

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINTS OF
IRIS RAYFORD,**

COMPLAINANT,

v.

**CASE No. 17-1206-EL-CSS
CASE No. 17-1207-GA-CSS**

**OHIO POWER COMPANY D/B/A AEP OHIO
AND
COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC.,**

RESPONDENTS.

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on June 6, 2017

{¶ 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} Ohio Power Company d/b/a AEP Ohio (AEP Ohio) is a public utility as defined in R.C. 4905.02 and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

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

{¶ 4} On May 8, 2017, Iris Rayford (Complainant) filed complaints against AEP Ohio and Columbia alleging that both her electric and gas services had been disconnected, that she was facing eviction, and that she had been treated unfairly by AEP Ohio and Columbia.

{¶ 5} AEP Ohio filed its answer on May 30, 2017. In its answer, AEP Ohio admits that Complainant was a customer and that Complainant's electric service was disconnected

on December 29, 2016. AEP Ohio denies all other allegations in the complaint. In addition, AEP Ohio sets forth affirmative defenses in the answer.

{¶ 6} Columbia filed its answer on May 26, 2017. In its answer, Columbia states that it is generally without sufficient knowledge to either admit or deny the allegations in the complaint. In addition, Columbia sets forth in the answer several affirmative defenses.

{¶ 7} At this time, 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 of this complaint in lieu of an evidentiary hearing. In accordance with Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-26, any statement 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 the parties from initiating settlement negotiations prior to the scheduled settlement conference.

{¶ 8} Accordingly, a settlement conference shall be scheduled for July 5, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1246 in the offices of the Commission, 12th Floor, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. If a settlement is not reached at the conference, the attorney examiner may conduct a discussion of procedural issues. Procedural issues for discussion may include discovery dates, possible stipulations of facts, and potential hearing dates.

{¶ 9} Pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-26(F), the representatives of the public utilities 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 requisite authority to settle those issues. In addition, parties attending the settlement conference should bring with them all documents relevant to this matter.

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

{¶ 11} It is, therefore,

{¶ 12} ORDERED, That a settlement conference be held on July 5, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. in Conference Room 1246, in the offices of the Commission, 12th Floor, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215. It is, further,

{¶ 13} ORDERED, That a copy of this Entry be served upon all parties and interested persons of record.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/ Kerry K. Sheets

By: Kerry K. Sheets
Attorney Examiner

jrj/vrm

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in

Case No(s). 17-1206-EL-CSS, 17-1207-GA-CSS

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry scheduling a settlement conference on July 5, 2017, at 1:30 p.m.; electronically filed by Vesta R Miller on behalf of Kerry K. Sheets, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio