## Schacht & McElroy

Michael R. McElroy Leah J. Donaldson

Members of the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Bars

Attorneys at Law

21 Dryden Lane Post Office Box 6721 Providence, RI 02940-6721 Michael@McElroyLawOffice.com Leah@McElroyLawOffice.com

> (401) 351-4100 fax (401) 421-5696

April 17, 2017

Luly Massaro Clerk Public Utilities Commission 89 Jefferson Boulevard Warwick, RI 02888

Re:

Providence Water Supply Board

Docket No. 4618

Dear Luly:

Enclosed for filing are an original and nine copies of Providence Water Supply Board's Objection to Bristol County Water Authority's Motion for Relief from Order.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

Very truly yours,

Michael R. McElroy

MRMc:tmg

cc: Service List

PWSB 2016 Rate Case Objection to BCWA Motion for Relief

### STATE OF RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

IN RE: PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD

DOCKET No. 4618

## PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD'S OBJECTION TO BRISTOL COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY'S MOTION FOR RELIEF FROM ORDER

### **INTRODUCTION**

Inaccurately claiming that this Commission issued an "Order at its February 10, 2017 Open Meeting . . ." (Motion, at 1), Intervenor Bristol County Water Authority ("BCWA") has filed a Motion for Relief from this non-existent Order. Providence Water Supply Board ("Providence Water") objects to this Motion and urges the Commission to reject it for the following reasons:

- 1. No Order was issued at the February 10, 2017 Open Meeting and accordingly, no Order exists from which BCWA can seek relief.
- 2. BCWA's Motion is simply a rehash of arguments BCWA previously presented to the Commission, which this Commission unanimously rejected.
- 3. Contrary to BCWA's allegations, the share of the costs allocated to wholesale customers in this docket is smaller than the wholesale allocations approved by this Commission in both Docket No. 3832 and Docket No. 4406.
- 4. This Commission's decision was correct when, as stated in the February 10, 2017 minutes:

The PUC unanimously agreed that cost allocation issues raised by the intervenors will be reviewed in Providence Water's next rate filing through a new cost of service study from scratch. **Vote 3-0**. (Emphasis in original).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For some unknown reason, BCWA waited for approximately two months after the Open Meeting and after the new rates went into effect to file this Motion.

### **ARGUMENT**

### I. BCWA cannot seek relief under Rule 1.28.

BCWA has filed a "Motion for Relief from Order" and has done so "pursuant to Rule 1.28" of the Commission's Rules. However, relief cannot be sought from an Order that does not exist. BCWA incorrectly claims on page 1 of its Motion that the Commission issued an "Order at its February 10, 2017 Open Meeting . . .", but no such Order exists. Rule 1.28(a) requires a written Order to exist in order to seek relief from that Order. Accordingly, the Motion should be denied for this reason alone.

If BCWA is arguing that an oral Open Meeting decision can constitute an "Order," this is contrary to Commission Rule 1.27 entitled "COMMISSION DECISIONS AND ORDERS." Under Rule 1.27(a):

Written Orders; Calculation of Time. The Commission will issue its orders in writing in every proceeding. The Commission may in its discretion make an oral decision at the bench or at an open meeting prior to the issuance of its written order. The timeliness of applications for rehearing and notices of appeal shall be calculated from the date the Commission issues its written order.

Therefore, the Commission Rules make it clear that all Commission Orders must be "in writing in every proceeding." An oral decision from the bench or at an Open Meeting does not constitute an Order.

However, even if an Order existed, Rule 1.28 would not allow relief to BCWA. Rule 1.28(a) applies only to "clerical mistakes" and BCWA has made no allegation of a clerical mistake.

Rule 1.28(b) applies to "mistake, inadvertence, excusable neglect, newly discovered evidence, fraud, other." BCWA has sought relief under Rule 1.28(b)(6), which allows for relief from an Order for "any other reason justifying relief" from the operation of the Order. (Motion, at 2).

