

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION
MINUTES OF REGULAR COMMISSION STAFF CONFERENCE

January 30, 2023

The Regular Commission Staff Conference of the North Carolina Utilities Commission was held on Monday, January 30, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., with Chair Mitchell presiding.

The following were present:

COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Brown-Bland
Commissioner Clodfelter
Commissioner Duffley
Commissioner Hughes
Commissioner McKissick
Commissioner Kemerait

COMMISSION STAFF: Mr. Watson, Mr. Green, Ms. Fennell, Ms. Duffy, Ms. Jarvis, Mr. Mertz, Ms. Hicks, Ms. Harrod, Ms. Hilburn, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Barber, Ms. Jayasheela, Mr. Gajda, Mr. McCoy

PUBLIC STAFF: Ms. Edmondson, Ms. Holt, Ms. Jost, Mr. Creech, Ms. Coxton, Ms. Keyworth, Mr. McLawhorn, Mr. Lucas, Mr. T. Williamson, Mr. Nader, Mr. Michna, Ms. Patel, Mr. Junis, Ms. Bhatta, Ms. Proffitt

ATTORNEY GENERAL:

COURT REPORTER: Ms. Vines

ELECTRIC***CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY TO CONSTRUCT SOLAR FACILITIES*****Duke Energy Progress, LLC**

1. Docket No. SP-28189, Sub 0 – Application of Hobnob Solar, LLC for an amended certificate of public convenience and necessity to construct an 80-MW solar photovoltaic facility in Hoke County, North Carolina (*T. Williamson /Keyworth*)

On January 26, 2022, the Commission issued an order granting Hobnob Solar, LLC (Applicant) a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-110.1 for construction of a 72-MW_{AC} solar photovoltaic generating facility to be located south and east of Old Wire Road and near the intersection of Old Wire Road and St. Pauls Road/Highway 20, Dundarrach, Hoke County, North Carolina. The Commission previously accepted registration of the facility as a new renewable energy facility.

On August 29, 2022, the Applicant filed a letter stating that the capacity of the facility has been increased to 80-MW_{AC}. The letter also stated that the site plan of the facility had not changed.

The Public Staff stated that it had reviewed the amendment and determined it to be in compliance with the requirements of N.C.G.S. § 62-110.1(a) and Commission Rule R8-64.

The Public Staff recommended that the Commission issue the amended CPCN to the Applicant.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

Commissioner Kemerait did not participate in this decision.

2. Docket No. SP-47825, Sub 0 – Application of Ridgeline Solar, LLC for a certificate of public convenience and necessity to construct an 80-MW solar photovoltaic facility in Duplin County, North Carolina, and Registration Statement (*T. Williamson/Keyworth*)

On October 20, 2022, Ridgeline Solar, LLC (Applicant) filed an application seeking a certificate of public convenience and necessity pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-110.1(a) for construction of an 80-MW_{AC} solar photovoltaic generating facility to be located on the south side of Red Hill Road (State Road 1306), south of the intersection with Alum Springs Road and east of Herrings Marsh Run, Mount Olive, Duplin County, North Carolina.

Also on October 20, 2022, the Applicant filed a registration statement for a new renewable energy facility.

The Public Staff stated that it had reviewed the application and determined it to be in compliance with the requirements of N.C.G.S. § 62-110.1(a) and Commission Rule R8-64. The Public Staff further stated that the registration statement contains the certified attestations required by Commission Rule R8-66(b).

The Public Staff recommended approval of the certificate and registration for the facility.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

NATURAL GAS

ADJUSTMENT TO BENCHMARK COST OF NATURAL GAS

Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc.

3. Docket No. G-5, Sub 657 – Application of Public Service Company of North Carolina for authority to adjust rates and charges to track changes in wholesale costs of gas (*Nader/Holt*)

On January 18, 2023, Public Service Company of North Carolina, Inc. (PSNC or Company) filed an application, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-133.4, and Commission Rule R1-17(k)(3) and (5)(d), requesting authority to decrease its sales rates by \$2.7768 per dekatherm (dt) and its transportation rates by \$0.0268 per dt effective February 1, 2023. The decrease is a result of a change in PSNC's Benchmark Commodity Gas Cost from \$7.00 per dt to \$4.25 per dt, as well as the change in the company use and unaccounted for gas as described in PSNC's Rider D.

The Public Staff stated that it had reviewed the proposed rate changes.

The Public Staff recommended approval as filed.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc.

