaid by \$160.00.

{¶ 4} Columbia filed its answer on January 10, 2018. Columbia admits that it placed Complainant on a payment plan and that Ms. Gipson made payments. Columbia denies that Ms. Gipson overpaid any amount.

{¶ 5} The attorney examiner finds that this matter should be scheduled for a settlement conference. The purpose of the settlement conference will be to explore the

parties' willingness to negotiate a resolution in lieu of an evidentiary hearing. In accordance with Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-26, any statements made in an attempt to settle this matter without the need for an evidentiary hearing will not generally be admissible to prove liability or invalidity of a claim. An attorney examiner from the Commission's legal department will facilitate the settlement process. However, nothing prohibits any party from initiating settlement negotiations prior to the scheduled settlement conference.

{¶ 6} Accordingly, a settlement conference shall be scheduled for February 6, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. at the Commission offices, 180 East Broad Street, 12th floor, Conference Room 1246, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793. The parties should bring with them all documents relevant to this matter. If a settlement is not reached at the conference, the attorney examiner will conduct a discussion of procedural issues. Procedural issues for discussion may include discovery dates, possible stipulations of facts, and potential hearing dates.

{¶ 7} Pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-26(F), the representatives of the public utility shall investigate the issues raised in the complaint prior to the settlement conference, and all parties attending the conference shall be prepared to discuss settlement of the issues raised and shall have the authority to settle those issues.

{¶ 8} As is the case in all Commission complaint proceedings, the complainant has the burden of proving the allegations of the complaint. *Grossman v. Public Util. Comm.*, 5 Ohio St.2d 189, 214 N.E.2d 666 (1966).

{¶ 9} It is, therefore,

{¶ 10} ORDERED, That a settlement conference be scheduled for February 6, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. at the Commission offices, 180 East Broad Street, 12th floor, Conference Room 1246, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793. It is, further,

{¶ 11} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be served upon all parties of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

s/James Lynn

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By: James M. Lynn  
Attorney Examiner

JRJ/sc

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

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**in**

**Case No(s). 17-2541-GA-CSS**

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry scheduling settlement conference for 02/06/2018 at 10:00 a.m. in accordance with Paragraph 6. - electronically filed by Sandra Coffey on behalf of James Lynn, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio