

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

SARAH HAND AND GRETCHEN HAND,
a married couple

Complainant,

v.

RAINIER VIEW WATER COMPANY, INC.,

Respondent.

DOCKET UW 170924

**EXHIBIT 14 TO TESTIMONY OF
COMPLAINANT SARAH HAND**

EXHIBIT 14

TO TESTIMONY OF

Sarah Hand

March 19, 2018

UTC Hearing Transcript December 22, 2016

go into an adjudicatory phase on this matter today. All right. Mr. Sevall, do you want to give, for the benefit of people on the bridge line, the number to call in and about how many minutes from now will you be starting?

Scott Sevall: Let's say we're going to start at 20 after, so 10:20. Let's make it 10:30. I need a little break and I've got to get people down there. So, the phone number is 360-407-3780 and the PIN for that is 936505. But I heard nobody was on the bridge line.

Speaker 15: Excuse me, I'm on the bridge line. Could you please repeat the number, please?

Scott Sevall: Yes.

David Danner: For my benefit as well.

Scott Sevall: Okay. The phone number is 360-407-3780 and the PIN number is 936505. So, we just have one on the bridge line that looks to participate?

Speaker 16: No, there's more than that. I'm here too.

Scott Sevall: Okay. All right. I was just trying to get a number because I want to make sure I've got enough lines coming in on that, if I need to call and get more. So, once again, it's 360-407-3780. The PIN is 936505, pound, I assume.

Ann Rendahl: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Scott Sevall: Pound, yes.

David Danner: All right.

Scott Sevall: 10:30 because that will give me the ability to go get more ports as I believe I'm going to need.

David Danner: All right. Thank you very much for that. So, that concludes our discussion of item A2 this morning. We will now move to item A3, Rainier View. Good morning, Mr. Ward.

Jim Ward: Good morning, Commissioners. Jim Ward, Regulatory Services. Agenda item A3 is docket number UW-161232. This is a filing by Rainier View Water Company Inc. Excuse me. This filing was filed on November 21st of this year. It is an extension of time to collect a surcharge of 75¢ to put in treatment systems.

I'd like to go back to 2014. Rainier View came in at that time, July of that year, to ask for this initial surcharge. The surcharge was to fund the installation of six water treatment systems for removal of iron and manganese on various wells. These wells are located in the Southwood Sound Water System. As I understand it, this water system serves over 13,000 customers, has over 27 individual wells,

and approximately 10 or 12 tanks. So, it's a very large service area in the Southwood/Puyallup/Graham service area.

The company at that time requested approximately \$900,000 of funds to be paid by this surcharge of 75¢ per customer per month. The initial surcharge was to run until July of 2019. What the company is asking today is to extend that surcharge out to the July of 2025, an additional six years. That additional collection of money would be used to install four additional treatment systems on four wells that are currently high in iron and manganese. So, what is before you today is an extension. The actual rate of .75 or 75¢ per month per customer will not change. Only the collection time period will change.

We did receive five comments on this. Four of the comments dealt with the brown water, which I assume would be the iron and manganese contamination that is in the water. This is a natural occurring event in this area of the Graham and Puyallup area. We do have available, I believe, Department of Health on the bridge line. The company representative is here. I know there are customers that wish to speak to this item. We also have the KIRO News 7 available to record a lot of this.

So, without further, recommendation today is to approve the extension of the surcharge tariff, thereby allowing Rainier View Water Company to ... this tariff to become effective December 31 of 2016. This would then make it an additional six years on the original out to the year of 2025. Also, issue an order to grant Rainier View the request for the surcharge to provide funding for these items subject to conditions in staff's memorandum A through G. These are the same items and conditions that were in the original surcharge, we're simply continuing that on. I am available for questions. Also, the company representative is here and I do believe we have Department of Health on the bridge line.

David Danner: All right. Thank you very much. Mr. Ward, we're extending this from 2019 to 2025 for these four additional treatment systems. Is that what you-

Jim Ward: Yes.

David Danner: ... you said? Were those four additional treatment systems considered during the original request for the surcharge back in 2014?

Jim Ward: I don't know if they were. They were not part of the original, no. I don't know if they were being considered by the company at that time. Maybe the company can answer that question.

David Danner: Okay. Then maybe we'll save that for them. The question I have is are we finding high levels of iron and manganese in other parts of the system, in those that the original surcharge was trying to address?

Jim Ward: Once again, I'll defer that to the company.

David Danner: Okay. So, we'll save that for them. Another question is, obviously this is a surcharge that does not, it does not end until 2019. So, the urgency of approving that surcharge today, we really do have a little time to deal with this if we're not ready to extend the surcharge today. Is that correct?

Jim Ward: Yes. It does not add anything additional. It just continues on past 2019.

David Danner: Okay. So, we have a little bit of time to, if we decide not to do this today, we can do this sometime before 2019.

Jim Ward: I would defer that again to the company.

David Danner: Okay. I think that's all the questions I have for you. So, unless Commissioner Rendahl has some questions for you.

Ann Rendahl: I do have some questions, but these may again be deferred to the company. So, it goes to the question of were the conditions of manganese in the particular wells in question today present at the time they came in in 2014?

Jim Ward: I believe that would be, but I'd like to confer to the company to verify that.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Then the particular customer concerns about the water, have you been working with the customers or has that been Consumer Protection on customer recourse for this particular situation?

Jim Ward: I believe that would be Consumer Protection. I have not talked with customers, no.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Miss Feezer, I understand Mr. Cup has been working on this but is unavailable. Are you aware what the customer recourse is for this particular situation? Looking at our rules, it appears that there is recourse if there is a violation of Department of Health standards. While manganese and iron are not considered, as my understanding, a Department of Health violation, what is the recourse for customers in this situation?

Bridget Feezer: For the record, Bridget Feezer with Consumer Protection. You are correct. Mr. Cup has been working the case and he is out ill. When it comes to quality of water, the WACs say that the company must follow Department of Health requirements. So, when we receive consumer complaints, we do sure that the customer has been getting timely responses from the company, that the company is responding to the customer.

Then in some cases, we also basically act as a liaison between Department of Health and UTC in which we will contact Department of Health to get more information about what they're doing to address the situation. Most recently,

the reports that we received from Department of Health, they shared with us several reports from testings that they had been doing. Those reports showed that the water was safe to drink. So, beyond that, from there, based on that report that we're getting, we refer them to Department of Health for further concerns about the quality of water.

Ann Rendahl: Okay, so in this situation, I've been shared a picture of this water and I'm not sure I would want to drink it, even if it was considered safe to drink. So, is there a formal complaint pending before us? I don't want to delve into issues that are inappropriate and currently pending before us. Is the complaint formal?

Bridget Feezer: To my knowledge, we do not have a formal complaint before us.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. So, it's what's considered-

Bridget Feezer: It's an informal.

Ann Rendahl: ... an informal complaint where somebody has contacted the commission with an inquiry but has not raised that to a formal complaint.

Bridget Feezer: Correct.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Thank you.

David Danner: So, I just want to comment. You said you saw a picture of the water. I saw a picture on a news Twitter site, I believe. There's a question about whether that was actually a Rainier Water customer's actual water or whether that was a stock photo of dirty water. I don't know the answer to that. So, we obviously have some questions I think I'd like to ask the company about the quality of the water. Thank you, Mr. Ward. All right. Mr. Finnigan?

Rick Finnigan: Good morning. Rick Finnigan on behalf of Rainier View.

David Danner: Okay. I don't know if it's you I should be asking or if Mr. Blackman is.

Rick Finnigan: Yeah. I'll take a first shot at it, but Mr. Blackman is available as well. Just one of the questions that you both asked was for these wells that were proposing treatment, were they needing the treatment in 2014, then the answer is no. This was an issue that has arisen with these wells since that time. Water levels and water quality for individual wells changes over time. That's one of these things that did occur.

David Danner: Okay. So, this extension basically is for funding to take care of four additional treatment systems, four that were not contemplated in the first surcharge that was approved by the commission.

Rick Finnigan: That is correct.

David Danner: Okay. Again, the question about whether this needs to be done now or sometime later.

Rick Finnigan: If it's not approved, then we can't do the construction this spring and summer. That's the issue. If it's approved, we can move ahead, get the construction done, put treatment online, and address the problem and have it in place sometime this summer. So, delay means delay in fixing the problem.

David Danner: Okay. That's good information. I saw that you will be collecting the surcharge, that there will be surcharge money collected through July 2019.

Rick Finnigan: Correct.

David Danner: But that money's basically already accounted for.

Rick Finnigan: It's already been spent.

David Danner: Okay. What is the track record with the treatment that has been done so far?

Rick Finnigan: It's been good. For those wells that were treated, we're not seeing the problem with manganese and iron that was there before. So, the treatment methodology that we're wanting to put in place has proven to actually work out with the existing wells where it has been applied.

David Danner: Okay. So, we have been hearing about customer complaints about the color of the water. Again, what we're hearing from Department of Health is that we don't have a safety issue here. At the same time, I understand if the water's discolored and has an odor to it, that's a problem that needs to be resolved. Again, I don't know how severe the problem is and how quickly it needs to be addressed. I think maybe Mr. Blackman can give some information to us on that.

Rick Finnigan: Sure.

David Danner: Any questions for Mr. Finnigan?

Ann Rendahl: Yes. Mr. Finnigan, before Mr. Blackman comes up, and maybe he's the one who can answer this, when did the problem start occurring with these four wells?

Rick Finnigan: Mr. Blackman will need to address that, but it was after 2014 when we were before you with the original surcharge. So, it's been fairly recent. But precisely when, I couldn't tell you. I think it varies with each of the wells. I don't think they all happened at the same time.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. My concern is how long this has been going on before the companies come in for this.

Rick Finnigan: Yeah. The major problem I know arose this summer. That's about the best I can say is we started getting customer complaints this summer, got a dozen, 18, something of that nature.

Ann Rendahl: Yeah.

David Danner: Okay. Thank you. Maybe Mr. Blackman, could you help us out here for, answer some questions?

Bob Blackman: Good morning. Bob Blackman.

David Danner: Okay. What is your position with Rainier View?

Bob Blackman: I'm the Chief Operations Officer.

David Danner: Okay. So, when did you first hear about these problems?

Bob Blackman: Because of the size of the system and the number of wells, it is an ongoing issue and has been for years. We started a program a couple years ago to start the treatment. We were having very good success with the wells we have treated already. Complaints are down and we're just continuing on to the next step.

The issue that's at hand now is we do have a wells, one of the main well that the main complaint came in on, that is a blended well, meaning that there's three wells on one site. So, it wasn't obvious what was causing the problem. We have since done the testing and we do know that the third well on the site is the one that's creating the problem. It does have a manganese level double what the others are. So, that's the one that we're immediately going to be treating.

David Danner: Okay. There's no question that is the cause of the problem here of the discoloration and the smell?

Bob Blackman: In this region, yes.

David Danner: It's manganese. Is iron also part of it?

Bob Blackman: Not in this well. It's strictly manganese.

David Danner: Okay. So, this is not an unusual or unheard of problem in water systems.

Bob Blackman: No. Not in this area. In the Graham/Spanaway area, it's very common. The other utilities in the area are also treating.

David Danner: Okay. So, what did you do when you first got complaints about this? Obviously, coming in to get a treatment system going. But are there immediate steps that can be taken to address homeowners' concerns?

Bob Blackman: We started flushing. We tried flushing, moving large amounts of water through the system and try and get this subdivision cleaned up as well as we could.

David Danner: Okay. So, when you flush a system, it means that whatever manganese deposits there might be in the pipes get moved along?

Bob Blackman: That's the intent. Sometimes it works, sometimes it can actually make it worse because it does get into the home. Then you have to flush out the homes as well.

David Danner: Okay. So, again, there was a picture in one of the news reports that was very, very brown water. Is that what your customers are seeing?

Bob Blackman: You'd have to ask them. I haven't personally seen it that bad. But they brought into our office also. So, take their word that it came out how long. It usually cleans up after five, 10 minutes of flushing. It'll clean up out of the home. So, they may have got a shot of the manganese as it was traveling through the pipes. If they happened to be the person that had the faucets open at the time, it would draw it in and they would experience that.

David Danner: But it's your experience that if they had left the faucet running for a little while, that brown water would have lightened up.

