

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF CHRISTI WATER SYSTEM, INC. FOR AN INCREASE IN RATES AND CHARGES

CASE #~~20-1762-EL-BGN~~  
20.1423. W. W. AIR

The following PUBLIC HEARING was held before Attorney Examiner, Matthew J. Sandor.

Date and Time: Wednesday, September 1, 2021  
6:00 p.m.

Place: The Northtowne Mall  
1500 North Clinton Street  
Defiance, Ohio

Reporter: Marie B. Fresch RPR RMR CRC  
Registered Merit Reporter  
Notary Public, State of Ohio

RECEIVED-COOKING DIV

2021 SEP -9 PM 12:09

PUCO

This is to certify that the images appearing are an accurate and complete reproduction of a case file document delivered in the regular course of business.  
Technician JLL Date Processed 9.9.21

1			INDEX
2	Page	Line	
3			TESTIMONIES
4	6	19	KATHERINE VOFF
5	9	24	SUSAN TACK
6	10	23	DANIELLE SMALL
7	14	18	JIM SEYMOUR
8	16	7	RENATE McNEAL
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

1                   MR. SANDOR:   The Public  
2           Utilities Commission of Ohio has scheduled for Public  
3           Hearing at this time and place, Case Number  
4           20-1428-WW-AIR, which is captioned In the Matter of the  
5           Application of Christi Water System Inc. for an Increase  
6           in Rates and Charges.

7           My name is Matthew Sandor and I am an Attorney  
8           Examiner assigned by the Commission to hear this case.

9           Also with me this evening is Jill Kocher from our  
10          Public Affairs Department, near the entrance, holding  
11          the door open. Thank you.

12          At this time, I would like to take appearances of  
13          counsel on behalf of the parties.

14          Hearing none, Christi filed its application on  
15          August 24th, 2020, and filed an amended application on  
16          September 24th, 2020 to increase its rates and charges  
17          for water service to residents of the Christi Meadows  
18          Subdivision, River Chase Properties, and Webco  
19          Properties in the City of Defiance in Ohio.

20          Under the rates and terms proposed within the  
21          application, Christi proposes a new consolidated rate  
22          structure. Under the proposed rate design, a customer's  
23          minimum bill would increase from \$26.89 to \$92.79, or  
24          \$65.90 per month, a 245.07 percent increase. Also under  
25          this rate structure, a customer using 400 cubic feet of

1 water would see their bill increase approximately 70%.

2 On April 7, 2021, the Commission Staff filed its  
3 staff report, which recommends the commission reject the  
4 proposed rate structure, and further recommends a  
5 midpoint rate of return of 9.3% and an increase over  
6 current revenue of 35.8 percent, which would generate a  
7 revenue requirement of \$196,973.

8 Staff recommends a monthly charge of \$34.34 for the  
9 first 50 cubic feet of water and one volumetric rate of  
10 \$0.12307 for usage above 50 cubic feet.

11 Under Staff's recommended rate design and revenue  
12 requirement, a customer's minimum bill would increase  
13 from \$26.89 to \$34.34, or \$7.45 per month, a 27.69%  
14 increase. Also under Staff's developed rates, a  
15 customer using 400 cubic feet of water would see their  
16 bill increased approximately 34.6%.

17 The purpose of this evening's hearing is to receive  
18 comments from the public regarding Christi's application  
19 in this case. This is not intended to be a question and  
20 answer session, but instead is your opportunity to let  
21 the Commission know what you think about the applicant's  
22 request. Subsequent to this hearing, the Commission  
23 will review the application, staff report, the record  
24 from this hearing, filed comments, and other applicable  
25 documents to reach a decision regarding Christi's

1 application.

2 Tonight's hearing is being transcribed by a court  
3 reporter. If you plan to testify, please speak clearly  
4 so that the court reporter can accurately reflect your  
5 comments on the record. Also, if you have prepared a  
6 written statement, it would be helpful if you provide a  
7 copy to the court reporter for reference to ensure the  
8 transcript is accurate.

9 After I finish with this introduction, we will  
10 begin by inviting individuals on the sign-in sheet to  
11 speak about the application. Each person who signed up  
12 to testify will be permitted to speak once. Before you  
13 present your testimony, we will ask you to take an oath  
14 or affirmation that what you're about to say is the  
15 truth. We'll also ask you to state your name and  
16 address for the record. You will then provide your  
17 thoughts on Christi's application. The parties to the  
18 case and myself will be permitted to ask you questions  
19 about your statement. The testimony that you provide  
20 tonight will be considered part of the official record  
21 in this case, and as mentioned earlier, it will be  
22 reviewed by the Commission before a final decision is  
23 made on the application.

