

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH**

DOCKET NO. W-1226, SUB 4

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of		
Application by Fairfield Water Company)	ORDER EXCUSING WITNESSES,
for Authority to Adjust and Increase)	ACCEPTING TESTIMONY,
Rates for Water Utility Service in Fairfield)	CANCELING EXPERT WITNESS
Water's Service Area in Henderson)	HEARING, AND REQUIRING FILING
County, North Carolina)	OF PROPOSED ORDER

BY THE HEARING EXAMINER: On January 16, 2024, Fairfield Water Company (Applicant or Fairfield Water), filed an application with the Commission seeking authority to increase its rates for providing water utility service in Fairfield Water's service area in Henderson County, North Carolina (Application). On March 12, 2024, the Applicant filed an amendment to page 1 of its Application. The Applicant provides water utility service to 12 customers (11 quadrplexes and one church) in the Fairfield Water service area in Henderson County, North Carolina.

On February 12, 2024, the Commission issued an Order Establishing General Rate Case and Suspending Rates, which declared this proceeding to be a general rate case and suspended the proposed new rates for up to 270 days pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § § 62-134 and 137, respectively.

On April 5, 2024, the Commission issued an Order Scheduling Hearings, Establishing Procedural and Filing Requirements, and Requiring Customer Notice (Scheduling Order). By the Scheduling Order, the Commission scheduled a public witness hearing on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, in Hendersonville, North Carolina, and an expert witness hearing on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, in Raleigh, North Carolina.

On May 15, 2024, Fairfield Water filed its certificate of service indicating that customer notice had been provided as required by the Scheduling Order.

On May 21, 2024, the public witness hearing was held as scheduled at the Henderson County Courthouse. On May 31, 2024, Fairfield Water filed a verified report addressing all customers' comments expressed during the public hearing held on May 21, 2024, pursuant to the Scheduling Order.

On May 31, 2024, Fairfield Water and the Public Staff (collectively, the Stipulating Parties) entered into and filed a Settlement Agreement and Stipulation (Stipulation), including Public Staff Accounting Settlement Exhibit 1, which sets forth the Public Staff's calculation of the annual revenue requirement agreed to by the Stipulating Parties.

Additionally, on May 31, 2024, the Public Staff filed the Joint Settlement Testimony of Kuei Fen Sun, Public Utility Regulatory Analyst with the Accounting Division, Shashi M. Bhatta, Public Utilities Engineer with the Water, Sewer, and Telephone Division, and Partrick A. Fahey, Public Utilities Regulatory Analyst with the Economic Research Division. Pursuant to the Stipulation, the Stipulating Parties agree that all prefiled testimony and exhibits of the Stipulating Parties may be received in evidence without objection, and each party waives all right to cross-examine any witness but reserves the right to examine witnesses as follow-up to any questions from the Commission.

In conjunction with the filing of the Stipulation, the Stipulating Parties filed a joint motion requesting that the Commission cancel the expert witness hearing scheduled for July 10, 2024, and allow the Stipulating Parties to file a joint proposed order to be submitted to the Commission by June 28, 2024.

Based upon the foregoing, the Hearing Examiner finds good cause to excuse the Applicant and all Public Staff witnesses from testifying at the expert witness hearing, to cancel the expert witness hearing scheduled for July 10, 2024, and receive into the record the Stipulation, the Joint Settlement Testimony, and the Application. Further, the Hearing Examiner requires that the Stipulating Parties file a joint proposed order in this proceeding and final exhibits and schedules that support the stipulated revenue requirements and rates on or before Friday, June 28, 2024.

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED as follows:

1. That the expert witness hearing previously scheduled for 10:00 a.m., on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, in Raleigh, North Carolina is hereby canceled;
2. That the Applicant and the expert witnesses in this matter are excused from testifying at the hearing on Wednesday, July 10, 2024;
3. That the Application, the Settlement Agreement and Stipulation, including Public Staff Settlement Exhibit 1, and the Public Staff's Joint Settlement Testimony are hereby admitted into evidence; and

4. That the Stipulating Parties shall work together and file with Commission a joint proposed order, a proposed customer notice, and final exhibits and schedules that support the stipulated revenue requirements and rates on or before Friday, June 28, 2024.

ISSUED BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION.

This the 14th day of June, 2024.

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Tamika D. Conyers".

Tamika D. Conyers, Deputy Clerk