

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR AUTHORITY TO AMEND ITS FILED TARIFFS TO INCREASE THE RATES AND CHARGES FOR GAS SERVICES AND RELATED MATTERS.

CASE NO. 21-637-GA-AIR

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF AN ALTERNATIVE FORM OF REGULATION.

CASE NO. 21-638-GA-ALT

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR APPROVAL OF A DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR ITS RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS.

CASE NO. 21-639-GA-UNC

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF COLUMBIA GAS OF OHIO, INC. FOR APPROVAL TO CHANGE ACCOUNTING METHODS.

CASE NO. 21-640-GA-AAM

ENTRY

Entered in the Journal on May 19, 2022

{¶ 1} Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. (Columbia or the Company) is a natural gas company and a public utility as defined by R.C. 4905.03 and R.C. 4905.02, respectively. As such, Columbia is subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission pursuant to R.C. 4905.04, 4905.05, and 4905.06.

{¶ 2} The fixation of rates for public utilities in the state of Ohio is governed by R.C. Chapter 4909. The statutory requirements for an application to increase a public utility's rates are enumerated in R.C. 4909.17, 4909.18, 4909.19, and 4909.43. Also, pursuant to R.C. 4901.13, 4909.04(C), and 4909.18, the Commission adopted Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01 and its Appendix (Standard Filing Requirements). These Standard Filing Requirements

specify the format for filing all information required in an application for an increase in rates and define the information that the Commission requires pursuant to R.C. 4909.18(E).

{¶ 3} Further, pursuant to R.C. 4929.05(A), a natural gas company may request approval of an alternative rate plan by filing an application to establish or change a rate under R.C. 4909.18.

{¶ 4} On May 28, 2021, Columbia filed separate notices of its intent to file an application for an increase in rates and an application for approval of an alternative rate plan. First, in accordance with Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01, Appendix A, Chapter I(B), the Company filed notice of intent to file an application for an increase in rates. Second, pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4901:1-19-06(A), the Company filed a notice of its intent to file an application for approval of an alternative rate plan.

{¶ 5} Also, on May 28, 2021, Columbia filed a motion to establish a test year and date certain and for waiver of certain filing requirements pursuant to R.C. 4909.15(C) and Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01 and 4901:1-19-02(D), respectively. By Entry issued July 7, 2021, the Commission approved the test year and date certain and granted in part and denied in part the requested waiver of specified Standard Filing Requirements.

{¶ 6} On June 30, 2021, Columbia filed a combined application to increase rates and charges and for approval of an alternative rate plan pursuant to R.C. 4909.18 and R.C. 4929.05, respectively.

{¶ 7} On August 10, 2021, Staff filed a letter stating that Columbia's application substantively conformed with the Standard Filing Requirements found in Ohio Adm.Code 4901-7-01, Appendix A.

{¶ 8} By Entry dated August 25, 2021, the Commission found that Columbia's application for an increase in rates and for an alternative rate plan be accepted for filing as of June 30, 2021.

{¶ 9} Staff conducted an investigation of the facts, exhibits, and matters relating to Columbia's applications. On April 6, 2022, Staff filed a comprehensive written report of its investigation in the above-captioned case dockets.

{¶ 10} By Entry dated April 14, 2022, the attorney examiner issued a procedural schedule. The Entry indicated that local public hearings would be scheduled, and publication required, by subsequent entry.

{¶ 11} On May 11, 2022, an Entry was issued scheduling the local public hearings and rescheduling the prehearing conference to May 27, 2022.

{¶ 12} It has come to the attorney examiners' attention that the rescheduled prehearing conference date creates a conflict for some of the parties to this case. The prehearing conference previously scheduled for May 27, 2022, shall therefore be rescheduled. The rescheduled prehearing conference will be held on June 1, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., in Hearing Room 11-C at the offices of the Commission, 180 East Broad Street, 11th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793. The purpose of the conference will be to discuss procedural aspects of these cases and to provide an opportunity for the parties to conduct settlement discussions.