Bob Blackman: Correct.

David Danner: Again, as far as you know, there's no health impacts to having elevated manganese in the water.

Bob Blackman: Correct. Yeah. It's state regulated as a secondary contaminant. So, they haven't ordered us to put a treatment in. We did this on our own.

David Danner: So, what is the impact on the infrastructure itself to have high levels of manganese? Does it have wear and tear on the pipes and valves and things?

Bob Blackman: I'm not aware. It can affect some of the velocities of the water going through the pipes. Typically, fire flow, larger gallonage can be reduced if the deposits are thick enough and reduce the diameter of the pipe. But it's usually not that big of a problem.

David Danner: If a homeowner lives at the end of a dead end or something like that, they going to have more problem than less or is it significantly different?

Bob Blackman: It'll probably be a larger problem. It has a tendency to settle out at the ends of lines where the velocity doesn't carry it through.

David Danner: So, how do you address that?

Bob Blackman: We have blow off assemblies that we can open up at the end of the lines if there's not a hydrant at the end. That's a very common way of removing it from the ends of mains, or we even go to the homes and flush out the homes or pull the meters out if we have to.

David Danner: Okay. So, the customers that have come to you, and I guess they're bringing jars of water for you to look at, are you giving them special attention? Are you trying to address their needs?

Bob Blackman: The needs would be to create a work order, go out and flush, do what we can to help alleviate the problem.

David Danner: Okay. So, how long does it take for your company to go out and ... I don't know how many complaints you've had so far.

Bob Blackman: It depends on time of day. It can be the same day if it's called in in the morning, or the next day. We typically take care of it within 24, 48 hour timeframe.

David Danner: Okay. So, are you aware of any customers that you have gone out on a call order and you've serviced, but found you have not been able to clear up the problem, so to speak?

Bob Blackman: I can't always satisfy every person. We can try. We'll go out, we'll flush. It may come back 48 hours later. It's something we can't see. So, it's really tough to say that we've totally solved their problem. But we do work with them and we've been out several times.

David Danner: So, you do have some cases where you've had multiple work orders from one customer?

Bob Blackman: Correct. Yes.

David Danner: Okay. I'm not familiar with what the smell is. Is it a light or is it a very distinct odor? How strong is it?

Bob Blackman: It depends on who you're talking to. It's very subjective. Some people don't even smell it. I'm not aware of the smell. But we've heard it was a musty smell to it at times.

David Danner: Okay. Have you had any conversations with the Department of Health about the water quality?

Bob Blackman: Yes I have.

David Danner: What did you learn?

Bob Blackman: We've made some middle on this. It's a large problem throughout the area. So, it's not just us. I'm familiar with it. I've been with the company for 34 years. So, it's been an ongoing issue. We've taken care of it in the past. So, it's not anything new that we're learning. We're just trying to satisfy the problem.

David Danner: All right. Thank you. Do you have any questions for Mr. Blackman?

Ann Rendahl: I do. Mr. Blackman, so how many customers on this group well that the third well that's the problem, how many customers are affected by that?

Bob Blackman: It goes into the overall system. So, there's 14,000 homes on the system. So, it's hard to say, "Yes, this one region is going to be affected." So, it's the well, it just goes out into the distribution system. Where the demand is is where the water goes. So, like I said, there's 22 other wells that are also pumping into this system.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. So, maybe a better question is how many particular complaints have you had since this summer when this issue first began?

Bob Blackman: A couple dozen.

Ann Rendahl: Are those recurring complaints or are there are only a few that are-

Bob Blackman: They're regionalized. Subdivision, in this case, probably the Springwood subdivision was the biggest, where the biggest problem's been.

Ann Rendahl: Is that closest to this well?

Bob Blackman: Yes it is.

Ann Rendahl: Okay.

Bob Blackman: Which would make sense.

Ann Rendahl: So, how long, if the commission were to approve this extension of the surcharge today, how long would it take the company to put in this system? I heard Mr. Finnigan say by summer. It seems to me that's a long time.

Bob Blackman: It's a process. We have to go through the State Department of Health, we have to get their approval before we can do anything. The filtration and treatment plant have to be built. So, to have it on by spring is what we're hoping to. That's a pretty aggressive schedule, we feel.

