

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR AN
INCREASE IN ELECTRIC DISTRIBUTION
RATES.

CASE NO. 20-585-EL-AIR

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR TARIFF
APPROVAL.

CASE NO. 20-586-EL-ATA

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF
OHIO POWER COMPANY FOR APPROVAL
TO CHANGE ACCOUNTING METHODS.

CASE NO. 20-587-EL-AAM

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on March 17, 2021

{¶ 1} Ohio Power Company d/b/a AEP Ohio (AEP Ohio or Company) is an electric light company as defined by R.C. 4905.03 and a public utility as defined by R.C. 4905.02, and, as such, is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission.

{¶ 2} In Case No. 16-1852-EL-SSO, et al., the Commission modified and approved a stipulation and recommendation (Stipulation) filed by AEP Ohio, Staff, and numerous other signatory parties, which authorized the Company to implement an electric security plan for the period of June 1, 2018, through May 31, 2024. Among the commitments in the Stipulation, AEP Ohio agreed to file a base distribution rate case by June 1, 2020. *In re Ohio Power Co.*, Case No. 16-1852-EL-SSO, et al., Opinion and Order (Apr. 25, 2018) at ¶ 45.

{¶ 3} On April 29, 2020, in the above-captioned cases, AEP Ohio filed a pre-filing notice of its intent to file an application for approval of an increase in its electric distribution rates, tariff modifications, and changes in accounting methods.

{¶ 4} On June 8, 2020, AEP Ohio filed its application to increase its rates pursuant to R.C. 4909.18.¹ AEP Ohio filed direct testimony in support of its application on June 15, 2020.

{¶ 5} On November 18, 2020, as amended on November 25, 2020, Staff filed a written report of its investigation (Staff Report). Pursuant to R.C. 4909.19 and Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-28(B), objections to the Staff Report were due by December 18, 2020.

{¶ 6} By Entry issued on November 23, 2020, as amended by Entries issued on December 1, 2020, January 14, 2021, January 27, 2021, and February 1, 2021, the procedural schedule was established in these cases such that a public hearing was held on February 8, 2021, the prehearing conference and technology test session were held on February 11, 2021, and the evidentiary hearing commenced on March 4, 2021, all through Webex. Pursuant to the February 1, 2021 Entry, the due dates for direct expert testimony supporting objections to the Staff Report, motions to strike objections to the Staff Report, and memoranda contra motions to strike objections to the Staff Report were indefinitely extended at the request of the parties.

{¶ 7} At the February 11, 2021 prehearing conference, the parties informed the attorney examiner that they were engaged in negotiations in an attempt to reach a settlement. AEP Ohio requested that, if a stipulation was not filed before March 4, 2021, the evidentiary hearing be called and continued. AEP Ohio also agreed to provide an update on the status of negotiations at that time.

{¶ 8} On March 4, 2021, the evidentiary hearing was called and the proceedings continued to permit the parties to engage in further settlement negotiations. At that time, AEP Ohio informed the attorney examiner that the Company had reached a settlement in

¹ Due to the closure of the Commission's offices from June 1, 2020, through June 5, 2020, the application for a rate increase, which was submitted by AEP Ohio on June 1, 2020, was accepted for filing on June 8, 2020, and deemed timely filed in accordance with R.C. 1.14 and Ohio Adm.Code 4901-1-07 and 4901-1-13. *In re the Extension of Filing Dates for Pleadings and Other Papers Due to a Building Emergency*, Case No. 20-1132-AU-UNC, Entry (June 8, 2020).

principle with some of the parties and that they expected to file a stipulation by March 12, 2021.

{¶ 9} On March 12, 2021, a Joint Stipulation and Recommendation (Stipulation) was filed by AEP Ohio and 13 other parties to the proceedings. In a correspondence included with the Stipulation, AEP Ohio indicates that the parties have begun discussing a separate potential stipulation to address matters relating to the virtual hearing process, consistent with the directives discussed at the prehearing conference. AEP Ohio states that the Company will update the attorney examiners on the potential stipulation to address virtual hearing issues at the next prehearing conference.

{¶ 10} The attorney examiner finds that the next prehearing conference shall be scheduled for March 26, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., via Webex, to update the attorney examiners on the parties' progress regarding matters relating to the virtual hearing process. Access information for the conference will be provided to counsel for the parties at the electronic mail address of record.

{¶ 11} It is, therefore,

{¶ 12} ORDERED, That a prehearing conference be held, as scheduled, in accordance with Paragraph 10. It is, further,

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

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/Greta See

By: Greta See
Attorney Examiner

GAP/hac

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Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

3/17/2021 11:27:59 AM

in

Case No(s). 20-0585-EL-AIR, 20-0586-EL-ATA, 20-0587-EL-AAM

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry ordering that a prehearing conference be held, as scheduled, in accordance with Paragraph 10 electronically filed by Heather A Chilcote on behalf of Greta See, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission