

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT OF
ROSHAWNE HALL,**

CASE NO. 21-472-EL-CSS

COMPLAINANT,

v.

**OHIO POWER COMPANY D/B/A AEP
OHIO,**

RESPONDENT.

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on June 23, 2021

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

{¶ 3} On April 16, 2021, Roshawne Hall (Complainant) filed a complaint against AEP Ohio alleging, among other things, that the Company, in an untimely manner, disconnected electric service, in February 2021, at an address where she resides. The complaint also alleges that AEP Ohio, as a condition precedent to accepting a payment, insisted on completing an owner occupancy review. The complaint further alleges that AEP Ohio inexplicably changed the billing name and/or account number on the service account at Complainant's residence, has applied charges from an old account that Complainant asserts should be considered as forgiven, and is retaliating against Complainant and her spouse, Stephen Hall, for participating, in 2013, in certain energy assistance programs.

{¶ 4} On May 6, 2021, AEP Ohio filed its answer to the complaint. In its answer, AEP Ohio admits some, and denies others, of the complaint's allegations, and sets forth several affirmative defenses. Among other things, AEP Ohio admits: (1) that the Company disconnected electric service at the involved service address after Stephen Hall failed to complete the requirements to start service in his name at the premise; (2) that the Company transferred a previously unpaid balance for electric service provided to Stephen Hall to the current electric service account for the involved service address when the current account was opened in Stephen Hall's name on February 4, 2021; and (3) that the Company required and completed an occupancy review at the involved service address prior to opening a new account in Stephen Hall's name. Among other things, AEP Ohio denies: (1) that the Company is retaliating against Complainant; (2) that it would be appropriate relief for an unpaid balance transferred to the current electric account in Mr. Hall's name to be "forgiven"; and (3) that service was transferred out of Stephen Hall's name in 2013 without permission.

{¶ 5} By Entry issued May 28, 2021, a prehearing settlement teleconference was scheduled for June 18, 2021. After the entry was issued but before the teleconference could take place, the date of June 18, 2021 was recognized as a state holiday. As a result, the June 18, 2021 settlement teleconference did not occur as originally scheduled and is, hereby, being rescheduled.

{¶ 6} The attorney examiner finds that this matter should be scheduled for a settlement teleconference. 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 teleconference.

{¶ 7} Accordingly, a telephone settlement conference call shall be scheduled for July 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. To participate in the teleconference, the parties shall dial (614) 721-2972 and conference code 632 449 043#.

{¶ 8} 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 teleconference, and all parties participating the teleconference shall be prepared to discuss settlement of the issues raised and shall have authority to settle those issues.

{¶ 9} 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).

{¶ 10} It is, therefore,

{¶ 11} ORDERED, That a settlement teleconference be scheduled for July 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., as indicated in Paragraph 7. It is, further,

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

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/Daniel E. Fullin

By: Daniel E. Fullin
Attorney Examiner

NJW/mef

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Case No(s). 21-0472-EL-CSS

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry scheduling a settlement teleconference for July 9, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. electronically filed by Ms. Mary E Fischer on behalf of Daniel E. Fullin, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio