

1 PLACE: Dobbs Building, Raleigh, North Carolina

2 DATE: Thursday, July 20, 2023

3 DOCKET NO.: W-354, Sub 412

4 TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 7:35 p.m.

5 BEFORE: Chair Charlotte A. Mitchell, Presiding

6 Commissioner Daniel G. Clodfelter

7 Commissioner Kimberly W. Duffley

8 Commissioner Jeffrey A. Hughes

9 Commissioner Floyd B. McKissick, Jr.

10 Commissioner Karen M. Kemerait

11

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13 IN THE MATTER OF:

14 Application for Approval of Business Combination

15 between Carolina Water Service, Inc. of North

16 Carolina/Corix Infrastructure (US) Inc., and

17 SW Merger Acquisition Corp.

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2 FOR CAROLINA WATER SERVICE, INC. OF NORTH CAROLINA:

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7

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13

14 FOR THE USING AND CONSUMING PUBLIC:

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NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

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E X H I B I T S:

IDENTIFIED/ADMITTED

(No exhibits were presented)

P R O C E E D I N G S:

CHAIR MITCHELL: Good evening. Let's come to order and go on the record, please. I'm Charlotte Mitchell, Chair of the North Carolina Utilities Commission, and with me this evening by remote connection are Commissioners Daniel G. Clodfelter, Kimberly W. Duffley, and Karen M. Kemerait.

I now call for hearing Docket No. W-354, Sub 412, In the Matter of Application for Approval of Business Combination between Carolina Water Service, Incorporated of North Carolina/Corix Infrastructure (US) Incorporated, and SW Merger Acquisition Corp.

Before we proceed any further and as required by the State Government Ethics Act, I remind Members of the Commission of our duty to avoid conflicts of interest and inquire, at this time, as to whether any member of the Commission has a known conflict with respect to matters coming before us in this docket.

(No response)

CHAIR MITCHELL: The record will reflect no conflicts have been identified, so we will proceed.

On November 23rd, 2022, Carolina Water Service, Incorporated of North Carolina, to which I

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 will refer to as CWSNC, Corix Infrastructure (US)
2 Incorporated or Corix, and SW Merger Acquisition
3 Corp., collectively the Applicants, filed with the
4 Commission an Application for the approval of a
5 Business Combination. Filed with the Application were
6 the direct testimonies of Donald H. Denton, Ellen
7 Lapson, Dante DeStefano, and Brian Bahr.

8 SWMAC and Corix request the Commission to
9 authorize a merger between the two entities. The
10 Application provides the proposed merger between SWMAC
11 and Corix does not involve a change in the direct
12 control of CWSNC and does not involve a transfer of
13 CWSNC's stock. The combination will have no impact on
14 the Commission's continuing regulation of CWSNC as a
15 regulated water and wastewater utility in North
16 Carolina. Assuming the combination is approved, CWSNC
17 would remain subject to the jurisdiction of the
18 Commission pursuant to the North Carolina Public
19 Utilities Act and the Commission's Rules and
20 Regulations.

21 The rates currently charged by CWSNC were
22 approved in Docket Number W-354, Sub 384 on April 4th,
23 2022. No rate changes are proposed in this docket.

24 On April 12th, 2023, the Public Staff filed

1 with the Commission a recommendation that the matter
2 be scheduled for both a public witness hearing and an
3 expert witness hearing.

4 On April 25th, 2023, the Commission issued
5 and Order Scheduling Hearings, Establishing Discovery
6 Guidelines, and Requiring Customer Notice. The Order
7 scheduled the public witness hearing to be held
8 remotely by way of Webex on this date, as well as an
9 expert witness hearing to begin on August 2nd, 2023 in
10 Raleigh. The Order established procedure for
11 individuals to register to participate in the public
12 hearing.

13 That brings us to tonight. The purpose of
14 tonight's hearing is to hear from CWSNC's customers
15 regarding their concerns with the pending application.
16 Each public witness that has registered in advance, in
17 accordance with the instructions in the Commission's
18 Order, will be given the opportunity to testify under
19 oath should he or she wish to do so.

20 The intervention and participation of the
21 Public Staff in this proceeding is recognized pursuant
22 to North Carolina General Statute § 62-15(d) and
23 Commission Rule R1-19(e) .

24 The Public Staff, which represents CWSNC's

1 customers, will assist you-all with your testimony
2 tonight. In addition, the Public Staff has conducted
3 an independent investigation of the Application, and
4 on June 30th, 2023, filed the joint direct testimony
5 of Lynn Feasel, June Chiu, Lindsay Darden, and John
6 Hinton which sets forth the Public Staff's
7 recommendations for Commission action on the
8 Application.

9 The Applicants filed rebuttal testimony in
10 this docket on July 14th.

11 You may view this testimony on our website
12 which is ncuc.net by navigating to the docket and
13 accessing the documents filed in that docket.

14 In order to facilitate a full and fair
15 opportunity for all speakers to participate tonight,
16 we'll use the following procedures:

17 In conducting this hearing, the Commission
18 functions in a judicial capacity, as we are required
19 to do under North Carolina Law. We largely follow the
20 North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure and Rules of
21 Evidence. Because the Commission functions as a
22 Court, we cannot respond to questions from customers
23 tonight; rather, we're here to receive evidence from
24 you in the form of your testimony. In addition, for

1 these reasons, if you choose to testify, you'll be
2 asked to affirm to the truthfulness of your testimony
3 before you give it.

4 Public witnesses will appear by audio
5 connection only. Commissioners and attorneys will be
6 appearing by video and audio connection. Any public
7 witness that wishes to view live video of the
8 proceeding may access it on your computer by way of
9 YouTube which is linked from the Commission's home
10 page. However, if you do this, please be sure to mute
11 your computer when you're called on to testify to
12 avoid feedback and interference with our court
13 reporter's ability to transcribe this proceeding.

14 In order to allow each person an equal
15 amount of time to participate, there will a limit of
16 three minutes per person to provide testimony.

17 Public witnesses will be called on to
18 testify in the order that they have called in. When
19 it is your turn to speak, the Webex administrator will
20 send you a request to unmute your line. You'll hear
21 the following message: "You are being asked to unmute
22 yourself. To unmute, press *6." It's important that
23 you listen for this message, and once you unmute
24 yourself, please state your name to signify that

1 you've unmuted. At that time, we will begin the
2 process of your provision of testimony. I'll ask you
3 to provide an affirmation as to the truthfulness of
4 your testimony, and once you've done that, you may
5 begin. The attorneys for the Public Staff will ask
6 you a series of questions prior to your testimony as
7 well. To ensure that the hearing tonight runs
8 efficiently, please pay close attention to the course
9 of the hearing, and be ready to respond as soon as you
10 hear the message requesting that you unmute.

11 Counsel for any party may ask questions of
12 the witnesses testifying tonight. In addition, the
13 Commission will have the opportunity to ask questions.
14 This means that if you do choose to provide testimony,
15 you may be asked questions by attorneys or by the
16 Commissioners. However, just as a reminder, the
17 Commissioners and the attorneys for the parties
18 tonight may not respond to your questions, but rather,
19 we're here to listen to you.

20 Okay. With that, we'll go ahead and get
21 started, and I will call upon counsel for the
22 Applicant to announce their appearances for the
23 record. All right. Who wants to go first?

24 MS. SANFORD: Thank you, Chair Mitchell.

1 This is Jo Anne Sanford representing Carolina Water
2 Service, Inc. of North Carolina. With me on the line
3 is Mary Lynne Grigg of McGuireWoods, representing
4 Southwest Water Company. We also have Dante DeStefano
5 from Carolina Water Service who is on the line from
6 the Applicant. We have a number of employees of both
7 Carolina Water and Southwest who are watching this
8 proceeding on the line tonight. Included in those
9 ranks are a number of our field personnel who would
10 like to be available to assist any of the speakers
11 tonight after the hearing. It would be not tonight
12 but at a later date, if there are specific problems
13 with customer concerns. Thank you.

