

DOCKET NO. R-2020-3017951

Hearing Date: July 9, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

ALJ Ex. 3 7/9/2020 Brosky Letter

112 Fountain Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
July 9, 2020

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission  
Commonwealth Keystone Building  
400 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Docket R-2020-3017951

Dear Secretary Chiavetta,

I am writing today to register my opposition to the PWSA proposed rate increase. While I understand PWSA's need to finance infrastructure improvements, I think the rate schedule they are requesting is too aggressive. A 14% to 20% increase is out of step with most people's average cost of living wage increases and is a burden on your average resident in the best of times. To institute the change during a global pandemic when many residents are experiencing income insecurity is irresponsible.

Additionally it appears that many ratepayers are still subsidizing unmetered usage by institutional users including the City of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Public Schools and other agencies such as the Pittsburgh Zoo, and the Aviary. I think expecting residents to finance infrastructure improvements before rectifying institutional abuse constitutes an undue burden on private citizens. Perhaps the PWSA should make the metering of institutional users a priority before requesting residents pay additional fees.

Also, I am concerned that PWSA has not taken all necessary actions to regards to cost cutting or efficiency improvements prior to requesting additional rate increases. Prior to their initial request to the PUC, there were several articles in local media regarding PWSA's mismanagement in the past. Currently there is no reporting mechanism in place to measure their actions (or lack of) in this regard. There has been no transparency on the part of PWSA regarding their efforts to obtain lower cost debt financing from the federal government, not only for the proposed infrastructure improvements but to refinance old debt.

I am also perplexed as to why our neighbor, the Municipal Authority of Westmoreland County is able to provide the same volume of water to their constituents at a lower rate? Per their website, the rate for a 5/8 meter per 1,000 gallons was \$20.60 whereas the same volume currently costs PWSA users \$27.27 and is proposed to increase to \$29.55. It is hard for me to believe that the labor and material costs differ so greatly within the southwest region to justify such a large price differential.

ALJ-3  
R-2020-3017951  
7-9-20  
Pittsburgh JS

Rosemary Chiavetta, Secretary  
Page Two  
July 9, 2020

Why are consumers expected to sign a blank check when there is no accountability regarding performance and efficiency metrics? I would be more willing to pay additional fees if I knew they were matched with verifiable cost savings on the part of PWSA.

While I understand and appreciate the need for infrastructure improvements, I hope that any future rate increases also come with requirements for PWSA to provide additional reporting to their rate payers in regards to their progress towards ending costly unmetered usage, as well as cost cutting and efficiency improvements including progress towards obtaining lower cost financing rather than the continual expectation that the residential ratepayer is expected to bear the weight of management's poor decision making.

Respectfully,

Catherine Brosky  
Resident, City of Pittsburgh