

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF RACHEL CLINE,

COMPLAINANT,

v.

CASE No. 17-196-EL-CSS

OHIO EDISON COMPANY,

RESPONDENT.

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on February 16, 2017

{¶ 1} Pursuant to R.C. 4905.26, the Commission has authority to consider written complaints filed against a public utility or an electric services company 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} Ohio Edison Company (Ohio Edison) is a public utility as defined in R.C. 4905.02 and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

{¶ 3} On January 19, 2017, Rachel Cline (Ms. Cline or Complainant) filed a complaint against Ohio Edison, alleging that, after a “noticeable spike” in her September 2015 bill, every subsequent bill was extraordinarily high. According to Ms. Cline, she resides in a home with gas heat and has been the only resident there since June 2016, yet her bills kept increasing. Complainant contends that inspections of the furnace and air conditioning do not indicate any reason for the higher electric usage. Ms. Cline asserts that, only after a new meter was installed in October 2016 upon her demand, did Ohio Edison representatives suggest that she should have had the previous meter checked.

{¶ 4} On February 8, 2017, Ohio Edison filed its answer. Ohio Edison admits that Ms. Cline’s meter was replaced in October 2016, and that her average bill from

September 2014 through September 2015 was approximately \$88.06 per month, while her average bill from October 2015 through October 2016 was approximately \$141.88. Ohio Edison further admits that a meter was removed from Complainant's residence in October 2016. Ohio Edison denies the remaining allegations or states that it lack knowledge about the allegations.

{¶ 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 March 10, 2017, at 1:00 p.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 on 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 March 10, 2017, at 1:00 p.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

By: James M. Lynn
Attorney Examiner

JRJ/sc

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in

Case No(s). 17-0196-EL-CSS

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry scheduling settlement conference for 03/10/2017 at 1:00 p.m. at the Commission offices, 180 East Broad Street, 12th floor, Conference Room 1246, Columbus, Ohio. - electronically filed by Sandra Coffey on behalf of James Lynn, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio