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BEFORE THE  
ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION  
BENCH MEETING  
PUBLIC UTILITY  
Wednesday, January 13, 2016  
Chicago, Illinois

Met, pursuant to notice, at 10:30 A.M.,  
at 160 North La Salle Street, Chicago, Illinois.

- PRESENT:
- BRIEN J. SHEAHAN, Chairman
  - ANN MCCABE, Commissioner
  - SHERINA E. MAYE EDWARDS, Commissioner
  - JOHN R. ROSALES, Commissioner

SULLIVAN REPORTING COMPANY, by  
PATRICIA WESLEY  
CSR NO. 084-002170

1 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Good morning. Are we ready to  
2 proceed in Springfield?

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MR. MATIRISCH Yes, we are.

4 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Pursuant to the Open Meetings  
5 Act, I call to order the January 13, 2016 Bench  
6 Meeting of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

7 Commissioners McCabe, Edwards and  
8 Rosales are present with me in Chicago. We have a  
9 quorum.

10 We have no requests to speak and will,  
11 therefore, move into our regular agenda.

12 We are going to begin by going out of  
13 order a little bit this morning. We are going to  
14 take a couple of items from our Public Utility Bench  
15 Session Agenda first and then we have some minutes  
16 to clean up at the end.

17 Our first item under the Public  
18 Utility Agenda is Nicor Gas' compliance report with  
19 the final Order in Docket No. 11-0046, and we have  
20 got a couple of representatives of the company here.

21 Just for the record, if you will state  
22 your name before you begin.

1 MR. EVANS: Andrew Evans from AGL Resources.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: Melvin Williams, Nicor Gas.

3 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you, and the floor is  
4 yours.

5 MR. EVANS: Thank you, and thank you,  
6 Commissioners, for having us today. This is the  
7 fourth time that the company has had an opportunity  
8 to come before you to talk about our progress  
9 related to the merger conditions, and I'm happy to  
10 tell you that we are fully compliant with the 34  
11 conditions that were set forth in the merger  
12 agreement in 2011.

13 As you know, John Somerhalder retired  
14 as Chairman, President, and CEO of AGL Resources at  
15 the end of December. I assumed the role of  
16 President and CEO at the beginning of the year, and  
17 Jim Rubright, who's a long-time member of our board,  
18 assumed the role of Chairman of AGL Resources right  
19 at the first of the year.

20 While I have spent significant time in  
21 Illinois over the last four years in my prior role  
22 of CFO, this is the first time that I have had a

1 chance to come before the Commission.

2 Just to give you some sense of  
3 background, I've been in the utility business for  
4 about 25 years working for Southern Company for the  
5 first 10 of that, and I have been with AGL Resources  
6 for about 15.

7 My family has a long history in  
8 Illinois. I have a number of relatives who  
9 currently reside in DuPage County, but my parents  
10 grew up in Clarendon Hills in Hinsdale, met in  
11 Hinsdale High, so I have a significant obligation to  
12 serve appropriately in those communities or hear  
13 about it from my family.

14 As part of our leadership succession  
15 process generally, in last May we asked Beth Reese  
16 to come back to Atlanta to serve as Chief Financial  
17 Officer. That's a very important change for me  
18 personally and I know one that's personal to you as  
19 well.

20 Beth is a fantastic representative of  
21 the Illinois communities and we are real proud to  
22 have somebody so senior in leadership take such a

1 senior role in the corporation. She won't soon  
2 forget the commitments that she made up here, and I  
3 think that's been a very important transition for  
4 us.

5                   With the changes in 2015 and likely  
6 the changes that will continue related to our  
7 announced acquisition or merger with Southern  
8 Company, I just want to assure you that we'll remain  
9 committed, very heavily committed to our customers  
10 and employees in Illinois and continue to support  
11 growth which is one of our primary tenets here.

12                   The full details of our merger and  
13 compliance were provided in our December report to  
14 the ICC. Let me just add that after four years of  
15 operating in Illinois we believe that we will  
16 continue to operate successfully under the remaining  
17 conditions for many years to follow, and I don't  
18 think that you will see a material shift in the way  
19 we operate as it relates to the transactions.

20                   Melvin will provide additional details  
21 on our key business activities for 2015, but I did  
22 want to highlight a few points relative to the

1 merger compliance activities and my perspective on  
2 the industry generally.

3           Nicor Gas customers continue to  
4 benefit from service that provides among the lowest  
5 natural gas rates in Illinois. We have extended our  
6 record of low rates through a combination of  
7 effective operations, management and our ability to  
8 leverage economies of scale across our corporate --  
9 our seven utility footprint, our corporate  
10 footprint, but our costs are never at the expense of  
11 safety, and safety is always a top priority.