24 A couple of other notes. If you decide you do not  
25 want to testify when we read your name from the sign-in

1 sheet, you can merely pass to the next witness. If you  
 2 decide that you prefer to file written comments in the  
 3 case docket, the Commission Staff can answer your  
 4 questions about how to do that. Also, once you finish  
 5 testifying, or if you're just here to observe, you may  
 6 leave the hearing at any time you wish. We ask that you  
 7 do so quietly.

8 The Commission appreciates your participation in  
 9 tonight's hearing and we want everyone who has signed up  
 10 to testify to have the opportunity to do so. For that  
 11 reason, please keep your statement to a reasonable  
 12 length of no more than five minutes. At this time, we  
 13 will begin with the testimony.

14 All right. So our first witness is Katherine M.  
 15 Voff.

16 THE WITNESS: I have never --

17 MR. SANDOR: One moment,  
 18 Ms. Voff, I need to swear you in.

19 KATHERINE VOFF

20 Being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

21 MR. SANDOR: Please state and  
 22 spell your name for the record.

23 THE WITNESS: Katherine Voff,  
 24 K A T H E R I N E, Voff, V as in Victor, O F F.  
 25 Address.

1 MR. SANDOR: And please state  
2 your address.

3 THE WITNESS: 2173 Hawthorne  
4 Drive, and that's Defiance.

5 MR. SANDOR: Okay, please  
6 proceed.

7 THE WITNESS: I had two  
8 questions that I had wrote down. The first one is, why  
9 the increase in the first part? I don't understand  
10 what's going on there.

11 And not knowing how any of this works, I've never  
12 lived in this type of an environment before. Has the  
13 water plant, the water equipment, however it's referred  
14 to, has it been maintained correctly; has things been  
15 kept up-to-date?

16 And I guess there is things that, because I have  
17 only lived here for ten years, there is things that  
18 these two ladies, as well as Terry and Galen, of course  
19 they know more. So I'm kind of being cautious with what  
20 I say, but -- and I need a better understanding of what  
21 you just read about what the increase will be at one  
22 point.

23 You know, we thought it was about \$7 or something.  
24 Is that \$7 a gallon? Not a gallon, I know it's not a  
25 gallon. You know what I mean? Or is it just an

1 additional, say, let's just say ten dollars on your  
2 bill? I need a better understanding of that.

3 MR. SANDOR: So, thank you.  
4 And, again, we'll take that as your testimony unless you  
5 have anything to add after this, but we'll, any  
6 questions we add, or answers -- we'll try to answer to  
7 the best of our ability any of your questions after the  
8 proceeding.

9 THE WITNESS: Okay.

10 MR. SANDOR: During the  
11 proceeding, we just like to take people's testimony and  
12 their thoughts and feelings about the application; okay?

13 THE WITNESS: Um-hmm.

14 MR. SANDOR: Okay, any other  
15 additional testimony besides what you've given?

16 THE WITNESS: No.

17 MR. SANDOR: All right.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. KOCHER: The company is  
20 here too.

21 MR. SANDOR: Let's go off the  
22 record.

23 (Discussion held off the record).

24 MR. SANDOR: All right. I  
25 believe we actually have someone from the Applicant



1 here. Sir, if you could please identify yourself.

2 MR. BEILHARZ: Yes. Terry  
3 Beilharz, I operate the Christi Water System.

4 MR. SANDOR: All right, thank  
5 you. And I believe Mr. Beilharz is here to help answer  
6 any questions anyone that's in attendance may have after  
7 we're done with the hearing.

8 Okay. Let's proceed with our next witness. And  
9 again, you're welcome to stand up in place or come up to  
10 the podium. That is Galen Locher.

11 MR. LOCHER: I pass.

12 MR. SANDOR: Pass. All  
13 right. Thank you.

14 Our next witness is Michael L. Bishop.

15 MR. BISHOP: I can pass.  
16 Mine is more of a question than statement, so I'll pass.

17 MR. SANDOR: Okay, very well.

18 Next witness is Susan Tack.

19 MS. TACK: I don't really  
20 have any questions.

21 MR. SANDOR: Also, please  
22 raise your right hand.

23 SUSAN TACK

24 Being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

25 MR. SANDOR: Please state and

1 spell your name for the record.

2 THE WITNESS: Susan Tack,  
3 S U S A N, T A C K. I live on 2125 Hawthorne Drive.

4 MR. SANDOR: Okay, thank you.  
5 Please proceed with your testimony.

6 THE WITNESS: I don't really  
7 have any questions, other than I just wondered what the  
8 justification is for such a high increase. Are they  
9 going to upgrade the system? Are they improving things?  
10 Is there something that needs fixed? I understand that  
11 an increase might be necessary, but not a high increase.  
12 My water bill is already high enough.

13 MR. SANDOR: Okay. Is that  
14 it? Okay. Thank you.

15 And again, like we said, any questions you may  
16 have, hopefully, Mr. Beilharz will address as best as  
17 possible after.