This "any other reason justifying relief" language in Rule 1.28 is the same as the language in Superior Court Rule 60(b), which deals with "Relief from Judgment or Order." The Supreme Court ruled in *Santos v. Laikos*, 139 A.3d 394, 399 (RI 2016) that this "any other reason justifying relief" language is not a "catchall" and circumstances must be "extraordinary" to obtain relief:

Furthermore, we are satisfied that the hearing justice did not abuse his discretion in denying plaintiff's motion to vacate on the basis of "[a]ny other reason justifying relief" under Rule 60(b)(6). . . . Indeed, we have said that Rule 60(b)(6) is "not intended to constitute a 'catchall' and \* \* \* that 'circumstances must be extraordinary to justify relief." Allen ex rel. Allen v. South County Hospital, 945 A.2d 289, 297 (R.I. 2008) (quoting Bailey, 788 A.2d at 483).

As shown below, BCWA has set forth no reasons (extraordinary or otherwise) for relief that it did not previously argue to this Commission. This Commission unanimously rejected those arguments at its Open Meeting and there is no reason for the Commission to reconsider its previous decision.

# II. BCWA is improperly attempting to re-argue the allocation of the costs associated with the Central Operations Facility and is simply asking the Commission to change its mind.

BCWA is asking this Commission to change its mind regarding the allocation of the costs of the Central Operations Facility ("COF") to wholesale customers. It makes the same arguments in its Motion for Relief from Order as it previously made before this Commission at the hearings, and as it made in writing in BCWA's post-hearing "Statement of Position" filed with this Commission on February 6, 2017, prior to the Open Meeting.

With regard to the allocation of costs related to the COF, BCWA made the following written arguments in its February 6, 2017 "Statement of Position" that was filed with this Commission:

### 7. COF COST ALLOCATIONS

- In Docket 4571 the parties agreed that the costs for the COF should be allocated based on the specific functions performed at the facility considering factors such as square footage and number of employees for function such as administration, customer service, billing, metering, etc. Harold Smith's [sic] acknowledged this in his Surrebuttal testimony in this Docket (See H. Smith Rebuttal, pp. 4-5)
- Providence made absolutely no attempt to perform this allocation, yet it seeks to assign over 21% of the COF costs (\$724,104/year (with PILOT) and \$649,579/year (without PILOT)) to the wholesale customers. Since Providence does not plan on filing a full rate filing for approximately five years, the wholesale customers may end up paying over \$3.6 million, or 12% of the total costs, before a proper allocation is determined. There is simply no evidence in the record to support this allocation, and it runs contrary to accepted ratemaking principals [sic]. Thus, this allocation should be denied. (at 4-5).

This Commission unanimously rejected these arguments, and ruled that a new cost of service study must be performed for Providence Water's next rate filing.

No new arguments have been presented by BCWA in the Motion for Relief from Order. For example, on page 2 of its Motion, BCWA states the first reason it believes the Commission should grant relief: "No evidence exists in the Docket 4618 record to justify the allocation of COF costs to the wholesale customers." This is exactly the same argument made by BCWA at the hearings and in its previous written Statement of Position where it said: "There is simply no evidence in the record to support this allocation . . . ." (Statement, at 5).

Similarly, in its Motion, BCWA argues that "the BCWA, and other wholesale customers, will pay these unsupported COF costs for three to five years before Providence files another general rate filing." (Motion, at 2). This is the exact same argument made in the previous Statement of Position where BCWA argued: "Since Providence does not plan on filing a full rate filing for approximately five years, the wholesale customers may end up paying over \$3.6 million, or 12% of the total costs, before a proper allocation is determined." (Statement, at 5).

In its Motion for Relief from Order, BCWA also argued that "In fact, Providence made these allocations without *any* attempt to employ the functional use allocation methodology . . ." (Motion, at 5, emphasis in original). This is the identical argument made in BCWA's previous Statement of Position where it stated "Providence made absolutely no attempt to perform this allocation, yet it seeks to assign over 21% of the COF costs . . . to the wholesale customers." (Statement, at 5).