4. Docket No. G-9, Sub 822 – Petition of Piedmont Natural Gas for authority to adjust rates and charges to track changes in wholesale costs of gas (*Michna/Jost*)

On January 17, 2023, Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. (Piedmont or Company) filed a petition, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 62-133.4, Commission Rule R1-17(k)(3), and Appendix A of Piedmont's North Carolina Service Regulations, seeking authority to decrease its Benchmark Cost of Gas from the current rate of \$7.00 per dekatherm (dt) to a rate of \$4.00 per dt.

The Public Staff stated that it had reviewed the proposed rate changes.

The Public Staff recommended approval as filed.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

COMMUNICATIONS

INTERCONNECTION AMENDMENTS

BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC, d/b/a AT&T North Carolina (AT&T)

5. Docket No. P-55, Sub 1749 – Amendment to the interconnection agreement with Fusion Cloud Services, LLC (Proffitt/Coxton)

On December 6, 2022, BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC, d/b/a AT&T North Carolina, and Fusion Cloud Services, LLC (collectively, the Parties), filed, for Commission approval, an amendment to their existing interconnection agreement approved on August 8, 2008. The original interconnection agreement was executed when Fusion Cloud Services, LLC was operating as Birch Telecom of the South, Inc.

The Public Staff recommended that the amendment be approved.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

6. Docket No. P-55, Sub 1722 – Amendment to the interconnection agreement with Peerless Network, LLC (Proffitt/Coxton)

On December 6, 2022, BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC, d/b/a AT&T North Carolina, and Peerless Network of North Carolina, LLC, filed, for Commission approval, two amendments to their existing interconnection agreement, approved on July 30, 2009.

The Public Staff recommended that the amendments be approved.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

7. Docket No. P-55, Sub 1922 – Amendment to the interconnection agreement with GC Pivotal, LLC (d/b/a Global Capacity) (Proffitt/Coxton)

On December 21, 2022, BellSouth Telecommunications, LLC, d/b/a AT&T North Carolina, and GC Pivotal, LLC d/b/a Global Capacity (collectively, the Parties) filed, for Commission approval, an amendment to their existing interconnection agreement in Docket No. P-55, Sub 1922, approved on November 18, 2020.

The Public Staff recommended that the amendment be approved.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

WATER AND WASTEWATER*ORDER RECOGNIZING CONTIGUOUS EXTENSION AND APPROVING OF RATES***Old North State Water Company, Inc.**

8. Docket No. W-1300, Sub 70 – Notification of intention to begin operations in an area contiguous to a present service area to provide water utility service for Cadence subdivision, Phases 1 and 2, in Guilford County (*Bhatta/Meda/Coxton*)

On August 4, 2022, Old North State Water Company, Inc. (ONSWC) filed a Notification of Intention to Begin Operations in Area Contiguous to Present Service Area (Notification) to provide water utility service in Phases 1 and 2 of Cadence subdivision in Guilford County, North Carolina. Phases 1 and 2 of Cadence subdivision is contiguous to ONSWC's Ashcroft Park service area. ONSWC proposes to charge the same rates approved under Docket No. W-1300, Sub 60.

The Public Staff recommended that the Commission issue an order recognizing the contiguous extension and approving the requested rates.

David Drooz, Counsel for Old North State Water Company, responded to questions from the Commission.

It was moved and passed that the Public Staff's recommendation be adopted.

The Minutes of the Regular Commission Staff Conference of January 9, 2023, were approved.

NATURAL GAS BRIEFING*BRIEFING BY PIEDMONT NATURAL GAS ON WINTER STORM ELLIOTT*

Brian Heslin, Deputy General Counsel of Piedmont Natural Gas; Jim Jeffries, Partner, McGuireWoods, LLP; Brian Franklin, Partner, McGuireWoods, LLP; Sasha Weintraub, Senior Vice President & President; Biran Weisker, Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, and Adam Long, Vice President, Gas Pipeline Operations; Natural Gas Business, Piedmont Natural Gas appeared before the Commission.

BRIEFING BY PSNC D/B/A DOMINION ENERGY ON WINTER STORM ELLIOTT

Mary Lynne Grigg, Partner, McGuireWoods, LLC; Rusty Harris, President; Andrew Moore, Director of Engineering, Construction, and Transmission Operations; and Darrin Kahl, Manager of Supply and Asset Management; Dominion Energy North Carolina appeared before the Commission.

Minutes prepared by Le Anne Ackerman.