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Ms. Sanford, and
15 good evening to you, and Ms. Grigg, and Mr. DeStefano.
16 All right. Public Staff.

17 MS. CULPEPPER: Good evening. Elizabeth
18 Culpepper with the Public Staff, appearing on behalf
19 of the Using and Consuming Public. Also appearing
20 with me is James Bernier, Jr., and present is Lindsay
21 Darden, an Engineer in our Public Staff's Water,
22 Sewer, and Telephone Division.

23 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good evening,
24 Ms. Culpepper, Mr. Bernier, and Ms. Darden. Any

1 preliminary matters from counsel before we hear from
2 our first witness?

3 MS. CULPEPPER: No, ma'am.

4 MS. SANFORD: No, ma'am.

5 MS. GRIGG: No, ma'am.

6 CHAIR MITCHELL: With that, Mr. Warren,
7 would you please unmute our first witness.

8 MR. ROY: This is Vincent Roy. Hello?

9 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Roy, is this Vincent
10 Roy?

11 MR. ROY: Yes, ma'am.

12 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good evening.

13 VINCENT P. ROY;
14 having been duly affirmed,
15 testified as follows:

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Ms. Culpepper, you may
17 proceed.

18 MS. CULPEPPER: Mr. Roy, please state your
19 full name.

20 THE WITNESS: Vincent P. Roy.

21 MS. CULPEPPER: And your address?

22 THE WITNESS: 237 Lakeview Drive in Carolina
23 Trace, which is the community of about 700 houses and
24 4,000 people, and I've been representing them in this

1 capacity as the utilities representative for 16 years.

2 MS. CULPEPPER: What service do you have
3 from Carolina Water?

4 THE WITNESS: We have --

5 MS. CULPEPPER: Sorry.

6 THE WITNESS: We receive our water which is
7 a product from Sanford that is a pass-through for
8 Carolina Water Service, and also we have two water
9 treatment plants here on the property for sewage.

10 MS. CULPEPPER: Please proceed with your
11 statement.

12 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

13 At this time, my previous -- of the 16 years
14 that I've been doing this work for the residents here,
15 I would like to say that right at the beginning, that
16 we have a very good success and operation with the
17 local Carolina Water Service people, especially when
18 we have an emergency, our waterline breaks, you name
19 it, and so we have no argument with them, per se.
20 But, I did want -- and we want a documentation. I did
21 want to make a few comments. For example, there's a
22 recommendation in the documentation that the Corix and
23 the Newco will meet once -- perhaps meet once a year
24 with the Public Staff.

1 Knowing that the Public Staff are our
2 advocates, as consumers, they will be meeting with the
3 Public Staff much more than once a year, but to
4 discuss what the Public Staff is finding, I would
5 think that they should get together more than once a
6 year. Secondly, the Carolina Water Service daily
7 operation versus Corix and Newco, and their
8 relationship with the financial sponsors, it appears
9 to me that there is -- looking at some of the charts
10 in the book, when you look at the financial sponsors
11 leading down to Corix and Newco, and showing their
12 percentages of financial input, I presume that's the
13 percentages that are referred to, that there's too
14 much of an opportunity in my estimation for the
15 sponsorship with their financial power to get too much
16 authority in running the operation, which ultimately
17 comes out in the Carolina Water Service supporting the
18 residents of the community.

19 The reflection that I relate to is the
20 recent notification of the USD Program, the
21 environment, social, and government that we're seeing
22 that's being done by Vanguard, BlackRock, and even
23 state where they are putting people in boards of
24 direction to make sure that those boards of directors

1 are doing things that are more beneficial to USD, and
2 I would not like to see the financial sponsors with
3 their financial power and extenuating themselves on
4 the board of directors for Corix or Newco.

