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BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 160101-WS

APPLICATION FOR INCREASE IN WATER AND WASTEWATER
RATES IN CHARLOTTE, HIGHLANDS, LAKE, LEE, MARION,
ORANGE, PASCO, PINELLAS, POLK, AND SEMINOLE COUNTIES
BY UTILITIES, INC. OF FLORIDA.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: CUSTOMER SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN JULIE I. BROWN
COMMISSIONER JIMMY PATRONIS
COMMISSIONER DONALD POLMANN

DATE: Tuesday, January 11, 2017

TIME: Commenced at 9:30 a.m.
Concluded at 10:01 a.m.

PLACE: Charlotte Harbor Event Center
75 Taylor Street
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter and
Notary Public in and for
State of Florida at Large

PREMIER REPORTING
114 W. 5TH AVENUE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 MARTIN S. FRIEDMAN, ESQUIRE, Coenson Friedman,
3 P.A., 766 North Sun Drive, Suite 4030, Lake Mary,
4 Florida 32746, appearing on behalf of Utilities Inc. of
5 Florida.

6 J.R. KELLY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; ESQUIRE, Office of
7 Public Counsel, c/o the Florida Legislature, 111 W.
8 Madison Street, Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida
9 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of the Citizens of the
10 State of Florida.

11 JENNIFER CRAWFORD, WALTER TRIERWEILER, ESQUIRES,
12 FPSC General Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak
13 Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on
14 behalf of the Florida Public Service Commission Staff.

15 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; Florida Public
16 Service Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,
17 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida
18 Public Service Commission.

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I N D E X

WITNESSES

NAME :	PAGE NO.
JENNIFER HESSLER	16
RENE SWAIN	19
JIM SWAIN	21
CLARK GILLESPIE	21
MARTIN A. ATKINS	26
LEROY FURMAN	27
SUZANNE MURRAY	29

EXHIBITS

NUMBER :	MARKED
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NONE MARKED

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

2 CHAIRMAN BROWN: All right. Good morning. I
3 would like to welcome you all to this customer
4 service hearing in beautiful Punta Gorda, Florida.
5 It is such a great place to be in, and I appreciate
6 the hospitality of this city here.

7 Today's service hearing is a very important
8 part of the overall rate case process, and it is
9 designed to hear from you, the customers, and so we
10 are grateful that you all are here.

11 My name is Julie Brown, and I am Chairman of
12 the Florida Public Service Commission. With me
13 today are the other Florida Public Service
14 Commissioners, and I would like to give them an
15 opportunity to introduce themselves, starting from
16 my right.

17 COMMISSIONER PATRONIS: Good morning. My name
18 is Jimmy Patronis. Thank you for allowing us to
19 participate with you today for this hearing.
20 Looking forward to your testimony.

21 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: Good morning. My name
22 is Don Polmann, and I appreciate the opportunity to
23 be here with you. Thank you for coming.

24 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you -- thank you.
25 Staff counsel, will you please read the notice?

1 MS. CRAWFORD: Certainly. Pursuant to notice,
2 this time and place has been scheduled for the
3 purpose of conducting a customer service hearing in
4 Docket 160101-WS. The purpose of the customer
5 service hearing is set forth more fully in the
6 notice.

7 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

8 At this time, we will take appearances of
9 counsel.

10 MR. FRIEDMAN: Martin Friedman on behalf of
11 Utilities Inc. of Florida.

12 MR. KELLY: Good morning, my name is J.R.
13 Kelly. I am with the Office of Public Counsel, and
14 we have the privilege of representing the customers
15 of Utilities Inc.

16 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

17 MS. CRAWFORD: Jennifer Crawford and Walt
18 Trierweiler for Commission staff. I would also
19 like to make an appearance, if I may, please, for
20 your General Counsel, Keith Hetrick.

21 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

22 And again, I want to take this time to give my
23 appreciation to the customers who came out today.
24 We have eight customer service hearings scheduled
25 throughout the state for this rate case petition.

1 Later on in the process, we will have a
2 technical hearing that commences on May 8th, and it
3 will go for one week, in which we take the
4 substance of the evidence of the case. But this
5 meeting, as I said, is designed to hear from
6 customers about your comments, concerns or any --
7 any information related to the company's request.

