

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
THE EAST OHIO GAS COMPANY D/B/A
DOMINION ENERGY OHIO FOR
APPROVAL OF TARIFFS TO ADJUST ITS
AUTOMATED METER READING COST
RECOVERY CHARGE TO RECOVER COSTS
INCURRED IN 2020.

CASE NO. 20-1624-GA-RDR

FINDING AND ORDER

Entered in the Journal on April 21, 2021

I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} The Commission approves the application of The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio to adjust its automated meter reading cost recovery charge, subject to the recommendations of Staff.

II. DISCUSSION

{¶ 2} The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio (Dominion or Company) is a natural gas company, as defined by R.C. 4905.03, and a public utility, as defined by R.C. 4905.02. As such, Dominion is subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission pursuant to R.C. 4905.04, 4905.05, and 4905.06.

{¶ 3} R.C. 4929.11 provides that the Commission may allow any automatic adjustment mechanism or device in a natural gas company's rate schedules that allows a natural gas company's rates or charges for a regulated service or goods to fluctuate automatically in accordance with changes in a specified cost or costs.

{¶ 4} In Case No. 07-829-GA-AIR, et al., pursuant to a stipulation, the Commission approved Dominion's recovery of accrued costs for the installation of automated meter reading (AMR) technology through a separate charge mechanism, with the initial recovery charge set at zero, and with subsequent periodic filings to adjust the AMR cost recovery charge. *In re The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion East Ohio (Distribution Rate Case)*, Case No. 07-829-GA-AIR, et al., Opinion and Order (Oct. 15, 2008).

{¶ 5} Most recently, in Case No. 19-1945-GA-RDR, the Commission approved Dominion's current AMR cost recovery charge in the amount of \$0.02 per month for costs incurred January 1, 2019, through December 31, 2019. *In re The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio*, Case No. 19-1945-GA-RDR, Finding and Order (Apr. 8, 2020).

{¶ 6} On November 30, 2020, in the above-noted case, Dominion filed a prefiling notice of an application supporting a rate adjustment for the AMR cost recovery charge to recover costs incurred during 2020.

{¶ 7} On February 26, 2021, Dominion filed its application to adjust its AMR cost recovery charge consistent with the procedures approved in the Company's *Distribution Rate Case*. Along with the required schedules, Dominion filed the testimony of Lori S. Parker in support of its AMR application.

{¶ 8} In its application, Dominion requests that the Commission approve an adjustment to its AMR cost recovery charge, as follows:

Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Proposed Decrease
\$0.02 per month	\$0.00 per month	\$0.02 per month

{¶ 9} In her testimony, Ms. Parker attests that Dominion calculated the AMR cost recovery charge in a manner consistent with the revenue requirement calculation in the last rate case and provided detailed discussion as to how such calculations were made in the instant case. Ms. Parker indicates that the calculation takes into account the federal income tax rate reduction pursuant to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Ms. Parker offers that, in 2020, Dominion achieved \$6,947,496.28 in meter-reading operations and maintenance expense savings for its customers, compared to that expense for the 2007 baseline year, despite increases in labor rates and benefits since 2007. However, she noted that Dominion did not experience call center savings in 2020. (Dominion App., Attach. C at 2-9, Schedule 11.)

{¶ 10} By Entry issued March 2, 2021, the procedural schedule in this matter was established such that motions to intervene and comments on the application by Staff and intervenors were due by March 23, 2021; a statement from Dominion as to whether all issues raised in the comments have been resolved was due by March 29, 2021; expert testimony on behalf of intervenors and Staff was due to be filed with the Commission by March 31, 2021; in the event the parties were able to negotiate a settlement, the stipulation was due to be filed with the Commission by 9:00 a.m., on April 2, 2021; and, in the event that all issues were not resolved or the parties entered into a stipulation, the hearing was scheduled to commence on April 5, 2021.

{¶ 11} Staff filed comments on Dominion's AMR application on March 23, 2021. No motions to intervene or other comments were filed.