5 Finally, I pray that the operation of the
6 staff at the Crestwood level is not changed with all
7 the changes that I see in the black and white
8 documents I've been reading. As I said earlier, the
9 customer and the work staff relationships are healthy
10 from the point of view of getting work done with the
11 residents pitching in to help during off-duty hour
12 breaks. For example, the work staff here at Carolina
13 Trace works five days a week, from 8:00 to 5:00, and
14 the breaks that occur at night or on weekends are
15 going through the -- the headquarters are handled
16 typically by a staff of down to the pioneer stadium,
17 but at the same time, we have the residents actively
18 participating in traffic control and helping with any
19 tools or equipment that may be needed on the spot.

20 As I look at the current operational profile
21 for Carolina Water Service on a three-year plan, the
22 Commissioners have not been able to come to grips with
23 that plan, and their hearings subsequently -- the
24 practical 10.7 percent is being met in a very strange

1 manner, and I won't go into detail on that. But in
2 these times, as I digressed a little, in these times
3 of high inflation that works for everything in this
4 country, it's come to have a complicating input
5 regarding trying to plan ahead on improvements versus
6 repair, which has raised the Public Staff
7 notification, because it seems to be some misdirection
8 on the Carolina Water Service when they can -- incur
9 those payments and improvements, which is fundable and
10 repairs are not.

11 Overall, I've taken more than my three
12 minutes but I do want to say that as I look at the
13 closing arguments in the document I have dated 14
14 July, it appears that money and power have a potential
15 to prevail. Having been in the Air Force for 26 years
16 as a colonel and seeing the power that can be emitted
17 from above, and also in private industry with a
18 billion dollar operation out of Washington, D.C., and
19 working all international work in Egypt and Saudi
20 Arabia, especially money prevails when I'm in foreign
21 countries, recognizing their disdain for the rules and
22 regulations. So the main thing I would remind
23 everybody is that we still have Chapter 62 which is
24 our set of rules and regulations, and I think every

1 effort from the financial sponsors to do any changes
2 must be considering -- must be considered by as -- by
3 looking out for any possible impact that Chapter 62
4 may have on that. And that's all I wish to provide at
5 the present time.

6 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right. Thank you, Mr.
7 Roy, for your comments tonight. Let me see if there
8 are any questions for you from counsel for the
9 Applicants?

10 (Pause)

11 I'm not hearing any questions.

12 MS. SANFORD: No questions.

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Questions from Public
14 Staff?

15 MS. CULPEPPER: No questions.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Questions from
17 Commissioners for the witness?

18 (No response)

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Roy, thank you again
20 for coming tonight and for sharing your thoughts with
21 us. We appreciate it and you may step down, sir.

22 Mr. Warren, let's call the next witness.

23 MR. YANDUKIN: Hello?

24 CHAIR MITCHELL: Please identify yourself.

1 MR. YANDUKIN: Hi. I'm Alex Yandukin. My
2 address is 5413 Swordsman Court --

3 CHAIR MITCHELL: Hold on one minute,
4 Mr. Yandukin. Let me administer the oath and then
5 we'll go from there.

6 ALEX YANDUKIN;
7 having been duly affirmed,
8 testified as follows:

9 CHAIR MITCHELL: Ms. Culpepper, would you
10 please walk the witness through the identification
11 process.

12 MS. CULPEPPER: Please state full name.

13 THE WITNESS: Alex Yandukin.

14 MS. CULPEPPER: And your address?

15 THE WITNESS: 5413 Swordsman Court,
16 Knightdale.

17 MS. CULPEPPER: Are you a customer of CWSNC?

18 THE WITNESS: Yes.

19 MS. CULPEPPER: What service do you receive?

20 THE WITNESS: Water and sewer.

21 MS. CULPEPPER: And what is your subdivision
22 or service area?

23 THE WITNESS: Huntington Cross, Knightdale
24 area.

1 MS. CULPEPPER: Thank you. Please proceed
2 with your statement.

3 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

4 Okay. Actually, I misread the docket here,
5 so no rate changes were proposed for this docket.
6 Actually, my main concern here is that the rates will
7 go up. That was actually my main concern for this
8 hearing. But regarding the merger, I don't actually
9 have much information about it. Apologies for that.