Ann Rendahl: So, what can the company do for the customers in the meantime that are experiencing this water?

Bob Blackman: I'm sorry, what?

Ann Rendahl: What can the company do for the customers in the meantime that are experiencing this?

Bob Blackman: What we've done in the past, and that's get a work order made up and we'll go out and flush, either at the service if we have to or hydrant or blow off assembly and clean up the water.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Thank you.

David Danner: All right. Thank you very much.

Bob Blackman: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

David Danner: So, I understand ... Mr. James, are you on the line?

Mr. James: Yes I am.

David Danner: Okay. You're with the Department of Health and you've heard the discussion so far. I was wondering, have you had calls regarding this water system, and how have they been resolved?

Mr. James: I believe that we've gotten one caller, one customer who's called and talked to us. We've been engaged in this since probably, I want to say November. I don't have the first date when we were first contacted about the issues out there at Springwood. My understanding is we went out and observed the testing of the three wells that serve the Fir Meadows area and one well came up above the secondary standard for manganese.

It's my understanding that that well has been turned off and is no longer in service and won't be turned on until summer after the treatment facilities are built unless something were to happen and there was a significant need for water. But our understanding is that this is a relatively low demand period and that the well will remain offline until treatment is provided. The goal is to provide that treatment before summer so that, again, they can meet their peak demand for water.

David Danner: Okay. Just want to make sure that that's Mr. Blackman's understanding as well. So, the well that tested high for manganese has in fact been shut down and will be shut down until the treatment is put in in the summertime.

Bob Blackman: Yes it is. It's off.

David Danner: Okay.

Bob Blackman: Yes, that well has been turned off.

- David Danner: Okay. Mr. James, again, I asked Mr. Blackman about how safe is water with elevated manganese and I wanted to basically ask you the same thing since this is your jurisdiction.
- Mr. James: Again, there is a secondary standard currently in effect for manganese. That suggest that it is currently regulated as an aesthetic problem, not as a health concern. Again, we don't suggest anybody drink water that is objectionable to them, either taste, odor, or visually. But our experience with manganese is that it does slough off the pipe, interior of the pipe from time to time and cause a great deal of discoloration, but that through flushing, it typically clears up after some flushing.
- David Danner: Okay. So, thank you. Do you have any complaints about this system that are pending in your office?
- Mr. James: Again, we've had the phone conversation since the issue presented itself to us in early November, I believe it was. Again, we went out with the company, took a look, we observed them flushing. We also observed the collection of samples and we received the results from the laboratory when the analysis was complete. Our understanding working with the company was that the well was going to be turned off. We've gotten a design for the treatment facility at the Fir Meadows well and we've provided informal comments on the design back to the company. We intend to continue to work with the company until this thing is resolved.
- David Danner: All right. Thank you very much. Commissioner Rendahl, do you have any questions for Mr. James?
- Ann Rendahl: Yes, and just in terms of what the process is at Department of Health for approving these plans.
- Mr. James: Typically, we get a project report that identifies the issue and then identifies what is perceived to be the alternatives that might be available to resolving the problem. Usually, it focuses on one selected alternative. Then we review and approve the project report when they've resolved any issues we might have. Then from there, we usually get a construction document that would go through the actual construction of the treatment plant. We would review that similarly and then approve the construction. Then the utility can go ahead and proceed with the construction of the facility and put it online and then notify us when the construction is complete.
- Ann Rendahl: So, where are you in the process now?
- Mr. James: It suggested to us that the schedule is doable to get the facility online before the summer peak demand period.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Mr. Blackman, you're not planning on turning on this well until you get this treatment facility in place?

Bob Blackman: It would depend. If the system requires that well to be turned on to maintain pressures, we will use it. If we don't need it and the demand is low, we'll keep it off.

Ann Rendahl: So, it's been off since you turned it off.

Bob Blackman: Correct. Since November.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Thank you.

David Danner: Okay. So, would that be something like if there's a fire, then the fire hydrants go on, or is it just something that happens from time to time?

Bob Blackman: Correct. A fire or high demand of some sort. There's enough storage to handle fire flow, but if other wells went down for some reason, pumps went out, we'd have a backup.