12           I spoke to the Chairman this morning  
13 and let him know that our priorities are simply  
14 safety for our employees and for our customers,  
15 customer satisfaction, typically customer growth in  
16 our customer base and investment in our  
17 infrastructure so we can continue to provide strong  
18 service over the next hundred years.

19           Specifically, the Commission's  
20 approval of our investing in the Illinois  
21 Infrastructure Program, a very important program to  
22 us that was approved in 2015, has allowed Nicor Gas

1 to improve the safety and reliability of the gas  
2 distribution system while spurring economic  
3 development activity in the state.

4 We are bringing important jobs. We  
5 are bringing businesses back toward communities that  
6 we serve and we are very focused on investment in  
7 the state.

8 Pipeline safety and modernization  
9 continue to be of critical importance to us and to  
10 our industry, and we appreciate the support that you  
11 have given us around those programs in particular.

12 Nationally wellhead prices are at  
13 historic lows. I'm sure you read about it daily, as  
14 I do. Recent price trends primarily are driven by  
15 the proliferation of shale gas production in a  
16 number of producing regions, some contiguous to you  
17 and some not.

18 While there will still be some price  
19 volatility due to weather, intermittent pipeline  
20 restraints, and other geopolitical events, analysts  
21 forecast low prices for quite some time, a very  
22 stark contrast to where we saw ourselves in 2008.

1 If you now look at where we stand, prices are  
2 considerably lower and should stay substantially low  
3 for a period of time. That's good for our customers  
4 and that's very good for our business.

5 Interstate transportation of natural  
6 gas is likewise evolving to meet new opportunities  
7 as the location for production changes relative to  
8 what it's been historically. We saw a lot of gulf  
9 coast production. We are now seeing a lot of  
10 mid-continent, high-continent production because of  
11 shale, and so we are working very hard to make sure  
12 that we balance that infrastructure appropriately.

13 AGL Resources continues to focus on  
14 opportunities to eliminate localized constraints and  
15 bring more reliable, stable and affordable  
16 production into our customers in Illinois through  
17 our growing footprint.

18 In that regard, the company looks  
19 forward to continuing to work in and with Illinois  
20 officials to extend our service and bring affordable  
21 fuel to as many homes as we possibly can.

22 Let me conclude my portion of the



1 presentation by emphasizing the positive impact of  
2 low natural gas prices, very positive impact and  
3 favorable opportunities provided to local  
4 distribution companies that really have fostered a  
5 recent flurry of merger and acquisition activity in  
6 our industry.

7                   Many industry analysts have long  
8 predicted that this would occur. We have had a very  
9 fragmented industry for a number of decades and it  
10 was very logical that it would lead to some  
11 consolidation of space, both gas consolidation and  
12 gas/electric consolidation.

13                   2015 saw this continuation occur at a  
14 very brisk pace with companies like Exelon and  
15 Pepco, Piedmont Natural Gas and Duke Energy  
16 combining, just to name a few.

17                   For AGL Resources, I think this kind  
18 of activity makes a lot of sense in our business.  
19 It will benefit our customers, our employees, and  
20 our shareholders.

21                   I don't specifically want to get ahead  
22 of other pending regulatory filings; however, I do

1 expect that we will -- I know that we will maintain  
2 and further strengthen our company's commitment to  
3 supporting our Illinois constituents through the  
4 acquisition.

5                   Again, thank you very much for your  
6 time. If there are any questions that I can answer  
7 for you, I'm happy to take them now or when Melvin  
8 concludes his remarks.

9                   With that, let me turn it over to  
10 Melvin Williams.

11           MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

12                   Good morning, Commissioners. I am  
13 pleased to be here today to share our annual update  
14 and talk to some of the business highlights for 2015  
15 and into 2016.

16                   I would like to start off with safety.  
17 Safety of our people, our pipeline, and the public  
18 is first and foremost our priority. In fact, we  
19 have added safety as our number one shared value  
20 this year across the enterprise further emphasizing  
21 the importance we place on safety in our  
22 organization.

1                   We continue to work to establish a  
2 culture of safety and see the impact of our efforts  
3 in our performance matrix as overall personal safety  
4 incidents are down over last year.

5                   An important part of our safety and  
6 reliability efforts include the modernization of our  
7 infrastructure, as Andrew alluded to. Investing in  
8 our infrastructure has been an ongoing part of our  
9 business. We made a commitment long ago to replace  
10 aging gas mains and services to ensure the safety  
11 and reliability of our system.

