MINUTES LOG
June 2, 2020
Zoom Videoconference

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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Please contact the Montana Consumer Counsel at 406-444-2771 for more information.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Sue Malek, Chair
Representative Mary Ann Dunwell
Representative Mike Hopkins

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED

Senator Jeff Welborn, Vice Chair
CALL TO ORDER
10:00:57 Chair Malek called the meeting to order with roll call.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS – January 13, 2020
10:01:30 MOTION: Representative Dunwell moved acceptance of the minutes.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote

STATUS OF CASES PENDING
Bob Nelson briefly highlighted the cases that have seen some change in status since the Committee’s last meeting. (Attachment 4)


10:17:58 Committee Discussion

Public Comment
10:40:30 Makenna Sellers – Northern Plains Resource Council
10:43:20 Mary Fitzpatrick – Billings, Montana – emailed comment - read into the public record by Rep. Dunwell


11:05:40  2020.05.066 – NorthWestern Energy - Petition for Accounting Order


11:16:18  2019.06.034 – NorthWestern Energy - Petition of Caithness Beaver Creek, LLC, to Set Terms and Conditions for Qualifying Facility

11:16:55  2019.09.067 – NorthWestern Energy - Petition of CED Pondera Wind, LLC, and Teton County Wind, LLC, to Set Terms and Conditions


11:26:15  2019.11.089 – NorthWestern Energy - Annual Tax Tracker

11:27:42  Committee Discussion.

11:30:44  2020.04.043 – NorthWestern Energy - Annual Townsend Propane Supply Rate Adjustment

11:30:54  2019.07.042 – Havre Pipeline - Farmstead Customer Rate Adjustment

11:31:15  2019.11.090 – MDU - Update of Time Differentiated Rate 93 Tariff

11:31:49  2020.05.055 – MDU - Application for Accounting Order to Track and Defer Financial Effects of COVID-19

11:32:32  2020.04.044 – MDU – Request for Waiver from ARM 38.5.176

11:33:14  2019.08.047 - EWM - Petition for Accounting Order

11:34:08  2019.06.031 - Energy West – Annual Gas Cost Tracker

11:38:11  Committee Discussion.

11:41:48  2020.06.067 - Public Service Commission’s Request for Comments Regarding Implementation of HB 597

FINANCIAL REPORT

11:43:00  Bob Nelson reviewed the current budget report (dated 6-1-20). Bob noted that he had no concerns with the budget as presented and that he expected a significant unexpended authority at fiscal year-end.

Chair Malek expressed her hope that the next Legislative session will recognize that this was an exceptional year with lack of travel and activities and restore the Consumer Counsel’s budget.

CONTRACTED SERVICES

11:46:27  Bob requested authorization from the committee to retain the services of the following consultants:

2020.05.066  - NorthWestern Energy Petition for COVID-19 Accounting Order
Larkin & Associates - Ralph Smith

2020.05.055 – Montana-Dakota Utility Co. Application for Accounting Order related to COVID-
Larkin & Associates - Ralph Smith

2020.04.044 – Montana-Dakota Utility Co Gas Rate Filing
George Donkin – Cost Allocation and Rate Design
Larkin and Associates - Ralph Smith - Revenue Requirement
Dr. Randy Woolridge – Cost of Capital
Resolve Utility Consulting – David Garrett – Depreciation issues

11:49:26  MOTION: Representative Hopkins moved to approve the retention of the consultants as per the request made by the Consumer Counsel.

VOTE: The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote

PUBLIC COMMENT

No additional public comment was offered at this time.
NEXT MEETING

11:50:27 The date for the next meeting is to be set later.

ADJOURNMENT

11:50:45 There being no further business before the Committee the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.