David Danner: But it would be in unusual circumstances in terms of whether you would need to turn that well on or not.

Bob Blackman: Correct.

David Danner: Okay. Okay. Thank you, Mr. James. I really appreciate your making yourself available today. It was very helpful. I have no other questions. I don't believe Commissioner Rendahl does.

Ann Rendahl: No additional questions. Thank you.

David Danner: So, again, I appreciate your participation. We have Randy Boyington. Are you on the line? Okay, or in the room? Okay. I don't see anyone else signed up to testify on this matter. Is there anyone in the room or on the bridge line who wants to discuss this matter?

Sarah Hand: Yes I do.

David Danner: Okay. Could you identify yourself, please?

Sarah Hand: Sarah Hand.

David Danner: I'm sorry, I didn't get the last name.

Sarah Hand: Hand. H-A-N-D.

David Danner: All right. Thank you. Go ahead.

Sarah Hand:

Hi. I'm a customer of Rainier View Water Company. I've dealt a lot with Mr. Blackman on my brown water issue. Unfortunately, they're saying that the water is safe to drink. But our water is brown. Obviously, I can't give that to my kids and my dogs or to ourselves. When my daughter showers, it also causes her to break out in rashes, so we have to give her a allergy pill due to this extra chemical or iron or whatever they want to call it, magnesium, in the lines.

They're saying that it doesn't cause damage to homes, but unfortunately, we had to pay out \$654 due to the damage it caused to our home. Also on top of it, I talked to Bob Blackman and he promised to put in a digital meter at my house so after flushing, it doesn't cost me extra money out of our pocket, which Bob Blackman failed to do that.

Another issue I have is we asked Bob Blackman to provide us with a water cooler and clear water to drink since they own Mountain Mist. He said he would not provide that to our home. At this time, we are not using the water like a regular customer would. We are buying bottled water for ourselves and for our dogs to drink because our water's brown. If they're telling us it is safe to drink and it won't cause us harm, I have a hard time believing that since the smell in the brown water, nobody would want to drink that. I don't know if anyone's in agreeance with that that.

Also, they're saying that these complaints didn't come in until the summer of last year, which I do believe that is wrong. KIRO has been out prior to the summer of last year to do a report on Springwood Estates. I'm asking that you guys don't grant them this additional 75¢ due to the fact that they told us that they put in this filtration system and made a deposit way before November of this year. So, I feel like they have done bad business practice, they are for profit, they own Mountain Mist, and they are not addressing every customer's concerns like they say they are.

So, I do believe that, at this time, I don't feel like you guys should be granting them extra money. Also, before they were having, there was a magnesium and iron problem is there's still an magnesium and iron problem in the water that we're drinking. I think that's a question that Bob Blackman should answer for us because we still have brown water coming into our house. I'm lost for words. I even offered Bob Blackman a bottle of water that's coming out of my sink and he refused to drink it. But he expects me to drink it and my kids to drink it and my dogs to drink it.

I've tried to deal with Bob Blackman on a number of occasions. His answer to me to pay my bill was to go to my local churches or if I was having a hard time with money, then maybe I should go to a food bank. I don't think that's the way you talk to a customer. He did not address our concerns. He still has not addressed our concerns. At this time, I would please ask you guys, do not give them an extra 75¢. They have a company called Mountain Mist that they can get the money from them.

David Danner: All right, thank you very much. Are there any questions for Miss Hand?

Ann Rendahl: No, thank you for letting us know your experiences.

Sarah Hand: The whole problem, ma'am, is the experience has not cleared up. We still have brown water. Even though they say they shut down this well, we still have brown water because I'm on, unfortunately, like you say, a end of the line. I am customer that is in a cul-de-sac on the end of the line. I'm directly on the end of the line.

David Danner: All right. All right. Thank you. So, I'm going to ask Mr. Blackman to come up and respond. Mr. Blackman, first of all, you've received complaints from this particular customer. Have you been to this customer's house? Have you checked the quality of the water?

Bob Blackman: I personally haven't. I know we've done work orders to go out. I'm not sure when the last one was done. If she hasn't called in to let us know that she's getting brown water, I can't go out there and just flush every day. I haven't heard from her for several weeks.