12                   Historically we have replaced about 40  
13 miles of main each year and we have been able to  
14 increase our efforts through our Qualified  
15 Infrastructure Program which we call Investing In  
16 Illinois.

17                   In 2015 we replaced 145 miles of  
18 natural gas mains and 31,000 natural gas services.  
19 We are working closely with municipalities in our  
20 service territories as we make these upgrades and we  
21 will continue our collaborative approach with them  
22 in 2016.

1                   Investing in Illinois and the  
2   corresponding legislation has been critical to  
3   ensure we can make the necessary upgrades to our  
4   system in a safe, yet, timely fashion, and we will  
5   continue our commitment to our customers.

6                   We continue to look for opportunities  
7   to engage diverse businesses and developing and  
8   expanding partnership opportunities created by these  
9   investments. We remain committed to our business  
10  diversity and increasing the economic impact within  
11  the communities where we do business.

12                  We are doing our part to create a  
13  healthy economy by participating in more than 30  
14  economic development organizations throughout our  
15  service territory and continuing to look for  
16  opportunities to make it easier and more affordable  
17  to get natural gas into new areas of the state.

18                  In terms of growth, we have added  
19  10,000 new customers this year. We have been able  
20  to expand to several new communities, including Lake  
21  Carol and Fairdale.

22                  Fairdale Community, as you may recall,

1 was a community that was hit by the tornado last  
2 year, and I want to thank you, Commissioners, for  
3 expediting the certification process for the town of  
4 Fairdale. We were able to serve them prior to this  
5 winter, so we sincerely appreciate your support.

6           Similar to the Lake Carol expansion,  
7 additional communities are reaching out to us for  
8 services. Our goal is that we can use an innovative  
9 economic development program that will allow us to  
10 extend facilities to these communities in a way that  
11 will benefit all customers.

12           Our customers continue to pay amongst  
13 the lowest natural gas costs in the State of  
14 Illinois, as Andrew mentioned. Prices are at  
15 historical lows. We are estimating a decrease of  
16 30 percent in customers' heating bills this winter  
17 over last.

18           To-date, we have engaged more than  
19 600,000 residential and business customers in our  
20 Energy Smart Program which is our energy efficiency  
21 program. We also continue to engage our customers  
22 in our Energy Assistance Program. Our commitment to

1 our customers and our communities is a part of our  
2 generosity of spirit which is another one of our  
3 shared values.

4 We are proud of our long legacy in the  
5 State of Illinois and we remain committed to the  
6 communities that we serve here.

7 We have contributed more than \$2  
8 million to more than 200 organizations this year,  
9 including organizations like the United Way  
10 Neighborhood Networks, but we're not just providing  
11 financial assistance. We are also providing our  
12 time and our talents giving approximately 2000 hours  
13 in volunteer hours within our communities.

14 Workforce development will continue to  
15 be a key priority for our business. We recognize  
16 the need to build and develop future generations and  
17 we are furthering our efforts to provide education  
18 and workforce development opportunities.

19 We are really proud of our efforts and  
20 the participations in various organizations  
21 throughout our community. We are focusing on  
22 developing our internal workforce as well. We want

1 to ensure we are tapping into the diverse skills,  
2 talents and experiences that exist across our  
3 organization.

4 We have introduced this year new  
5 Employee Resources Groups, or ERGs. These are  
6 groups that allow our employees to develop  
7 professionally and allow for their professional  
8 growth and opportunities through training, education  
9 and networking. We are very proud of our ERGs.

10 In summary, it's been a great year  
11 and we have been very pleased with our efforts  
12 around safety and reliability, growth and economic  
13 development, engagement with our customers, our  
14 communities and our employees.

15 We are proud of our long legacy of  
16 commitment to our customers and to the State of  
17 Illinois and we will continue to advance these  
18 efforts in the years to come.

19 Thank you for your time today. Andrew  
20 and I are available for questions if you have any.

21 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

22 Commissioner Edwards.

1 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: I have one question.  
2 It's a clarifying question.

3 Andrew, you mentioned -- you used the  
4 term I think twice of your relationship with other  
5 companies as a merger and then as an acquisition.  
6 Just as a former corporate attorney, I was curious  
7 to know what it was.

8 MR. EVANS: Sure. As a recovering accountant, I  
9 think there's different ways to describe what's  
10 occurring. We were acquired by Southern Company and  
11 will be accounted for as an acquisition.

12 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Any other questions?

14 (No response.)

15 Okay. Thank you for taking the time  
16 to come. We appreciate your presence.

17 MR. EVANS: Thank you for having me.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Mr. Williams, we have another  
20 report to hear from you as Chair of the Illinois  
21 Utilities Business Diversity Council.

22 By way of background, the Illinois



1 utilities Diversity Council is a forum for sharing  
2 best practices amongst Illinois utilities and focus  
3 on advancing the growth and utilization of diverse  
4 businesses in the State of Illinois.

5 The Council was chartered in June of  
6 2015 by five founding members, Ameren, ComEd,  
7 Illinois American Water, Nicor and Peoples/North  
8 Shore. We look forward to hearing about your  
9 progress.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Once again, good morning,  
11 Commissioners.

12 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: I'm sorry. Before you begin,  
13 Commissioner Edwards has something to say.

14 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Thank you,  
15 Mr. Chairman.

16 First of all, on behalf of  
17 Commissioner del Valle's absence, I just want to say  
18 that he and I have worked really collaboratively  
19 over the last year or two, and I just want to focus  
20 on the diversity roundtable we held last year in  
21 February prior to your taking this role, but you  
22 really talk about the use of the Utilities Business

1 Diversity Council.

2                   We talked about the goals that we are  
3 accomplishing, and even though we worked through a  
4 lot of other Councils that have been already formed  
5 around the nation, we wanted to ensure that this  
6 particular Council in Illinois would take the  
7 footprint of Illinois and would represent the five  
8 members that we had here.

9                   It was really important to make sure  
10 that everybody is on the same page, that all of the  
11 utilities were just as excited as we were, that this  
12 was really an effort based on passion and not based  
13 on force.

14                   So with that, I am excited to hear  
15 what you have to say. I know that even though the  
16 Council was launched in June and I know that a lot  
17 of that time between June and now was working to get  
18 together working on some of the governing documents,  
19 I just wanted to lay the foundation and say that we  
20 understand it's been six months perhaps a little  
21 less in actuality.

22                   So we thank you for your time. We

1 thank you for your support on behalf of all of the  
2 other CEOs and we welcome your comments.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Commissioner, and thank  
4 you for your continued support of the Council.

5 Good morning, once again,  
6 Commissioners. It's my pleasure, once again, to  
7 speak to you today this time as the Chair of the  
8 Board of Directors for the Illinois Utilities  
9 Business Diversity Council, or the IUBDC.

10 Before we get started, I would like to  
11 recognize my fellow board members: Anne  
12 Pramaggiore, President and CEO of ComEd; Bruce Hauk,  
13 President of Illinois American Water; Richard Mark,  
14 President of Ameren Illinois; Charles Matthews,  
15 President of Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

16 The IUBDC provides a structured forum  
17 whereby utility leaders are working today to share  
18 best practices, serve as a resource for our  
19 stakeholders, and advance our economy by increasing  
20 the utilization of diverse business partners within  
21 our companies in the State of Illinois.

22 We are collectively committed to

1 connecting businesses with valuable contacts, to  
2 expand their awareness and access to the  
3 opportunities that exist within each of our  
4 organizations, providing training, advocacy,  
5 education to diverse businesses, giving them the  
6 tools and mentoring they need to succeed when doing  
7 business with us, and we are driving accountability  
8 within our respective organizations, working towards  
9 consistent and transparent reporting that will help  
10 us more effectively collaborate and measure the  
11 impact of our efforts.

12                   Putting this vision into an actual  
13 plan has taken a significant effort and an  
14 unprecedented amount of partnership, engagement and  
15 coordination from our five utilities.

16                   Our work up front to align our  
17 strategic goals, structure the Council and  
18 establishing a governance process has admittedly  
19 taken more time than initially anticipated, but  
20 these efforts have laid the foundation for a strong  
21 and sustainable future.

22                   Since formally establishing and

1 announcing the Council in June, we have appointed  
2 six committees. I won't go into detail around the  
3 committees, but you do have a document in hand that  
4 will allow you to be able to review the structure.

5           The committees include members from  
6 different levels and departments of each of our  
7 utilities creating a developmental opportunity for  
8 employees and resulting in a diverse  
9 cross-functional team focused on driving actions and  
10 results.

11           We have made significant progress this  
12 year hosting our first two events, the Think Tank  
13 and Business Partnership Forum, on November 30th.

14           The first event created a forum for  
15 advocacy for stakeholders to engage in a discussion  
16 around the opportunities, challenges and best  
17 practices on issues of business diversity and  
18 inclusion within the State of Illinois.