8 I would like to note that the Utilities Inc.
9 of Florida company representatives are here today
10 to address any service or billing issues you may
11 have. We also have Public Service Commission
12 staff, which I will read over, who are here, our
13 technical staff, to address any specific questions
14 you may have.

15 When it's your time to speak, if you do have
16 specific questions, please save those for
17 afterwards, when our staff or utility
18 representatives will be glad to assist you and give
19 you ample time. And I will go over, for the
20 record, some of the staff members who are here
21 today at this customer service hearing.

22 With us from our technical staff, we have Curt
23 Mouring. We have Chris Church, Mimi Hearn, Conrad
24 Howard, Patti Daniel, Laura King. We have Walt
25 Trierweiler -- got it right -- Jennifer Crawford,

1 Cindy Muir and Kelly Thompson, who put this service
2 hearing together. Rachel -- sorry, Debbie Krick,
3 and that is it.

4 And this is an official hearing which means
5 that it will become part of the official record,
6 and will be transcribed as well. As such, you will
7 need to be sworn in before you testify and provide
8 comments to us, and we will take care of that in
9 just a few moments.

10 Please note, though, that your comments will
11 be subject to cross-examination, which means that
12 either of the attorneys may cross-examine you or
13 ask questions, as well as the Commissioners.

14 We would ask that you please silence your
15 phones at this time, or other electronic devices,
16 so as not to interfere with the flow of the
17 proceeding. We appreciate the professional nature
18 and courtesy of these proceedings and ask that you
19 do so accordingly.

20 You may have noticed the speaker sign-up forms
21 when you signed -- came in. If you plan to speak
22 today, please make sure that you have signed one of
23 those forms. If you don't want to speak, however,
24 and you would rather provide written comments, you
25 can go ahead and do that as well. You could leave

1 them with us today, or you can mail them in. You
2 could also take some and give them to your
3 neighbors. Whether your comments are made verbally
4 or in writing, this Commission will give both equal
5 consideration as part of the overall rate case.

6 And now I will invite the attorneys from the
7 parties to give brief opening statements. Each
8 party will have six minutes, beginning with the
9 petitioning party, Utilities Inc. of Florida.

10 MR. FRIEDMAN: Good morning, Madam Chair,
11 Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen. My name is
12 Marty Friedman. I am the attorney for Utilities
13 Inc. of Florida.

14 In a moment, you are going to hear from John
15 Hoy, who is the President of Utilities Inc. of
16 Florida, to explain the reasons and background for
17 the rate case. But before he speaks, as the
18 Chairman mentioned, in the back of the room here,
19 we have two ladies from customer service for
20 Utilities Inc. of Florida. If you have any billing
21 or service issues, I ask that you get with them
22 sometime either now or after the meeting, and they
23 can take care of your customer service issues.

24 And now I would like Mr. Hoy to make some
25 comments.

1 MR. HOY: Good morning. Thank you
2 Commissioners, for the opportunity to speak to our
3 customers today. We always enjoy that. Again, I
4 am John Hoy, I am President of Utilities Inc. of
5 Florida.

6 UIF is the largest water and wastewater
7 utility that's regulated by the PSC here in
8 Florida. We have about 60,000 customers spread
9 across the state, 15 different systems in 10
10 different counties.

11 The -- what -- the driving issues, or the
12 driving reasons around this rate proceeding are
13 twofold. One is significant investments we have
14 made and are continuing to make in infrastructure.
15 Infrastructure is aging, everybody knows that, and
16 it requires significant amount of capital to keep
17 it up to speed.

18 The second driver is we consolidated our
19 companies across the state last year. So what was
20 separate companies, Utilities Inc. of Florida,
21 Utilities Inc. of Eagle Ridge, are now all part of
22 UIF. And in this -- this separate proceeding,
23 since that consolidation, the one thing we are
24 asking for is to consolidate our rates across the
25 state. And I guess the bottom line of that is, for

1 example, we have customers it's a significant
2 reduction in rates, and for Eagle Ridge customers,
3 you know, a small reduction there as well.

4 So that's the bottom line, and before I talk a
5 little bit more about that let me go back to the
6 infrastructure.

7 The state of Florida, the state of Florida
8 gets a grade of C+ for water infrastructure, and C
9 for wastewater. That's not a good place to be for
10 a state that promotes itself and needs to grow with
11 water is a primary component of that.

12 The Environmental Protection Agency actually
13 estimates about 16-and-a-half billion dollars will
14 need to be invested in Florida in the coming years.
15 UIF is not alone -- or shares in that.