{¶ 12} In its comments, Staff states it reviewed Dominion's application, schedules, testimony, and related documentation and confirmed that Dominion properly calculated the annualized revenue requirement proposed in this case. Further, Staff states a reconciliation component is not currently incorporated in the computation of the revenue requirement. However, given that the revenue requirement of \$(58,259.16) results in a rider rate of \$0.00, Staff recommends that Dominion track and reconcile this component as part of the revenue requirement in the Company's next AMR application, as without this reconciliation, customers will not receive the amounts owed to them. Staff concludes that it has no objections to Dominion's application and supporting documentation and, therefore, recommends the Commission approve the Company's application, subject to Staff's modification.

{¶ 13} On March 29, 2021, Dominion and Staff filed a joint motion for an extension of the due date for Dominion to file its statement addressing whether the issues raised in the comments have been resolved and the due date to file expert testimony, until April 1, 2021, to afford the parties additional time to negotiate a resolution of the issues.

{¶ 14} By Entry issued March 30, 2021, the parties' motion for an extension of the procedural schedule was granted.

{¶ 15} On April 1, 2021, Dominion filed its statement to inform the Commission whether the issues raised in the comments have been resolved. Dominion indicates that, since its inception, the AMR cost recovery charge has not included a reconciliation component. However, while Dominion does not necessarily agree with Staff's recommendation, in the interest of resolving all issues raised in this proceeding, Dominion agrees to incorporate a reconciliation component in the AMR cost recovery charge in future AMR filings, beginning with next year's filing for the recovery of 2021 AMR costs. Dominion notes that Staff recommended approval of Dominion's application and, thus, the Company believes that there are no further issues to resolve. Therefore, Dominion respectfully requests that the Commission approve its AMR application.

{¶ 16} On April 1, 2021, Staff also filed a statement confirming that Dominion and Staff have agreed that Dominion will incorporate a reconciliation component in the AMR cost recovery charge filings, commencing with the filing for 2021 AMR costs.

{¶ 17} Upon consideration of the application and comments filed by Staff, as well as the statement filed by Dominion and the correspondence filed by Staff, the Commission finds that Dominion's application to adjust its AMR cost recovery charge to \$0.00 per customer per month is reasonable and should be approved, subject to the modification proposed by Staff and accepted by Dominion.

III. ORDER

{¶ 18} It is, therefore,

{¶ 19} ORDERED, That Dominion's application to adjust its AMR cost recovery charge is approved, consistent with this Finding and Order. It is, further,

{¶ 20} ORDERED, That Dominion is authorized to file tariffs, in final form, consistent with this Finding and Order. Dominion shall file one copy in this case docket and one copy in its TRF docket. It is, further,

{¶ 21} ORDERED, That the effective date of the new tariffs shall be a date not earlier than the date upon which the final tariff pages are filed with the Commission. It is, further,

{¶ 22} ORDERED, That Dominion notify its customers of the changes to the tariffs via bill message or bill insert within 30 days of the effective date of the revised tariffs. A copy of the customer notice shall be submitted to the Commission's Service Monitoring and Enforcement Department, Reliability and Service Analysis Division, at least ten days prior to its distribution to customers. It is, further,

{¶ 23} ORDERED, That nothing in this Finding and Order shall be binding upon the Commission in any future proceeding or investigation involving the justness or reasonableness of any rate, charge, rule, or regulation. It is, further,

{¶ 24} ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon all interested persons of record.

COMMISSIONERS:

Approving:

Jenifer French, Chair
M. Beth Trombold
Lawrence K. Friedeman
Daniel R. Conway
Dennis P. Deters

GNS/hac

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

4/21/2021 2:14:24 PM

in

Case No(s). 20-1624-GA-RDR

Summary: Financing Order approving the application of The East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio to adjust its automated meter reading cost recovery charge, subject to the recommendations of Staff. electronically filed by Kelli C. King on behalf of The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio