Docket No. UG-210755 - Vol. IV

WUTC v. Cascade Natural Gas Corporation

May 25, 2022
BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION,

Complainant,

vs.

CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION,

Respondent.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING - VOLUME IV

Pages 1-8

May 25, 2022

6:00 p.m.

Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
621 Woodland Square Loop Southeast
Lacey, Washington 98503

(All participants appeared via videoconference.)

DATE TAKEN: MAY 25, 2022
REPORTED BY: ROSE DETLOFF, RMR, CCR #21036100
APPEARANCES

COMMISSIONERS:

DAVE DANNER, Chair
ANN RENDAHL, Commissioner

COMMISSION STAFF:

EMILIE BROWN
NASH CALLAGHAN
BRIDGIT FEESER
ANDREW ROBERTS

CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION:

LORI BLATTNER
MARK CHILES
MARK HANSON

PUBLIC COUNSEL:

SHAI BAUMANN
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LACEY, WASHINGTON; MAY 25, 2022

6:00 p.m.

PROCEEDINGS

CHAIR DANNER: Good evening, everyone.

It is May 25th, 2022, and this is a meeting of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission. And this is a public comment hearing in Docket UG-210755, and that is a general rate case filed by Cascade Natural Gas.

So I'm Dave Danner. I'm Chair of the Commission. I'm joined by my colleague, Commissioner Ann Rendahl.

On September 30th, 2021, Cascade Natural Gas filed a request with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission to increase base rates for natural gas service. The Company proposed a rate increase totaling 5.12 percent or $13.7 million.

And this proposed rate, if approved, would increase residential rates by about 5.34 percent. And as a result, the average residential customer would pay about $2.89 more a month under this request.

On March 22nd, 2022, the Commission received a proposed settlement by Cascade Natural Gas and the UTC
Staff, who act as an independent party in this case, to resolve all the issues in the case, and they proposed a settlement that would decrease the overall increase from $13.7 to $10.7 million.

That is a settlement proposed only by those two parties, Cascade and the UTC Staff, and it is not supported by the Alliance of Western Energy Consumers, The Energy Project, or the Public Counsel, who are also parties to this case.

Today, it's our intent to hear from the public on their comments on the proposals before the Commission. We take comments of the public very seriously. We have received several written comments so far. And we will hear what any member of the public has to say tonight and take those matters under advisement as we consider this case.

I'm going to turn it over now to Andrew Roberts.

Andrew, first of all, do you see anyone on the call tonight who wishes to testify before us?

MR. ROBERTS: So there are a couple names up here that I'm not familiar with, and they could be Company representatives or our court reporter. I see a Rose Detloff and a Mark Hanson. I'm not familiar with either one of those names.
THE COURT REPORTER: I am the court reporter.

MR. ROBERTS: Thank you, Rose.

MR. HANSON: This is Mark Hanson. I'm with the Company.

CHAIR DANNER: All right.

In that case, looking at the list, I am not seeing any members of the public who wish to comment on this proposal this evening.

So let me ask -- let me just put the question out there. Is there anyone on the call who wishes to comment on this case tonight?

All right. I am hearing none, so I think there's no point in introducing Andrew Roberts from our Staff or our Public Counsel representatives tonight. Ann Paisner is here and Shai Baumann. And, obviously, we won't be swearing in any people testifying tonight.

Commissioner Rendahl, do you have anything that you wish to add tonight? Otherwise, we will adjourn this meeting early.

COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: So I don't have anything to add, but I see Ann Paisner had put her camera on, and I wonder if Public Counsel does have something they wish to say.

MS. PAISNER: I do. Thank you. Yeah,
CHAIR DANNER: That's all right. Don't be sorry.

MS. PAISNER: I just wanted to say that, you know, people can still submit written comments, and I wanted to provide our e-mail and snail mail address, if I may.

So if members of the public would still want to provide comments, written, they can e-mail us at utility@atg.wa.gov. Or they can mail it to us at Attorney General's Office, Public Counsel Unit, 800 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2000, Seattle, Washington 98104.

Thank you.

CHAIR DANNER: Thank you.

And, of course, we will also receive comments at the Commission at comments@utc.wa.gov.

Ann Paisner, do you have a proposal for when we should have a deadline for public comments?

MS. PAISNER: Yes. Well, typically, I believe the record stays open through the conclusion of the hearing, and the hearing is scheduled for June 1st and 2nd. At that rate --

CHAIR DANNER: But you need time to compile.

MS. PAISNER: Right. Exactly.

So that's, I think, approximately one week
beyond the hearing. So depending on when the hearing concludes, which is uncertain at this time -- at that point, then I believe we would request a week after. So it's on a Wednesday.

CHAIR DANNER: All right. So I think what we will do, then, is let's welcome comments through June 2nd, and then we will give you seven days after that to compile and get those to us.

MS. PAISNER: Excellent. Thank you.

CHAIR DANNER: Does that work for you? All right.

Is that okay with you, Commissioner Rendahl?

COMMISSIONER RENDAHL: Yes, and that's consistent with what we've done in prior cases.

CHAIR DANNER: All right. Very good. I appreciate it.

And since we don't have any members of the public joining us tonight, let's just get on with our evenings, everyone, and I will adjourn the meeting. I want to thank you all for joining in tonight.

So with that, we are adjourned. Thank you.

(Proceedings adjourned at 6:06 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE

STATE OF WASHINGTON
COUNTY OF KING

I, Rose Detloff, a Certified Court Reporter in and for the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.

ROSE DETLOFF, CCR, RMR

My commission expires:
DECEMBER 6, 2022