18 Okay. Then our next witness is Danielle Small.

19 MS. SMALL: I'm here.

20 MR. SANDOR: Please raise  
21 your right hand.

22 DANIELLE SMALL

23 Being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

24 MR. SANDOR: Please state and  
25 spell your name for record.

1 THE WITNESS: Danielle Small,  
2 DANIELLE, SMALL.

3 MR. SANDOR: And then please  
4 state your address.

5 THE WITNESS: 3121 Sandlewood,  
6 SANDLEWOOD, Drive.

7 MR. SANDOR: Please proceed  
8 with your testimony.

9 THE WITNESS: Okay. So, I  
10 have lived at Lake Christi Meadows for about eight years  
11 now.

12 Our bills have been continuously fluctuating back  
13 and forth. We've had some water pipe issues, one of  
14 which has still never been fixed in the last four years.  
15 Our main line that comes into our house from the street  
16 is broken and remains broken. Thankfully, we have  
17 something on the inside of our house that will allow us  
18 to shut it off should there be an issue.

19 My last bill that I received said that my husband  
20 and I used no water for the month, but we were charged.  
21 I don't know how that happens, because we do wash our  
22 clothes and take showers, so I'm not sure how we got a  
23 zero usage on it. That has happened multiple times.

24 We have no bill that is itemized that tells us what  
25 the charge is for. It is a very simple, this is what

1       our last reading was, this is what the reading is now,  
2       and this is the dollar amount that just gets charged.

3               I have never received anything that says how much  
4       the water costs for us at Lake Christi Meadows or how  
5       much our usage is.  If that's something I missed, it's a  
6       possibility, but again, the first time that I've ever  
7       seen any type of written charges have been when these  
8       papers were filed and the increase was made.

9               Oh, and the other item that we have is also to the  
10       best of our knowledge, there is no flushout at the end.  
11       I live in a cul de sac, so the only flushout we have is  
12       at the end of the street.  So we get all the dirty  
13       cruddy water.  And there is a flushout -- I guess we can  
14       ask that later.

15               So, there are, there are items that go along with  
16       having water, having clean water, and paying for your  
17       water to go to your house, that I believe that we are  
18       not receiving out at Lake Christi Meadows.  And we're  
19       just looking for -- what?

20                       MS. McNEAL:                        You came here  
21       from the city.

22                       MR. SANDOR:                        One second.  
23       Hold on, let's let her speak.  One person at a time.

24                       THE WITNESS:                        As she said, we  
25       get the water from the city.  The city doesn't give us

1       our bill. The bill goes to Lake Christi. Lake Christi  
2       Meadows or Christi Water System, as far as I know,  
3       doesn't do anything with that water. That water just  
4       travels through a pipe that gets, at the end of the  
5       county, and that water still comes to us.

6               How that bill gets taken care of, I'm not sure.  
7       That would be something that would be great to know as  
8       well, but there is nothing that gets done with that  
9       water; it goes through a pipe.

10              As far as I know, Lake Christi Water just charges  
11       us whatever they want to charge us. I've never received  
12       anything that says what that water is, how much the  
13       usage is, how much that charge is past a certain point.  
14       Like I said, maybe I'm missing something, but there is a  
15       disconnect somewhere and that needs to be fixed.

16              MR. SANDOR:                               How many years  
17       have you lived at your address?

18              THE WITNESS:                               Eight.

19              MR. SANDOR:                               And has this,  
20       the issues that you described been a problem since you  
21       moved into this address?

22              THE WITNESS:                               Absolutely.

23              MR. SANDOR:                               Okay.

24              THE WITNESS:                               I had a mess-up  
25       with our bill the first three months we were there, I

1 had to contact and contact and contact, and it took a  
2 month or two before I could get the correct person, that  
3 I could get a hold of the right place, so that the water  
4 bill could be transferred over. It's been from the very  
5 beginning we've had multiple issues.

6 MR. SANDOR: All right. I  
7 have no further questions.

8 THE WITNESS: Okay.

9 MR. SANDOR: Thank you very  
10 much for your testimony.

11 And we have reached the end of the list of people  
12 who signed up to testify. Is there anyone else present  
13 tonight that would like to testify before we end the  
14 hearing? Okay.

15 Let's start, I saw your hand first, sir. If you  
16 could please stand and raise your right hand.

17 JIM SEYMOUR

18 Being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 MR. SANDOR: Please state and  
20 spell your name for the record.

21 THE WITNESS: Jim Seymour,  
22 S E Y M O U R.

23 MR. SANDOR: Please state --

24 THE WITNESS: 4133 Christi  
25 Shores.

1 MR. SANDOR: Please proceed  
2 with your testimony.

3 THE WITNESS: I want to  
4 dovetail on what the young lady said. We've lived in  
5 Lake Christi Meadows for seven years, and we've had  
6 absolutely no idea of why we're being charged and the  
7 amount we got charged for our water bill.

