

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**IN RE: CONANICUT MARINE SERVICES, INC :
(JAMESTOWN AND NEWPORT : DOCKET NO. 4389
FERRY) 2022 RATES AND CRUISE TENDER RATES :**

ORDER

I. Ferry Rates for the 2022 Season

On March 23, 2022, Conanicut Marine Services, Inc. (Conanicut), operating the Jamestown and Newport Ferry, a seasonal ferry service, filed an application with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for approval of its rates and schedule for ferry transportation between Jamestown and Newport commencing on May 21, 2022. Conanicut proposed to increase all of its rates and to add a charge for children four years old and under. Young children had previously been afforded free passage. This is the first rate change proposed by Conanicut since the 2018 season.¹

On April 7, 2022, after examination, Patricia Smith, a Rate Analyst for the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (Division) filed a Memorandum PUC recommending approval of the rates, noting that the service is a discretionary service. The Division also recommended that the proposed fares be approved as filed, noting that further investigation and public hearings were not necessary. Ms. Smith noted that she had inquired about the reason for the increases, particularly the increase from \$0 to \$10 for young children and \$10 to \$18 for older children. She explained that Conanicut had represented that they had been “operating in the red for the last few seasons and had looked at ways to increase revenues without significantly increasing the full fare tickets which they were concerned would impact overall ridership.” Ms. Smith indicated that

¹ A copy of the tariff filing can be found here: [http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4389-Jamestown-Newport%20Ferry%20Rates%202022%20\(3-23-22\).pdf](http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4389-Jamestown-Newport%20Ferry%20Rates%202022%20(3-23-22).pdf).

while these increases are proportionately larger than the other increases, they still represent a significant discount off the adult fares. She opined that taken as a whole, the tariff changes were reasonable, particularly because the last rate change was approximately four years ago.²

II. Cruise Tender Service Rates

On April 15, 2022, Conanicut filed a tariff for approval of rates for cruise ship tender service, the Certificate of Convenience and Public Necessity for which had been approved by the Division on that same date.³ Conanicut also requested the PUC find good cause to rule on the tariff with less than thirty (30) days' notice and without a hearing. Conanicut represented that the tender service which is not a lifeline service, was scheduled to commence on April 25, 2022.⁴

On April 19, 2022, the Division submitted a Memorandum from Ms. Smith in which she noted that Conanicut had complied with conditions set forth in the Division's April 15, 2022 Order, that the Division agreed the tender service was not a lifeline service, that the tariff rate would be paid by the ship and not its passengers and, therefore, the Division recommended approval without further investigation or hearing.⁵

III. PUC Decisions

At Open Meetings, the PUC considered the ferry tariff on April 11, 2022, and the ship tender service tariff on April 20, 2022, and found the proposed rates in each to be proper and reasonable. The PUC found that a comprehensive rate proceeding was not

² Div. Mem. (Apr. 7, 2022); <http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4389-Division%20Memo.pdf>.

³ Div. Order No. 24355 (Apr. 15, 2022).

⁴ Conanicut Tariff Filing (Apr. 15, 2022); <http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4389-Conanicut%20Marine%20Svs%20Tender%20Tariff%204-15-22.pdf>.

⁵ Div. Mem. (Apr. 19, 2022); [http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4389-Div%20Memo%20re%20Conanicut%20Marine%20Tender%20Service%20\(4-19-22\).pdf](http://www.ripuc.ri.gov/eventsactions/docket/4389-Div%20Memo%20re%20Conanicut%20Marine%20Tender%20Service%20(4-19-22).pdf).

required in either matter and therefore elected to exercise its option under R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-3-12, on the basis that good cause existed to waive further investigation, further notice, and public hearing based upon the fact that the services proposed by Conanicut Marine Services do not constitute lifeline ferry services to an isolated ratepayer population.

Accordingly, it is

(24416) ORDERED:

1. The March 23, 2022 tariff filing made by Conanicut Marine Services, Inc., seeking approval of its rates for ferry transportation between Newport and Jamestown commencing on May 21, 2022, is hereby approved.
2. The April 15, 2022 tariff filing made by Conanicut Marine Services, Inc., seeking approval of its ship tender service rate is hereby approved.

EFFECTIVE AT WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND PURSUANT TO OPEN MEETING DECISIONS ON APRIL 11, 2022 AND APRIL 20, 2022. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED ON JUNE 3, 2022.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Chairman



Abigail Anthony, Commissioner



John C. Revens, Jr., Commissioner

NOTICE OF RIGHT OF APPEAL: Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-5-1, any person aggrieved by a decision or order of the PUC may, within seven days from the date of the order, petition the Supreme Court for a Writ of Certiorari to review the legality and reasonableness of the decision or order.