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right, Mr. Yandukin, do
11 you have anything else you'd like to say about your
12 experience with CWS and concerns that you might have
13 regarding this merger? I understand that you're
14 concerned about the potential for rate increases.

15 THE WITNESS: Yes.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Anything else you want us
17 to know?

18 THE WITNESS: No. It's just that this is my
19 main concern, because the rates -- I've only been
20 living at this address for two years and the prices
21 have went up twice. And, yeah, now my bill's like
22 more than electric bill, and that's ridiculous,
23 because before I moved here from Raleigh, just 10
24 miles away, and my water bill was just \$45 a month,

1 and now it's \$140. And my friends across the road,
2 across Campbell Road, they have a different water
3 service and they get to pay \$60 a month for water,
4 while watering the lawn, you know. And here, I can't
5 even afford to water my lawn.

6 Nobody in my neighborhood actually waters
7 their lawn. They just let it dry out in the winter
8 because it's just unaffordable. There's \$90 just to
9 have the service, just \$90 a month just to have the
10 service, and then it's -- after that, your bill ends
11 up being \$142 or more. When I was watering my lawn,
12 it was \$200 a month. It's just unreasonably. And
13 besides the unreasonable prices, their competence and
14 just processing everything is not -- it's just very
15 incompetent. Like, we got a letter about radioactive
16 material found in our water supply. I mean, that's
17 terrible. It like why, how? I've never heard of
18 that, and now, I actually get letters about
19 radioactivity in our water.

20 Then we got several letters asking us to
21 verify what kind of plumbing material is going to our
22 house. I mean, the tool verified doesn't have -- it's
23 not -- what is it? Lead, some lead piping. It's like
24 it's your job. Like after meter and towards my house,

1 it's my job to verify plumbing, but from meter and
2 onward, it's your job. It's like why are you asking
3 us to do this? I refuse to do this. And their auto
4 pay also just doesn't work. I always try just to get
5 it to work. And when I enter my bank information, it
6 still shows up as Washington Mutual instead of Chase.
7 Chase bought Washington Mutual in 2008, like 15 years
8 ago, and nowhere else in my auto pays or anywhere else
9 I dealt with, that my bank shows up as Washington
10 Mutual. That's because they should have updated their
11 system since 2008, because the bank went away, cease
12 to exist. And it's just like dealing with
13 incompetency, extremely high prices, and just under
14 constant threat of the money, the costs going up and
15 up.

16 Well, I'm truly, truly surrounded everywhere
17 else who doesn't have Carolina Water Service, pays
18 just \$60 a month or less while watering their lawn and
19 using up water freely. And, yeah, this is my main
20 concern. And HOA has been actually looking into
21 connecting to the Knightdale heated (sic) plumbing,
22 but it takes -- it's very expensive. I've been
23 looking into installing wall and septic tank. It's
24 also way too expensive. I'm just really just going to

1 sell my house and just go someplace that's not being
2 serviced by Carolina Water Service, to get out of
3 this, because it's really going to get worse. Like,
4 it's more expensive than my electric bill, and it just
5 keeps on going worse and worse. That's just my
6 concern, but any mergers or rate increases.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Yandukin, thank you for
8 your testimony. Let me see if there are questions for
9 you from counsel for the Applicant?

10 MS. SANFORD: We have no questions. Thank
11 you.

12 MS. GRIGG: No questions. Thanks.

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Public Staff?

14 MS. CULPEPPER: No questions.

15 CHAIR MITCHELL: Any Commissioners have
16 questions for the witness? Mr. Yandukin --

17 COMMISSIONER MCKISSICK: Madam Chair, I do
18 have a question.

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: Go ahead, Commissioner
20 McKissick.