In short, BCWA's Motion for Relief from Order is simply a rehash of the same arguments previously made by BCWA on this issue. The Motion is an improper attempt to get a second bite at the apple. BCWA is asking the Commission to change its mind based on arguments which were previously presented to and rejected by the Commission. To grant this Motion would set a bad precedent. Parties would begin to endlessly seek to re-litigate issues that have been argued and decided by the Commission. It is not in the best interests of ratepayers to have to pay legal fees to re-litigate issues that have already been fully argued and decided, nor is it an efficient use of the Commission's limited time.

### III. BCWA's allegations as set forth in its Motion are incorrect.

BCWA argues that Providence Water changed the cost allocation to wholesalers "from 0 to 21.63%." (Motion, at 6). Moreover, BCWA has argued that the parties "agreed" upon a functional use methodology of allocation in Docket 4571. Both of these allegations are untrue.

BCWA is contending that <u>none</u> of the costs associated with the COF should be allocated to the wholesale class, claiming that was the "default" position established in Docket 4571. This is wrong. In Docket 4571, the only cost that was allocated solely to retail was the debt service on the loan to purchase the COF. The COF O&M costs presented in Providence Water's response to

RR-3 (attached to BCWA's Motion) were allocated to the wholesale customers, and this has been the case since at least Docket 3832. In fact, the share of these costs allocated to the wholesale class in Docket 4618 (21.50%) is **smaller** than the percentages that were previously allocated to the wholesale class in Docket 3832 (27.26%) and Docket 4406 (21.82%). (See attached Exhibit 1). This Commission can take administrative notice of Docket Nos. 3832 and 4406. See Rule 1.22(c).

As Mr. Smith testified, at the time the filing for Docket 4618 was prepared, Providence Water did not have the information necessary to implement a functional allocation methodology that was discussed (but, contrary to BCWA's assertion, was **never** agreed to) during Docket 4571.

The bottom line is that the wholesale customers receive benefits from the COF. It would be impossible to provide service to them without some kind of building to house the utility's administrative staff, engineering staff, a lab, and garage facilities. Therefore, the wholesale class must pay their fair share.

### **CONCLUSION**

Requiring a new cost allocation study to be filed in Providence Water's next rate case makes good sense. Therefore, for the reasons stated, and upon the authorities cited, we respectfully submit that BCWA's Motion for Relief from Order should be denied.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> If the Commission denies BCWA's Motion, BCWA will still have the right to file a petition for a statutory writ of certiorari with the Rhode Island Supreme Court to review the issue of the allocation of the COF costs to wholesale customers. Pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 39-5-1, such a petition can be filed within seven days of the issuance of the Commission's Report and Order.

Date: April 17, 2017

Respectfully submitted, PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD By its attorney

Michael R. McElroy, Esq. #2627

Leah J. Donaldson, Esq. 7711

Schacht & McElroy 21 Dryden Lane P.O. Box 6721

Providence, RI 02940-6721

Tel: (401) 351-4100 Fax: (401) 421-5696

Michael@McElroyLawOffice.com Leah@McElroyLawOffice.com

### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017, I sent a copy of the foregoing to the service list.

Theresa Gallo

PWSB/2016 Rate Case/Objection to BCWA Motion for Relief

EXHIBIT	
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Page	1
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# COMPLIANCE MODEL

HJS Exhibit 2 Update

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EXHIBIT PENGAD 800-631-6989 Page 3

HJS Exhibit 3 Update

# Allocation of Capital Costs Rate Year Ending December 31, 2008

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102" Valve
Alternative Source of Supply
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# SETTEMENT MODEL DOLKET 4406

Altocation of Operating and Maintenance and City Services Expense Rate Year Ending December 31, 2014

Allocation

Schedule JDM-11 Settlement 0&M Cost Allocation

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Maximum Day		1,241,091 \$ 40,795 \$ 193,247 \$ 11,666 \$ 13,103 \$	233 250 55 250 250	186,043 \$ 103,265 \$ \$ 3,414,236 \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$	37.861 \$ 37.861 \$ 384,655 \$ 408,056 \$ 2,880 \$
2,583 & Base 11,495 & S	்கை கைகை	5,041,534 \$ \$ 113,972 \$ 539,883 \$ 47,387 \$ 53,228 \$ 53,22			64.348 % 64.348 % 693.532 % 57.486 % 5.532 % 5.532 % 5.532 % 5.532 % 5.532 % 5.533 % 5
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Autotation Pactor D D D D D D D	₹≺≺ check	* < < < \ NN N > >	COM Z	1	Com Z / Y / Y / Y / Y / Y / Y / Y / Y / Y /
Material + Supplies Contractual Services - Legal Contractual Services - Other Transportation ExpCAO Insurance - Other Insurance - Other Insurance - Other Read Tobal Evence - CAO	67570 Misc. Expanses 67570 Misc. Expanses 7 Total Customer Accounts 60180 Salaries + Wages - Emp 60280 Payroll Clearing - Emp 60380 Salaries + wages - Officers, Dir.	Employee Pension + Ben Overhead Rate Applied Purchase Power Fuel for Power Purch Material + Supplies Contractual Services - Engineer Contractual Services - Actig	Contractual Services - Mgt. Fees Contractual Services - Mgt. Fees Contractual Services - Mgt. Fees Rental Buildg/Real Prop Rental Duildg/Real Prop Ins. Gen. Liability Insurance - W/C Insurance Other Advertising Expense Reg Com Exp - Amort of Rate Case	780 Regulatory Corn ExpOther 580 Miss. Expenses  Total Administration + General  Total Operation & Maintenance  Total Operation & Maintenance  Total Operation & Waintenance  65840 Insurance WIC - WTM 66870 Insurance WIC - CAO 62080 Materials + Supplies - A&GO 62081 Confined Services - I and 8 860	65580 Contract Services - Citer A&GO Injuries and Damages 65780 Ins. Gen. Libellity 65980 Insurance-Other A&GO 65880 Insurance-Other A&GO 65880 Insurance - W/C 67070 Bad Debt Expense-CAO 67580 Misc. Expense
62070 63370 63570 65070 65970 65970	67570 67570 Administrativ 60180 60280 60380	60480 60580 61580 61680 63180 63280 63380	63480 64180 64180 64280 65080 65080 65080 66080 66080	66780 Regulato 67880 Misc. Exi Total Ad Total Op 857 Insurance Fund 65840 Insurance 65970 Insurance 65080 Materials 63180 Contract 63180 Contract 63180 Contract	65780 65780 65880 65880 67070 67580

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Schedule JDM-12 Settlement Capital Cost Allocation

Capital Cost Allocation											
•				Allocatio	Allocation of Capital Costs	φ					
				Rate Year En	Rate Year Ending December 31, 2014	2014					
	Allocation	Mocation   Adjusted Test	Rate Year	Pro Forma	3	Maximum	Maximum		Billing & Fire	Fire	
	Factor	Year	Adiustments Rate Year	Rate Year	Base	Day	Hour	Meters	Collection	Protection	Wholesale
Capital Find	Q			\$ 2,450,000	986,797	458,169	233,348	146,776		81,351	543,559
Western Cranston Find (WCWDS Find) TD	E			\$ 62.069		19,335	13,590	•		•	•
Infradmenting Depletoned Lind	. 7			\$ 24,000,000	10.5	5.098.252	2,596,563	•	•	1	5,324,659
AMD Motor Devisionent Eind	2 0			\$ 1,000,000		•		1,000,000	•	•	•
For inment Replacement	2			\$ 600,000	241,665	112,205	57,146		•	19,923	- 19,923 133,116
			Section of the Contract of the	\$ 28,112,069 \$	12,	\$	5,687,961 \$ 2,900,647 \$ 1,182,722	\$ 1,182,722	€9	\$ 101,273	\$ 6,001,334