16 We have got significant investments we need to
17 make and have made. Over the last decade, we have
18 invested over \$100 million in our infrastructure,
19 and this rate proceeding has about, almost \$35
20 million in projects that will be included in this.
21 It's projects like \$12 million for pipe
22 replacement. It's projects like the widening of
23 Placida Road that we have to relocate our
24 facilities in order to meet the demands of the
25 counties. We have projects in Eagle Ridge as well,

1 and it's spread across the state. So that's the
2 driver.

3 If I get back to the rate consolidation. We
4 had a rate proceeding here in Sandalhaven about a
5 year-and-a-half ago, and we concluded in the
6 beginning of last year. And in that proceeding, it
7 was a significant increase in rates. We know that.
8 But in that proceeding, we committed to come back,
9 file another case, try to get the rates
10 consolidated across the state to bring rates down.
11 That's why -- that's, again, the driver in this
12 case.

13 So we are looking for support in that. We are
14 hoping that it's not just a sampling of customers.
15 It's our customers across the state, if we
16 consolidate our rates throughout the systems, we
17 can avoid the kind of rate shock that has, for any
18 community -- because every community is going to
19 face some kind of infrastructure need, and if you
20 spread it throughout the majority of our systems,
21 or all of our systems, we have a better chance of
22 fewer rate cases, and smaller increases for all of
23 our customers.

24 So I appreciate the opportunity to talk today,
25 and I look forward to your comments. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

2 And now we will hear from Office of Public
3 Counsel, Mr. J.R. Kelly.

4 MR. KELLY: Chair, I am going to come up here.
5 I can't see everybody --

6 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

7 MR. KELLY: -- behind the podium.

8 Good morning, again. As I mentioned, my name
9 is -- there we go. As I mentioned, my name is J.R.
10 Kelly, and I have the privilege of representing
11 you, the customers, in this proceeding.

12 You heard Mr. Hoy mention that this case is
13 basically an opportunity that UIF is asking to
14 consolidate a bunch of systems into one statewide
15 rate. And there are going to be some winners and
16 there are going to be some losers, depending on if
17 the rates go up or down.

18 In addition, Utilities Inc. is asking to
19 increase their overall revenues by approximately \$7
20 million a year. We have retained several experts
21 in the fields of engineering and accounting, and we
22 are carefully looking at all of their requests, and
23 we are going to challenge those areas that we feel
24 are not reasonable or prudent in what they are
25 asking to increase their rates to. And I will

1 mention a few areas that we have highlighted, that
2 we are taking a very, very careful look at.

3 Number one, as Mr. Hoy mentioned, UIF is
4 seeking to increase their capital improvements in
5 Florida -- or excuse me, their capital investment
6 form by about \$30 million. That represents about
7 37 percent -- 35 percent, something like that --
8 increase in the capital investment they already
9 have in Florida. And we want to make sure that
10 what they are going to do is reasonable and
11 prudent, and not gold-plated, so to speak.

12 The second issue we are looking at deals with
13 salaries and wages. UIF is asking to increase
14 their salaries and wages by about
15 half-a-million-dollars. And that raises a concern
16 to us, because when you consolidate, there should
17 be some synergies and economies of scale that
18 result, and there should be some benefits out of
19 consolidation that you, the customers, should be
20 able to enjoy in some reductions in the expenses
21 that you would pay through your rates, so we are
22 looking at that very closely.

23 And the third large item is Utilities Inc. is
24 looking to allocate about 36 -- 35, \$36 million
25 annually from their corporate parent and affiliate

1 companies that are located in Illinois and other
2 places outside of Florida. And the bottom line is,
3 those would go into the rates that you pay, and so,
4 therefore, we are taking a very, very careful look
5 at what kind of monies are going outside the state
6 of Florida, as to what benefits you would receive.

7 Now, today is your meeting. It's not my
8 meeting. It's not the Commission's meeting. It's
9 not at the Utilities Inc.'s meeting. This is your
10 meeting, and this is your opportunity to come up
11 and speak to the Commission, and basically testify
12 and tell the Commissioners, and myself and the
13 Utility, your experiences with the quality of
14 service that you have received from Utilities Inc.,
15 as well as any other issues that you may wish to
16 discuss, and certainly your feelings about the rate
17 increase.

18 And specifically, I would ask you to talk
19 about any problems that you may have had with
20 secondary water standards, that's the taste, color,
21 smell of the water. The -- your experiences with
22 their service they provide you, good or bad, we
23 want to hear it. The Commissioners want to hear
24 it. How is has the Utility treated you when you
25 have contacted them to file a complaint, or ask for

1 information, or any billing issues. And lastly, do
2 you timely receive notices and communications, such
3 as boil water notices from the utility?

4 Basically, tell us your experience, because
5 those are the things that will go into the
6 decision -- the decision-making that the
7 Commissioners behind me will be making.

8 So thank you so much for taking time to come
9 out today. And I hope to hear from many of you
10 later on today. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Kelly. Thank
12 you, both parties.

13 Now moving into the public comment portion. I
14 would like to give you all just some brief
15 instructions on how the process will go.

16 Each customer will have three minutes. I will
17 give some latitude given the number of customers
18 that have signed up, but really, the lights on the
19 podium will guide you. When it gets to yellow, you
20 have about a minute left. When it gets to red, you
21 should be wrapping up.

22 Again, we appreciate you all coming out here.
23 We will be -- I will be swearing you all in at this
24 time, together, so if you would like to provide
25 testimony to us, and plan to address us, please

1 stand and raise your right hand with me.

2 Do you swear or affirm to provide the truth in
3 this proceeding?

4 (Chorus of affirmative responses.)

5 (Customers collectively sworn.)

6 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you. Please be seated.

7 Office of Public Counsel will be calling
8 customers up by name. He will call one or two up,
9 with the first one being up to the podium, the
10 second one being on deck.

11 And I believe I have covered everything that
12 there is to, so, Mr. Kelly, would you begin by
13 calling your first customer on the list?

14 MR. KELLY: Yes, ma'am.

15 The first speaker is Ms. Jennifer Hessler, and
16 she will be followed by Ms. Rene Swain.

17 MS. HESSLER: Do I stand addressing you?

18 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Yes.

19 MS. HESSLER: Hi, I am Jennifer.

20 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Good morning.

21 MS. HESSLER: And I came to this meeting
22 because I don't remember a chance to come to the
23 last meeting when the increase came across, so I
24 want to voice my opinion.

25 I am pleased to see it's going to be a

1 decrease, which would be to our benefit. And as
2 far as the increase last year, I want the Utilities
3 to remember that the area that we are in down here
4 is mostly seniors, mostly seasonal residents, and
5 that we were penalized by your increases last year,
6 especially the monthly rate, not being here for six
7 months out --

8 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Speak a little bit more into
9 the microphone.

10 MS. HESSLER: Especially the monthly rate, me
11 not here for six months, that's quite a penalty
12 when you are a senior and you are down here paying
13 those rates, so the decrease is welcomed.

14 And I don't have any issues with the company
15 as far as service or billing. I am happy with
16 that.

17 And -- what else did I have down here? If,
18 indeed, there are any chances for another increase,
19 I would like to be able to have meetings like this,
20 where we could attend. A lot of the meetings for
21 the Commissioners are after we leave. I have been
22 to meetings at the Commissioners' office before
23 regarding other items of rezoning, and it's nice to
24 be able to give your opinion -- our opinion, so
25 they can hear how their constituents feel. But --

1 and I would also like to know if, indeed, we do --
2 when this is finalized, when we will find out about
3 it.

4 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Absolutely.

5 MS. HESSLER: And that's all.

6 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Could you state your name and
7 address for the record first?

8 MS. HESSLER: Sure, Jennifer Hessler. 6713
9 Gasparilla Pines Boulevard, Englewood.

10 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

11 And to answer your question about when you
12 will be notified. We have a special agenda
13 scheduled for July 12th. The technical hearing, as
14 I mentioned earlier, is May 8th through the 12th,
15 and so we have deliberations actually that will
16 occur on July 12th. There -- A final order will be
17 issued, Ms. Crawford?

18 MS. CRAWFORD: 20 days following the agenda.

19 CHAIRMAN BROWN: 20 days, and the Utilities is
20 required by law to file a notice.

21 MS. CRAWFORD: That's correct.

22 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Okay.