21 EXAMINATION BY COMMISSIONER MCKISSICK:

22 Q Sir, have you contacted Carolina Water Service
23 about any of your concerns previously?

24 A Concerns? Well, just regarding the auto pay,

1 sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, yeah.
2 I've been slow about this. I haven't contacted
3 them. About the other, like, for radioactive and
4 plumbing, no. I'm just shocked about it but no,
5 I haven't made any concerns about it. Regarding
6 the pricing, yes. Everybody knows about it,
7 nothing can be done about this. So, yeah, the
8 pricing, it cannot be done, anything about it,
9 but yeah, I should probably contact them about
10 the auto pay system being broken. That's on me.

11 Q Okay. And one quick follow-up. I mean, the
12 bills that you are experiencing at this time, I
13 mean, are your neighbors experiencing similar or
14 comparable --

15 A Yes.

16 Q -- type of bills to your knowledge?

17 A Yes. So it's up to \$200 from what I hear.

18 Q So you don't believe there's anything unique
19 about a problem you may be having with your meter
20 or anything like that or a leak or anything like
21 that?

22 A No, nothing on my side.

23 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you, sir.

24 THE WITNESS: You're welcome.

1 CHAIR MITCHELL: Any other questions for the
2 witness?

3 (No response)

4 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right, Mr. Yandukin,
5 you may step down. Thank you again coming tonight and
6 sharing testimony with us.

7 Mr. Warren, would you please call the next
8 witness.

9 MR. DOUGHERTY: Hello?

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: Would you please identify
11 yourself.

12 MR. DOUGHERTY: Yes, ma'am. My name is
13 Patrick J. Dougherty. I'm a resident --

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Dougherty, before you
15 go any further.

16 PATRICK J. DOUGHERTY;
17 having been duly affirmed,
18 testified as follows:

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: Ms. Culpepper, you may lead
20 the witness through.

21 MS. CULPEPPER: Mr. Dougherty, please state
22 your address.

23 THE WITNESS: 92 Warbler Way, W-a-r-b-l-e-r,
24 Way, and that's in Hampstead, North Carolina 28443.

1 MS. CULPEPPER: Are you a customer of
2 Carolina Water?

3 THE WITNESS: Yes. I have been for the last
4 30 months.

5 MS. CULPEPPER: What service or services do
6 you have?

7 THE WITNESS: We have the water and
8 wastewater. We also have irrigation which I --
9 because of the cost, I've eliminated that meter.

10 THE WITNESS: And what is your subdivision
11 or service area?

12 THE WITNESS: So the subdivision is Songbird
13 Landing and it's in Pender County.

14 MS. CULPEPPER: Please proceed with your
15 statement.

16 DIRECT STATEMENT BY THE WITNESS:

17 So I had some issues with my irrigation, my
18 irrigation meter. I was being charged for it and I
19 wasn't using anything, and so I had to go through
20 about six or seven phone calls with Carolina Water
21 until we finally got -- at least made some headway.
22 At any rate, in the process of this, I pulled invoices
23 from Carolina Water Services dating from December of
24 2020 through June of 2023. And as the witness

1 testified before me, we have seen the price per 1,000
2 gallons of usage in January of -- well, in December of
3 2020, go from \$8.27 to \$13.02 per 1,000 gallons, so
4 that represents a 57 percent increase. And the other
5 part of this equation is the sewer bill. The sewer
6 bill went from \$4.59 per 1,000 gallons to \$14.94, so
7 the sewer bill went up 325 percent since I'm here, and
8 I'm only here 30 months, brand new home.

9 I had all my plumbing checked by Odyssey and
10 they verified that everything is water tight. It's my
11 wife and I. And just like the previous testimony, my
12 water bill is higher than my electric bill, and it
13 just keeps going up. This year, for example, in
14 January, our rate went up -- in January, and again in
15 May, our rates have gone up a total of 32 percent
16 just this year, and -- oh, by the way, the water that
17 is coming into us, I need to have a whole house water
18 filter, a water softener, and when I change the
19 filter, I see a brown water in that filter that my
20 filter, thank God, is trapping, but we're just not
21 getting quality water and the rates just continue to
22 skyrocket. And I'm here with one of my neighbors.
23 He's been here the same amount of time. We've looked
24 at other -- just like the previous testimony, we've

1 looked at other water companies and they are offering
2 water at a much, much significantly lower rate. So
3 we're concerned that the quality's going down, the
4 price is just skyrocketing, and we just don't know
5 where it's going to end.