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# Docket No. 4618 - Providence Water Supply Board - General Rate Filing Service List updated 10/17/16

Parties	E-mail	Phone
Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB)	Michael@McElroyLawOffice.com;	401-351-4100
Michael McElroy, Esq.		
Schacht & McElroy	Leah@McElroyLawOffice.com;	
PO Box 6721	Ecan@McEnoyEawOffice.com,	
Providence, RI 02940-6721		
Rick Caruolo, General Mgr.	Rcaruolo@provwater.com;	401-521-6300
Providence Water Supply Board	Gregg@provwater.com;	
552 Academy Avenue	ThomasM@provwater.com;	
Providence, RI 02908	mdeignan-white@provwater.com;	
	NancyP@provwater.com;	
	PeterP@provwater.com;	
Harold Smith	Hsmith@raftelis.com;	704-373-1199
Raftelis Financial Consulting, PA		
1031 S. Caldwell Street, Suite 100		
Charlotte, NC 28203		
Division of Public Utilities (Division)	Lwold@riag.ri.gov;	401-222-2424
Leo Wold, Esq.	Jmunoz@riag.ri.gov;	
Dept. of Attorney General	Dmacrae@riag.ri.gov;	
150 South Main St.		
Providence, RI 02903		
John Spirito, Esq.	John.spirito@dpuc.ri.gov;	
Division of Public Utilities & Carriers	steve.scialabba@dpuc.ri.gov;	
	Al.mancini@dpuc.ri.gov;	
	john.bell@dpuc.ri.gov;	
Jerome Mierzwa	jmierzwa@exeterassociates.com;	
Exeter Associates, Inc.		
10480 Little Patuxent Pkwy, Suite 300		
Columbia, MD 21044		
Ralph Smith	rsmithla@aol.com;	734-522-3420
Larkin & Associates, PLLC	dawn.bisdorf@gmail.com;	
15728 Farmington Road Livonia, Michigan 48154	dawn.bisdon@gman.com,	
Livonia, Michigan 48134	tmlarkinassociates@gmail.com;	
City of Warwick	peter@rubroc.com;	401-737-8700
Peter Ruggiero, City Solicitor		
RUGGIERO BROCHU		
20 Centerville Road	maryann@rubroc.com;	
Warwick, RI 02886		
Bristol County Water Authority (BCWA)	jkeoughjr@keoughsweeney.com;	401-724-3600
Joseph A. Keough, Jr., Esq.		
Keough & Sweeney		
41 Mendon Ave.		
Pawtucket, RI 02861		
City of East Providence	tchapman@cityofeastprov.com;	401-435-7523

Timothy Chapman, Esq. East Providence City Solicitor 145 Taunton Avenue East Providence, RI 02914	jmarvel@cityofeastprov.com; scoutu@cityofeastprov.com;	
Kent County Water Authority Mary B. Shekarchi, Esq. 33 College hill Rd., Suite 15-E Warwick, RI 02886	marybali@aol.com;	401-828-5030
Timothy Brown, P.E. General Manager Chief Engineer Kent County Water Authority PO Box 192 West Warwick, RI 02893-0192	tbrown@kentcountywater.org;	401-821-9300
Christopher Woodcock Woodcock & Associates, Inc. 18 Increase Ward Drive Northborough, MA 01532	Woodcock@w-a.com;	508-393-3337
File original and nine (9) copies w/: Luly E. Massaro, Commission Clerk Public Utilities Commission 89 Jefferson Blvd. Warwick, RI 02888	Luly.massaro@puc.ri.gov;  Cynthia.wilsonfrias@puc.ri.gov; Linda.george@puc.ri.gov; Sharon.colbycamara@puc.ri.gov;	401-780-2107
Kathleen Crawley Water Resources Board	Kathleen.crawley@wrb.ri.gov;	401-222-6696