

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Public Utilities Commission

Minutes of Open Meeting Held on July 13, 2020

An Open Meeting of the Public Utilities Commission was held on Monday, July 13, 2020 at 2:00 P.M. in Hearing Room A, 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island to discuss, deliberate, and/or vote on the following docket.

In attendance: Chairman Ronald Gerwatowski, Cynthia Wilson-Frias, Alan Nault, Todd Bianco and Luly Massaro. Remotely: Commissioner Marion Gold and Commissioner Abigail Anthony.

Chairman Gerwatowski called the Open Meeting to order at 2:05 P.M. A quorum was present.

Docket No. 5022 – Suspension of Service Terminations and Certain Collections Activities During the COVID-19 Emergency – On March 16, 2020, the PUC voted to enter emergency orders to prohibit regulated electric, natural gas, water, and sewer utilities to cease termination of service for nonpayment, cease sending past due accounts to collection agencies, and to refrain from sending termination notices with shut-off dates prior to April 15, 2020 for all customers. On March 30, 2020, April 13, 2020, May 6, 2020, and May 28, 2020, the PUC extended the emergency orders, most recently through July 17, 2020, subject to further review. Absent a vote to continue the order or modify the May 28, 2020 order it will terminate at 12:01 a.m. on July 18, 2020. At this open meeting, the PUC discussed, reviewed and considered whether the emergency orders should be continued or modified. In making a determination, PUC considered whether the State of Rhode Island is still under a state of emergency; the current phase of economic reopening and the associated rules; whether businesses are open; and whether collections have significantly impaired or are likely to impair the ability of the utilities, particularly non-investor-owned utilities, to meet financial obligations, among any other relevant information made available to the PUC. After review and deliberation, the following motions were made:

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to find an emergency still exists for customers eligible for low income discount offering by a utility. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Chairman Gerwatowski moved to extend the moratorium on utility shutoff for customers qualifying for low income discount through November 1, 2020 (the start of the winter moratorium) and for all remaining customers of National Grid, the moratorium is extended through September 30, 2020. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

Commissioner Anthony moved that National Grid reinstate the 18- 24- and 36- month payment plans (as outlined in the Commission’s Order of March 16, 2020) until further order of the Commission. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

The moratorium on utility terminations for all other regulated utility service and National Grid's nonresidential service will expire on July 17, 2020. This decision does not affect the requirement that regulated utilities shall temporarily suspend late fees, interest charges, credit card fees, debit card fees, and ACH fees.

The Open Meeting adjourned at 2:27 P.M. A video of the Open Meeting discussion can be accessed at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/WqQyXw296dg>.