8 There's never been any rhyme nor reason. There is  
9 never, like her, we've had issues with our, our checks  
10 supposedly never showing up. And when we call to try to  
11 resolve the issue, somebody is always, you know, it's  
12 never somebody there; they always got to call you back.

13 I agree. Lake Christi Meadows, the water  
14 department does absolutely nothing. I've never seen  
15 them replace any water mains. I've never seen them up  
16 any of the piping or anything on our street.

17 I know that the valve that goes into our house in  
18 the yard, I don't see how that sucker works, because of  
19 the cap that's on there has busted, and it's been like  
20 that for six years.

21 I'm just wondering why after seven years with no  
22 rhyme nor reason, no, we have no idea how much per  
23 gallon our water costs. We have no idea what Defiance  
24 is charging Lake Christi Meadows per gallon. All of a  
25 sudden, they want to raise it 200 and some percent now?

1 I think somebody ought to look into that a little  
2 more in depth than just passing it off. Thank you.

3 MR. SANDOR: Thank you for  
4 your testimony.

5 Please stand. Please raise your right hand.

6 RENATE McNEAL

7 Being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

8 MR. SANDOR: Please state and  
9 spell your name for the record.

10 THE WITNESS: Renate McNeal,  
11 R E N A T E, M C N E A L.

12 MR. SANDOR: Please state  
13 your address.

14 THE WITNESS: 4104 West  
15 Rolling Meadows.

16 MR. SANDOR: All right.  
17 Please proceed with your testimony.

18 THE WITNESS: I have lived in  
19 Christi Meadows for 50 years. We were the first family  
20 to move out there. I am happy that we have water. That  
21 when I turn my faucet on, I have water. I'm happy I  
22 have sewer. I have no complaints. Terry has tried to  
23 do his best with what he can do.

24 I have had a problem with my shutoff. They came  
25 and fixed it. I know if it's between the house and my



1       shutoff, I'm responsible for that; I understand that.

2               And I think if what you guys agree to is \$7 and  
3       some cents more a month, that's a very reasonable  
4       amount. Everything increases and there is lots of  
5       things that need to be done, that we don't know what's  
6       involved.

7               He doesn't have a water system. He buys it from  
8       the city and it's going to us. The bill has to be,  
9       somebody has to come and read our meter. Then somebody  
10      has to go and figure the bill out. It comes -- I've  
11      never had any problems. I don't understand being there  
12      50 years and not having any problems and all of a sudden  
13      people move in and they have problems right and left.

14              That's all I have to say. I'm not against the  
15      increase that was mentioned on the paper. Thank you.

16              MR. SANDOR:                               Okay. Thank you  
17      for your testimony.

18              Is there anyone else present tonight that would  
19      like to testify before we end the hearing?

20              You can only testify once, I'm sorry.

21              Yes, sir. Please stand. Please raise your right  
22      hand.

23              MR. KENT BEILHARZ:                       I don't want to  
24      testify. I'm Terry's son and I guess I want to just  
25      help him with any questions.

1 MR. SANDOR: You're Terry's  
2 son?

3 MR. KENT BEILHARZ: Yes.

4 MR. SANDOR: Could you please  
5 identify yourself and also what position you have.

6 MR. BEILHARZ: I'm Kent  
7 Beilharz. I'm company secretary and accountant.

8 MR. SANDOR: Thank you. It  
9 sounds like Kent will be available after the hearing as  
10 well this evening.

11 Anyone else? Last chance.

12 All right. That concludes the witnesses who signed  
13 up to testify. Thank you everyone for their  
14 participation this evening.

15 We would also like to thank Northtowne Mall for  
16 allowing us to use their facilities in order to conduct  
17 this public hearing in person with you this evening.

18 The hearing is now concluded. And the hearing  
19 transcript will be submitted on the record for the  
20 Commission's consideration in this case.

21 Thank you all again. Have a nice evening.

22 (Off the record).  
23  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

I, Marie B. Fresch, Registered Merit Reporter, and Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that the witnesses were duly sworn prior to the taking of testimony, that the testimony of said witnesses was taken by me in machine shorthand and was thereafter reduced to typewritten form by me and that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the testimony so given by the witnesses and that this Public Hearing was taken at the time and place specified in the foregoing caption.

I further certify that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this proceeding was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially interested, or otherwise, in the outcome of this action; and that I have no contract with the parties, attorneys, or persons with an interest in the action, as defined in Civil Rule 28(D).

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office at Norwalk, Ohio, on the 6th day of September, 2021.

  
MARIE B. FRESCH, RPR RMR CRC  
Notary Public, State of Ohio  
My Commission expires: 10-9-2023