David Danner: Has your company gone out and flushed the pipes around her house and serving her house?

Bob Blackman: Yes. We do. Like I said, sometimes when you flush, when you open up hydrants to move the water, it can actually make it worse. So, if we just arbitrarily go out and flush every third day, it could actually create a bigger problem because there is manganese in the system right now. One of the things we're looking to do is what they call pigging the mains where you actually insert something in and it scours the line as it goes through. There's no sense doing that until we get all the filtration in. At that point, that should totally alleviate any other problems.

Ann Rendahl: So, Mr. Blackman, if you have turned off the well that exceeded the standard according to Mr. James, but you're saying there's still manganese in the other two wells that's coming through the system or it's now in the lines and you can't get it out?

Bob Blackman: It's in the mains, it's taken, for a couple years, we don't know. We can't really see what's in there. So, the assumption is that it's celled in the mains and we can't just get it out.

Ann Rendahl: So, if you put the filtration system, are you putting it on all three wells or just the third well?

Bob Blackman: The third well, the well that's exceeding. The other two wells were basically non-detect.

Ann Rendahl: Okay.

David Danner: But this third well is not serving her right now.

Bob Blackman: Right now, it is not. It's offline right now. Like I said, I haven't gotten a call to do any flushing at her house. So, I don't know if it's how bad it is.

David Danner: Yeah, and we don't have that information here. I don't know how brown the water is. But the question is are you taking reasonable steps to try and bring this water up to the standards, not only for safety, but also for aesthetics that a reasonable person would expect?

Bob Blackman: That's the intent. That's why we're looking to put the filtration on.

David Danner: So, she mentioned things like a digital meter, an offer of trucking water in or something.

Bob Blackman: No, we didn't offer to bring water in. She wanted it. But number one, I'd like to clarify that we don't own Mountain Mist Bottled Water. It's a system, it's a company that's part of the Richardson family, but it has nothing to do with Rainier View Water.

David Danner: So, she mentioned things about her daughter's rash after showing with this water. Is that something that can-

Bob Blackman: I can't comment on that. I don't know. Probably 45,000 people use this water every day. Department of Health has gotten one complaint. If it were that big of an issue, I would assume that they would be getting a lot of calls over this.

David Danner: Yeah. Again, the matter before us this morning, we don't have the facts before us that are going to be able to deal with this particular customer's issues. The larger question is you do have a system that has water with elevated manganese and then the issue for us is to make sure that you're taking reasonable steps to alleviate that problem. You have any further questions for Mr. Blackman?

Ann Rendahl: No. I do not.

David Danner: All right.

Sally Barrow: [inaudible 01:13:36]

David Danner: Council?

Sally Barrow: This is Sally Barrow with the Attorney General's Office. I just want to clarify the scope of the commission's regulatory jurisdiction here. The commission is charged with economic financial regulation of water companies, not regulation

of water quality and quantity, which fall within the providence of the State Department of Health. I just would like to point out that in the most recent memorandum of understanding between the two agencies, which emphasizes the distinct nature and mission of the two agencies, it specifically states ... Oops. Sorry.

It specifically states that the UTC lacks staff expertise in the following subject areas and defers to the Office of Drinking Water, Department of Health, if technical questions arise, then identifies the areas: water system design, construction, operation, or maintenance; water quality, including but not limited to testing, filtration, and treatment; water quantity; and also water emergency plans. So, I just want to take a stab at clarifying the scope of the agency's regulatory jurisdiction.

David Danner: Yeah, and I thank you and your points are very well taken. I think that we're looking at is that we are being asked today to extend a surcharge for the purposes of addressing problems and we want to make sure we understand the extent of the problems and the effectiveness of the surcharge and addressing those problems.

Yes, we are not the ones who would be testing for the health or safety of the water and the Department of Health has been engaged appropriately. So, we will leave what is in their jurisdiction to them. So, that said, let me find out if there's anyone else in the room or on the bridge line who wants to talk to this matter. Okay.

Sarah Hand: Can I just clarify something? This is Sarah Hand again.

David Danner: Miss Hand, go ahead.