6 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Dougherty, is that the
7 extent of your testimony, sir?

8 THE WITNESS: Yes, it is.

9 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Before I check in
10 with counsel for the parties to see if there are any
11 questions for you, can you tell me what your average
12 water bill is?

13 THE WITNESS: So in -- last -- the one that
14 knocked me off my chair was \$207, and that was in the
15 month of May, and my -- it's just my wife and I. So
16 my electric bill is around \$130. That's a pretty
17 dramatic difference.

18 EXAMINATION BY CHAIR MITCHELL:

19 Q Do you irrigate a lawn or fill a swimming pool or
20 any --

21 A No.

22 Q -- from ancillary use?

23 A No.

24 Q Okay.

1 A No. As a matter of fact, we had a domestic water
2 meter and an irrigation water meter. We had to
3 remove that irrigation water meter because we
4 couldn't afford to run it anyway. And I was
5 paying \$27.30 a month just to have it in the
6 ground, so I had them take out.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, sir. Let me see
8 if there are questions for you from counsel for the
9 parties.

10 MS. SANFORD: This is Jo Anne Sanford and I
11 do have one question.

12 EXAMINATION BY MS. SANFORD:

13 Q Have you asked Carolina Water to check your
14 meter?

15 A I have been on the phone with Carolina Water at
16 least eight times in the last two months, and I
17 had Odyssey Plumbing come out to check and make
18 sure everything was water tight. And, finally,
19 when the gentleman from Carolina did come out
20 when I said look, I just -- I can't even think
21 about irrigating, take that meter out because I
22 don't want to pay \$27.30. When he pulled that
23 meter, he said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Dougherty.
24 You've been billed for the last three years for

1 the wrong meter. It's your neighbor's meter."

2 They were reversed. And he said, "This isn't the
3 first time this has happened in this
4 neighborhood." He said, "This is about the third
5 time that I've discovered irrigation meters being
6 reversed."

7 Q Mr. Dougherty, we will look into this after the
8 hearing tonight, and we'll respond to you --

9 A I appreciate it.

10 Q -- and to the Commission.

11 A Thank you.

12 MS. SANFORD: Thank you. No more questions.

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Ms. Sanford.

14 Any other questions for the witness from counsel?

15 MS. CULPEPPER: No questions.

16 MS. GRIGG: No, ma'am.

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioners, any
18 questions?

19 (No response)

20 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Mr. Dougherty, you
21 may -- thank you for your testimony tonight. Thank
22 you for being with us and you may step down.

23 Mr. Warren, it looks like there are no
24 additional callers but would you please confirm that

1 for me.

2 MR. WARREN: Yes, there are no more callers.

3 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you. With that,
4 we've come to the end of our hearing tonight. Thank
5 you, again, to those customers who participated
6 tonight and thank you to counsel for being here with
7 us, and members of Carolina Water staff as well as
8 Public Staff. We appreciate your being here with us,
9 and with that, we will be adjourned. Thank you very
10 much, everybody.

11 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Madam Chair, if you
12 could, just let the record reflect that Commissioner
13 Brown-Bland has been trying to get on Webex since the
14 call began and she was never able to make a link. I
15 know she's trying still right now.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. All right.

17 COMMISSIONER McKISSICK: Thank you.

18 CHAIR MITCHELL: The record will so reflect.
19 With that, we will adjourn. Thank you very much.
20 Let's go off the record.

21 (Whereupon, this hearing is adjourned)
22
23
24

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, TONJA VINES, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings in the above-captioned matter were taken before me, that I did report in stenographic shorthand the Proceedings set forth herein, and the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription to the best of my ability.

Tonja Vines

Tonja Vines