{¶ 13} R.C. 4903.083 requires that the Commission hold at least one public hearing within Columbia's service territory and further requires that at least one such hearing be held after 5:00 p.m. Local public hearings have already been scheduled for this case, but an additional local public hearing shall be held June 15, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the Council Chambers of Zanesville City Hall, 401 Market Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701.

{¶ 14} Columbia should publish legal notice of the additional local public hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the affected service territory once a week for two consecutive weeks prior to the scheduled date of the additional local public hearing. The legal notice should not appear in the legal notices section of the newspaper. The notice should read as follows:

LEGAL NOTICE

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio has scheduled local public hearings in Case Nos. 21-637-GA-AIR, *In the Matter of the Application of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval of an Increase in Gas Rates*; 21-638-GA-ALT, *In the Matter of the Application of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval of an Alternative Rate Plan*; 21-639-GA-UNC, *In the Matter of the Application of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval of a Demand Side Management Plan*; and 21-640-GA-AAM, *In the Matter of the Application of Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval to Change Accounting Methods*.

In its applications, Columbia requests approval of an increase in gas distribution rates and an alternative rate plan. In its rate case, Columbia requests a rate increase of \$221,429,000, an increase of 21.3 percent over current revenues. After its review of Columbia's application and records, the Staff of the Commission recommends a revenue increase in the range of \$35,197,000 to \$57,554,000, which represents an increase of between 3.98 percent and 6.34 percent over current revenues. Columbia's application for alternative rate plans seek to implement the following elements: the continuation of the infrastructure replacement rider for an additional five-year period; the continuation of the capital expenditure program rider for an additional five-year term; and the creation of a federally mandated investment rider to recover costs to comply with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration "Mega Rule" and other future mandated governmental spending.

These local hearings are scheduled to provide an opportunity for interested members of the public to testify in these proceedings. The local hearings will be held as follows:

(a) June 1, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 218 Cleveland Avenue SW, Canton, Ohio 44702.

(b) June 2, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the Simpson Garden Park, Banquet Room of Simpson Building, 1291 Conneaut Avenue, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

(c) June 7, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the City Council Chambers of Athens City Building, Third Floor, 8 East Washington Street, Athens, Ohio 45701.

(d) June 9, 2022, 6:00 p.m., at Whetstone Park Shelterhouse, 3901 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43085.

(e) June 15, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the Council Chambers of Zanesville City Hall, 401 Market Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701

The evidentiary hearing in these proceedings will commence on June 15, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., at the offices of the Commission, Hearing Room 11-A, 11th Floor, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, 180 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215-3793, by calling the Commission's hotline at 1-800-686-7826, or by visiting the Commission's website at <http://www.puco.ohio.gov>.

{¶ 15} It is, therefore,

{¶ 16} ORDERED, That the prehearing conference be rescheduled for June 1, 2022, as indicated in Paragraph 12. It is, further,

{¶ 17} ORDERED, That an additional local public hearing be held as set forth in Paragraph 13. It is, further,

{¶ 18} ORDERED, That Columbia publish notice of the additional local public hearing as set forth in Paragraph 14. It is, further,

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

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

/s/Gregory A. Price

By: Gregory A. Price
Attorney Examiner

MLW/hac

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in

Case No(s). 21-0637-GA-AIR, 21-0638-GA-ALT, 21-0639-GA-UNC, 21-0640-GA-AAM

Summary: Attorney Examiner Entry ordering that the prehearing conference be rescheduled for June 1, 2022; that an additional local public hearing be held June 15, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., at the Council Chambers of Zanesville City Hall, 401 Market Street, Zanesville, Ohio 43701; and, that Columbia publish notice of the additional local public hearing electronically filed by Heather A. Chilcote on behalf of Gregory A. Price, Attorney Examiner, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio