

MINUTES  
of the  
LEGISLATIVE CONSUMER COMMITTEE  
March 27, 2013  
State Capitol, Room 472, Helena, MT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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Senator Terry Murphy, Chairman  
Representative Pat Noonan, Vice Chairman  
Representative Mike Cuffe

STAFF PRESENT

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Robert A. Nelson, Consumer Counsel  
Suzanne Snow, Secretary  
Paul Schulz, Rate Analyst  
Jaime Stamatson, Economist

VISITORS PRESENT

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No visitors were present

CALL TO ORDER

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The meeting was called to order at 5.17 P.M. by Chairman Murphy.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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MOTION: Representative Noonan moved approval of the December 7, 2012 meeting minutes.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

## COUNSEL STAFF / PERSONNEL MATTERS

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Bob Nelson introduced, new staff member, Suzanne Snow.

Bob addressed the need to hire an attorney while Mary Wright recovers from knee surgery; seeking the Committee's permission to hire Monica Tranel, on a month to month basis.

MOTION: Representative Cuffe moved to authorize hiring of Monica Tranel, on a monthly basis.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously.

## FINANCIALS

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Expenditures for Contracted Services are in the range of what was anticipated when the budget was set. There is a possibility that a portion of the Contingency Fund may be used, with several major cases pending, but it is projected that MCC should be at budget, or close to, at fiscal year-end.

Personal Services category will end in a surplus due to a vacancy at the beginning of the year.

MCC's budget request for the next biennium has been approved without any material modifications.

## STATUS OF CASES

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Bob Nelson presented a brief overview of the Status of Cases.

**NWE – D2012.9.94** – Application to Increase Natural Gas Delivery Service Rates, filed 9/28/2012.

NWE requested a \$15.7 million non-gas cost increase (15.16%), or an average residential increase of 7.2%. MCC filed testimony. Based on the adjustments made by witnesses John Wilson and Al Clark, MCC recommended an increase of \$4.1 million, instead of the \$15.7 million increase requested by NWE. The hearing is scheduled for April 16, 2013.

**Mountain Water Co – D2012.7.81** – Application to Increase Rates for Water Service, filed 7/30/12.

Schedule has been suspended.

**NWE – D2012.5.49** – 2011-2012 Electric Supply Cost Tracker, filed 6/1/12.

Scheduled for a hearing in June. This application would have the effect of a 5.9% increase.

**MDU – D2012.9.100** – General Natural Gas Rate Increase, filed 9/26/12.

MDU has requested a \$3.5 million increase. This translates into a 17% increase in its non-gas costs. MCC filed Testimony in February. MCC has recommended a \$422,000 increase, which would be an overall increase of 0.7%, instead of the 5.9% overall increase requested by MDU. The hearing is scheduled for May 1, 2013.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

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There were no public comments.

#### NEXT MEETING

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It was agreed that the next meeting date would be set at a later time.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_, Robert Nelson, Consumer Counsel

Accepted by the Committee this 14th day of June, 2013

\_\_\_\_\_, Chairman.