23 MS. HESSLER: So it would be around the first
24 of August, then, I am guessing, that we will hear
25 something?

1 MS. CRAWFORD: That would be about right.

2 MS. HESSLER: Okay. All right.

3 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

4 Commissioners, do you have any questions?

5 Parties?

6 Thank you for your testimony.

7 MS. HESSLER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Next customer, please.

9 MR. KELLY: After Ms. Swain will be Mr. Jim
10 Swain.

11 MS. SWAIN: Yes. My name is Rene Swain. My
12 address is 9020 Kestral Circle, Englewood.

13 Pretty much what Jennifer said is how I feel.
14 The only thing is I am angry that Sandalhaven took
15 the hit, it sounds like we took a big hit, and we
16 are all on fixed incomes, yes. So it would be nice
17 to have that -- sorry.

18 CHAIRMAN BROWN: He is helping you out there.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I just want you to be
20 heard.

21 MS. SWAIN: Now I will be too loud -- to be
22 able to get some of that back, or recoup it. And I
23 am still a little skeptical about this decrease, I
24 don't believe it until I see it on paper. So -- I
25 mean, because we have taken a heck of a hit as

1 senior citizens. And, yes, they consider us as
2 coming down here seasonal, but so what. Everybody
3 likes our money just like everybody else, and I
4 think it's just totally unfair that Sandalhaven had
5 to take that hit.

6 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you, Ms. Swain, for
7 your testimony.

8 Commissioners, are there any questions?

9 Ms. Swain, how is your quality of service with
10 the utility?

11 MS. SWAIN: Actually, when we left here at the
12 end of April last year is when we got the really
13 highest bill from Utilities Inc. So I called when
14 we got home, and I said, I think we have a problem,
15 because I was just taken aback by the amount that
16 we had to pay. And they said they would go check
17 the meter, and I never heard anything back. I had
18 to call them again, and they said, we must have a
19 leak somewhere. I told them, the water is off.
20 Everything is off, so that's not possible. So we
21 had to wait until we got back down here, and we
22 did -- we did have one leak, it was small. We took
23 care of that, but I don't believe that that caused
24 our rate to be as high as it was. But, yeah, it
25 was not a good customer service, I thought, when I

1 had called with a problem.

2 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you for your testimony.

3 Next customer.

4 MR. KELLY: After Mr. Swain is Mr. Clark
5 Gillaspie.

6 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Good morning.

7 MR. SWAIN: Good morning. My name is Jim
8 Swain, 9020 Kestral Circle, Englewood. And the
9 other two speakers are people that were up here and
10 took care of what I had to say, so I am all set.

11 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you. Thank you for
12 that.

13 Next customer.

14 MR. KELLY: After Mr. Gillaspie is Mr. Martin
15 Atkins.

16 MR. GILLASPIE: My name is Clark Gillaspie. I
17 represent Cape Haze Resort, 8401 Placida Road,
18 Placida, Florida, 33946. I want to thank everybody
19 and for the opportunity to speak here this morning.

20 Quality of service: I don't have any issues.
21 I am not really aware of any issues.

22 Billing: UI has spent a tremendous amount of
23 money on their accounting system, as you are aware.
24 A couple of years ago, we weren't very happy with
25 it, but I can say today it's one of the best

1 billing systems that I have to deal with, so thank
2 you very much for that.

3 Road widening: UI is being hit with a large
4 bill for road widening. It's a matter that
5 benefits the county as a whole. UI is willing to
6 work with us to see if we can get the County to
7 reimburse them for some of the monies that they
8 will spend on the engineering and moving of
9 facilities. We are going to work together on that,
10 and I thank UI for doing that.

11 I understand that we stand to benefit with a
12 rate consolidation single tier, and so our comments
13 with regard to that are -- could be seen to be
14 somewhat disingenuous, but let's look at it from a
15 big picture point of view, as Mr. Hoy was doing
16 earlier. His comments were very interesting.

17 There is absolutely nothing wrong with the
18 companies becoming more efficient, and that's what
19 this is all about. Those efficiencies will benefit
20 all 60,000 customers in the long run for many years
21 to come, and it's certainly something we should
22 strive for. There is nothing wrong with being more
23 efficient, and so we certainly support their
24 application in regard to that.

25 The amount of monies that need to be invested

1 over the long-term, the efficiencies and companies
2 being well run are something that benefits us all.
3 I do want to address something, though, and that is
4 that it's not really a failure on anybody's part
5 here, but speaking in terms of Sandalhaven, for all
6 customers, you know, 20, 30, 60,000 customers, some
7 things happened in our area that are things that
8 you wouldn't want to have happen.

9 There are three things, really, that stacked
10 up against us, and one is that a waste water
11 treatment facility was prematurely retired. All
12 things being equal, it's not something that you
13 want to have happen. Those old package plants,
14 they are relatively inexpensive, they are
15 relatively easy to build, they are relatively
16 inexpensive to maintain and easy to operate. And
17 we had that happen to us. I am not pointing a
18 finger to blame here at anybody, but it's something
19 that happened to us.

20 In addition to that, we have some major
21 facilities in the ground, that are well designed
22 facilities, they were well built, and so on, but
23 look at the MFRs, those facilities are not being
24 used. So, you know, we still have the situation
25 where ratepayers, whether it's 1,000 of us or

1 60,000 of us are paying for facilities that aren't
2 being used.

3 And then there is the pass-through situation.
4 You know, there is nothing wrong with UI being in a
5 position, being a pass-through utility. There is
6 absolutely nothing wrong with that.

7 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Mr. Gillaspie, your time has
8 expired, but I will give you 30 seconds to wrap it
9 up.

10 MR. GILLASPIE: Okay, and I am just about
11 wrapped up.

12 So the -- but the pass-through situation,
13 because of the bulk rates that are charged by
14 Englewood, we -- the customer base pays a
15 tremendous amount for the wastewater, and it's not
16 something that's going into UI's pocket or anything
17 like that, but it's something that's happened.

18 So we've had three major things that have
19 caused the rate structure for this area to be much
20 higher than it should be, all things being equal.
21 And so what can you do? The one thing you can do
22 is address the used and useful again. If you look
23 at the MFRs, we are looking at less than 50 percent
24 utilization, and so maybe that's something that can
25 be adjusted.

1 So, again, thank you to everybody, including
2 the Office of Public Counsel, for doing such a good
3 job for us.

4 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you for your testimony,
5 Mr. Gillaspie, just a moment.

6 Commissioners, any questions?

7 Commissioner Polmann.

8 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: I wasn't clear in the
9 beginning, if you could please clarify the capacity
10 in which you represent -- a group? Please
11 elaborate on that.

12 MR. GILLASPIE: Yes, sir.

13 It's an informal structure. We have a number
14 of fairly large projects within the Sandalhaven
15 jurisdiction, within the franchise area. And, you
16 know, one of those is represented by each of the
17 two gentlemen here with me, and I represent a
18 third. Representatives of the other two were
19 unable to join us here today, but combined, our
20 core committee represents probably about 70 to
21 80 percent of the customers of Sandalhaven.

22 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: So you are representing
23 residential customers?

24 MR. GILLASPIE: Yes, sir.

25 COMMISSIONER POLMANN: Thank you.

1 MR. GILLASPIE: Yes, sir.

2 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Any other Commissioners?
3 Parties?

4 Thank you for your testimony.

5 MR. GILLASPIE: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Next customer, please.

7 MR. KELLY: After Mr. Atkins is Mr. -- I think
8 it's Leroy Furman.

9 MR. ATKINS: Okay. My name is Martin A.
10 Atkins, 8660 Amberjack Circle, Englewood. I
11 represent the -- I am on the Board of Directors, I
12 represent the Hammocks Preserve Condominium --

13 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Could you just pull the mic a
14 little bit closer, please?

15 MR. ATKINS: Again, I will repeat.

16 My name is Martin A. Atkins, 8660 Amberjack
17 Circle, Englewood. I represent the Hammocks
18 Preserve Condominium Association, 162 units here in
19 Englewood.

20 First of all, I would like to congratulate
21 Utilities Inc. for their amalgamation, and I hope
22 it leads to efficiencies over the long-term,
23 leading to lower rate increases. As we know we
24 will see rate increases in the future, but I hope
25 the amalgamation results in efficiencies of scale,

1 and leads to a better relationship with the utility
2 going forward.

3 I congratulate Clark on all of his work that
4 he has done over the years. So far he's knowing,
5 reading, doing research on all the historical rate
6 increases, rate amalgamations throughout the state,
7 as well as a lot of finite details that go into a
8 rate.

9 The Office of Public Counsel has helped us
10 over the years, so we thank them immensely.

11 And finally, I would like to say that your due
12 diligence in this rate -- rate change, rate
13 amalgamation. It will be certainly appreciated,
14 and hope you come out with rates that are just,
15 fair and prudent for all the customers.