Sarah Hand: They said that they were going to do the surcharge through 2019 and now they're adding so many years to that. Does that mean that they're going to just keep blending and we're going to keep getting this stuff through our lines? Like he said, he knows that we're still getting this stuff through our lines. He just doesn't know the scope of it. He's telling us his responsibility ended at the meter where our responsibility is our home. If the water's brown coming in at the meter, how are we supposed to stop that?

David Danner: So, the commission is asked today to extend a surcharge that would allow the company to make capital improvements that will address the issues that have been raised about the elevated manganese in the water and the associated color and odor issues. So, that is the question that we have here. The water system itself generally ends at the meter. Mr. Ward, do you have anything to add to that? All right. So, that's what we're being asked to do today. Any discussion, Commissioner Rendahl?

Ann Rendahl: I do have one more question for Mr. Blackman. I had asked you, the third well is turned off. But apparently, these issues are still occurring. Is that because of the three other wells that you're looking at treating or is it just because there's manganese in the system?

Bob Blackman: I think it's just built up in the system.

Ann Rendahl: So, you said you were thinking about using some-

Bob Blackman: A pig.

Ann Rendahl: ... a pig similar to-

Bob Blackman: You insert it into the pipe and it scours the piping as it goes down and removes all the manganese or sediment in the water.

Ann Rendahl: That's through the mains in the system in the Spring-

Bob Blackman: Yes. Not in the homes, but just in the main lines that are big enough.

Ann Rendahl: That's in the Springwood subdivision or throughout the entire system?

Bob Blackman: We'll start and see how it works in the Springwood system. That's our main objective.

Ann Rendahl: So, if this pig goes through and it gets to, for example, it'll go through the main, it's not going to go through the line that goes to a customer's meter.

Bob Blackman: Correct.

Ann Rendahl: So, how does that get cleaned out? How do you resolve this?

Bob Blackman: That will take time, flushing, continue to flush out there, hose bibs, faucets. That's the typical way to remove it out of those pipings.

Ann Rendahl: Okay. Thank you.

David Danner: All right. So, we have before us a recommendation that we approve the extension of the surcharge tariff and issue an order granting the request for the surcharge to provide the funding for these capital improvements. I think at this time, I think that this is the necessary step to start addressing the problems of the elevated manganese for the customers that have been experiencing. I think for that reason, I would approve or support the recommendation that staff is making. I think that getting started now so that when there is a high demand this summer that these improvements will be in place and that the well that has been shut off, if it is needed this summer, can operate.

Now, beyond that, if there are other issues or other steps that should be taken, I will leave that to the Department of Health. If there's a further need to come back to the commission for approval of expenditures to address something more immediate, we'll take those up at that time. But right now, I'm prepared to support this recommendation.

Ann Rendahl: I too am prepared to support the recommendation, but I do have concerns that this solution that obviously, the company needs the water from these wells to maintain the pressure and maintain support for the customers. So, this treatment needs to be applied. But I too have concerns that there is more that needs to be done to clean out the system. So, I too leave that to the company.

But I would encourage the company to work with this particular customer. I know that this is difficult, I know that this has been contentious, but the company really needs to work with this customer to resolve this issue. That is a separate issue from what is before us today. So, I encourage the company to do all it can to work with these customers who are experiencing this issue.

But on this particular matter that is before us today, I think it is appropriate to put in the treatment and extend the surcharge to try to resolve this issue in the system. I would encourage the company to bring to our attention if there're additional wells that come up in the future that seem to be having the same issue so we don't let this drag on for a long time. So, for that reason, I'm prepared to make a motion.

David Danner: All right.

Ann Rendahl: I move that in docket UW-161232 that the commission approve extension of the surcharge tariff, thereby allowing the rates proposed by Rainier View Water Company Inc. to become effective December 31, 2016 and issue an order to grant Rainier View Water Company's request for a surcharge to provide funding for capital improvements, subject to conditions A through G set forth in staff's memorandum.

David Danner: All right. I second the motion and the motion carries. This brings us to the end of today's open meeting. The recessed items have been taken off the agenda, so I believe we are now ready to adjourn. We are adjourned. All right. Thank you.

Speaker 23: Is there somebody who [inaudible 01:23:07]-

How did we do?



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