

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

v.

MURREY'S DISPOSAL COMPANY,
INC. d/b/a OLYMPIC DISPOSAL,

Respondent.

DOCKET TG-230778

ORDER 01

COMPLAINT AND ORDER
SUSPENDING TARIFF REVISIONS

BACKGROUND

- 1 On September 15, 2023, Murrey's Disposal Company, Inc. d/b/a Olympic Disposal (Olympic or Company) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) tariff revisions that would generate approximately \$1,885,000 (15.9 percent) in additional annual revenue. Olympic provides regulated solid waste collection service to approximately 15,500 residential; 1,900 commercial; 117 roll-off; and 6,040 residential recycling in Clallam and Jefferson Counties. The Company's last general rate increase became effective on June 1, 2011.
- 2 Olympic is seeking this increase due to increased capital investments, wage expenses, repair costs, and allocated expenses since its last general rate increase.
- 3 In Commission Staff's (Staff) review of the Company's books, accounts, and supporting documents, Staff identified several expenses that did not have substantial support showing the costs are necessary for the operation of regulated services. Staff discussed these items with the Olympic, however, after several meetings, discussions, emails, and two extensions of the effective date to allow further consideration, discussion, and review, Staff and the Company have been unable to agree treatment of the issues.
- 4 The outstanding issues are:
 - Insurance expenses related to incidents.
 - Employee bonuses and incentive compensations.
 - Employee Community Activity expenses: costs associated with bolstering employee morale.

- Company travel expenses, including food expenses.
- Severance payments to employees.

5 Staff has discussed these items with the Company and requested additional information to support the Company position. Staff has considered and discussed the information provided by the Company, both internally and with the Company. Staff concluded the information did not support the inclusion of the expenses in rates would be justified or provide reasonable benefits to the customers. The Company disagrees with Staff's position and analysis. Due to limitations on resolving the case within statutory limits and the subject matter differences, Staff recommends the Commission suspend the tariff revisions and set the docket for hearing.

DISCUSSION

6 We agree with Staff that the proposed increases might injuriously affect the rights and interests of the public and Olympic has not demonstrated to the Commission's satisfaction that the proposed increases would ultimately result in rates that are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient. Accordingly, we find that the Commission should suspend the tariff filing and hold public hearings, if necessary, to determine whether the proposed increases are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington vested by statute with the authority to regulate the rates, regulations, practices, accounts, and affiliated interests of public service companies, including solid waste companies.
- 8 (2) Olympic is a solid waste company and a public service company subject to Commission jurisdiction.
- 9 (3) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 26, 2023.
- 10 (4) The tariff revisions Olympic filed on September 15, 2023, would increase charges and rates for service provided by Olympic Disposal, and might injuriously affect the rights and interest of the public.

- 11 (5) Olympic Disposal has not yet demonstrated that the tariff revisions would ultimately result in rates that are fair, just, reasonable, and sufficient.
- 12 (6) In order to carry out the duties imposed upon the Commission by law, and as authorized in RCW 81.04.130 and RCW 81.04.220, the Commission believes it is necessary to investigate Olympic's books, accounts, practices, and activities, and to investigate and appraise various phases of Olympic's operations.
- 13 (7) As required by RCW 81.04.130, Olympic bears the burden of proof to show that the proposed increases are just, reasonable, and sufficient.
- 14 (8) Olympic may be required to pay the expenses reasonably attributable and allocable to such an investigation consistent with the provisions of RCW 81.20.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 15 (1) The tariff revisions Murrey's Disposal Company, Inc. d/b/a Olympic Disposal filed on September 15, 2023, are suspended.
- 16 (2) The Commission will hold hearings at such times and places as may be required.
- 17 (3) Murrey's Disposal Company, Inc. d/b/a Olympic Disposal must not change or alter the tariffs filed in this Docket during the suspension period, unless authorized by the Commission.
- 18 (4) The Commission will institute an investigation of Murrey's Disposal Company, Inc. d/b/a Olympic Disposal's books, accounts, practices, activities, and operations as described above.
- 19 (5) Murrey's Disposal Company, Inc. d/b/a Olympic Disposal shall pay the expenses reasonably attributable and allocable to the Commission's investigation consistent with RCW 81.20.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective December 21, 2023.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DAVID W. DANNER, Chair

ANN E. RENDAHL, Commissioner

MILTON H. DOUMIT, Commissioner