16 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Atkins.

17 Commissioners, any questions?

18 Thank you for your testimony.

19 Next customer.

20 MR. KELLY: After Mr. Furman is Suzanne
21 Murray.

22 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Good morning.

23 MR. FURMAN: Good morning. Good morning,
24 Commissioners. Good morning everybody in
25 attendance.

1 My name is Leroy Furman. I am the President
2 of Fiddler's Green Condo Association II, and I
3 represent II and I here, which is about 260 units.
4 And we were probably the most bene -- we were
5 benefited most when the utility with -- even though
6 it was premature, retirement of the wastewater
7 treatment was right in our back yard, so it really
8 helped, because now I don't have anybody telling
9 me, boy, what -- how can I get rid of that smell?
10 But, no, it was very well appreciated, and thank
11 you. It was -- it's something that improved our
12 community tremendously.

13 I agree with Clark, and I -- and we have been
14 a group that we have been together now for a couple
15 of years, getting ready for all of the things that
16 are happening, and all the research that's been
17 done by our group, and Clark in particular, has
18 proven itself. And so we would really, really like
19 to encourage the Commission to move forward with
20 this rate amalgamation, because we have been paying
21 the highest rates around.

22 And, as it's been stated before, the majority
23 of the people that live in our geographic area
24 primarily are seasonal and seniors, so they are
25 pretty much on fixed incomes. So anything you can

1 do to help us, we would certainly appreciate it,
2 and thank you for the opportunity you have given me
3 to address you. So thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Furman, for
5 your comments.

6 Commissioners, any questions? Seeing none,
7 thank you.

8 Mr. Kelly.

9 MR. KELLY: Ms. Murray is the last one who
10 signed up.

11 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Okay.

12 MS. MURRAY: Hi, good morning. I am Suzanne
13 Murray, I am the property manager of Grove City
14 Manor Apartments, Christian City of Florida Inc.,
15 located 6433 Gasparilla Pines Boulevard. And we
16 are a nonprofit 501(c)(3) that provides affordable
17 housing, 100 one-bedroom Section 8 apartment units
18 to elderly and disabled people, and have been in
19 business for 35 years in that location.

20 That rate increase last year has completely --
21 we can't do improvements, you know, it's a complete
22 mess. If it's going to be a decrease, that's
23 great. I will believe it when I see it.

24 My regular experience with customer service
25 with Utilities Inc. is poor. Anytime I call, oh,

1 that's the information we got from Charlotte County
2 Utilities, call them. You know, I get nothing, no
3 help from them at all, and I have to wait quite a
4 long time on hold to get through.

5 As I said, if there is going to be a rate
6 decrease, that would be wonderful. I would
7 certainly hope that we would see some sort of
8 reimbursement, because we are paying \$6,500 a month
9 to you alone. Our residents do not pay the
10 utility, or electric utility, it's all, you know,
11 covered by us, which is the taxpayer.

12 So we would like to see some relief and I hope
13 it's going to be soon. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you, for your
15 testimony.

16 Just a quick question: How many residents are
17 in your housing?

18 MR. FURMAN: About 105 at the present time,
19 there is 100 units.

20 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Okay. Thank you.

21 Commissioners, any questions?

22 COMMISSIONER PATRONIS: No.

23 CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you for your testimony.

24 Is there anybody who would like to speak who
25 has not addressed the Commission? Going once.

1 I want to take this time to thank you on
2 behalf of the Commission. Again, your comments are
3 very vital to the overall process, and we will
4 actually keep them in consideration.

5 This video is being streamed live, as well our
6 hearings will be streamed on the Public Service
7 Commission website, so we encourage you to look at
8 them. All of our meetings are on the website as
9 well.

10 If the Commissioners don't have any closing
11 comments, seeing none, this service hearing is
12 officially adjourned.

13 Thank you again.

14 (Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded at
15 10:01 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA R. KRICK, Professional Court Reporter, certify that the foregoing proceedings were taken before me at the time and place therein designated; that my shorthand notes were thereafter translated under my supervision; and the foregoing pages, numbered 4 through 31, are a true and correct record of the aforesaid proceedings.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 19th day of January, 2017.



DEBRA R. KRICK
NOTARY PUBLIC
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EXPIRES JULY 27, 2020