19           The second event focused on  
20 matchmaking on several of our utilities' key diverse  
21 partners with upcoming infrastructure opportunities  
22 within each of our utilities.

1                   Thank you to Commissioners McCabe,  
2 del Valle and Edwards for your attendance and  
3 participation in that event.

4                   These events are great opportunities  
5 for us to learn from each other, establish best  
6 practices and recognize new opportunities for  
7 partnerships.

8                   We have also created a website,  
9 believe it or not, in six months that will give the  
10 background and mission to provide helpful  
11 information as to contacts and events for diverse  
12 businesses, and at this point Meena is going to give  
13 us a preview of that website.

14           MS. BEYERS: Good morning. I am Meena Beyers  
15 from Nicor Gas and I am also the Chair of the  
16 Communication and Awareness Committee for the  
17 Illinois Utilities Business Diversity Council.

18                   Melvin asked me to join him today to  
19 give you a very brief overview of the Council's  
20 website [www.IUBDC.com](http://www.IUBDC.com), which was just recently  
21 launched. The website provides the Council's  
22 background and mission, as well as the vision to

1 provide any of our stakeholders the opportunities to  
2 understand why the Council was formed and what the  
3 Council hopes to achieve.

4           We have an overview of the leadership  
5 of the Council, as well as supplier diversity and  
6 business diversity contacts for each utility while  
7 the Council forums continue to grow and figure out  
8 how to centralize contacts for the Council among the  
9 utilities.

10           Under our Events tab we have a  
11 Calendar of Events that will be built over the  
12 course of the year, not only will it contain the  
13 Council's events but also supplier diversity events  
14 for each individual utility, as well as events that  
15 are held by our stakeholder for anyone that may be  
16 interested in attending, so you can see we have got  
17 a national conference here, as IUBDC will be looking  
18 at the other events held by our stakeholders locally  
19 in Illinois.

20           Under our Press Room tab we have a  
21 library of our press releases that are available.  
22 You can see the one from June and the one from

1 November listed there.

2 We also want to share some success  
3 stories of the Council. Currently we have two  
4 stories listed of companies that attended our  
5 November 30th Business Partnership Forum and how  
6 their business is able to grow a little bit based on  
7 that engagement that day.

8 Also, under the Press Room we hope to  
9 have a library of videos here. We currently have  
10 one video that introduces the leadership of the  
11 IUBDC. It has each leader just explaining what the  
12 Council is, how it was formed and what it hopes to  
13 achieve. We have another video underway that  
14 provides a recap of the November 30th event as well  
15 and the library will grow over time.

16 We also want to provide photo  
17 galleries here in the Press Room, as well as media  
18 contacts for anyone who wants to provide coverage  
19 for the Council.

20 Finally, under our Resources tab this  
21 area is going to continually grow as the Council  
22 achieves its mission and vision. We have got ways



1 for advocacy groups, as well as diverse businesses,  
2 to get engaged in the community, as well as quick  
3 links to the certifying bodies throughout the state,  
4 so any businesses that are interested in getting  
5 engaged and may not be certified yet can very easy  
6 find how they can do so.

7 Also, under our Business Resources tab  
8 we have got some key definitions of supplier  
9 diversity. So as we carry out the mission of the  
10 Council, our website will grow with it. Thank you.

11 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Meena.

12 And then, as you can see,  
13 Commissioners, a lot of time and effort and a lot of  
14 talented individuals are really focused on executing  
15 around our mission and our vision for the IUBDC.

16 Meena is actually leading one of our  
17 committees and we are very, very appreciative of the  
18 efforts that's gone into specifically developing our  
19 website over the last few months. So thank you,  
20 Meena.

21 We are in the final stages of our  
22 strategic planning process for this year. We have

1 completed a swat analysis of our organizations and  
2 we have laid out a strategic plan, which was  
3 reviewed by the board this past week at our board  
4 meeting.

5 Our strategic plan identifies six  
6 strategic goals for the Council for 2016: First  
7 create an open, engaging and accountable environment  
8 that will promote contribution of each IUBDC member  
9 while enhancing business diversity initiatives  
10 amongst the participating companies --

11 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: I'm sorry. Do we have a  
12 copy of that?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: The plan?

14 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: What you are reading now.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: No, you do not have a copy of the  
16 plan. The plan is still in development. We will  
17 have the final launch in a couple of weeks and we  
18 will provide it, Commissioner Rosales.

19 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Thank you.

20 MR. WILLIAMS: -- third develop and host  
21 stakeholder forums with specific focus on business  
22 diversity, education, training, matchmaking and

1 policy and other pertinent subject matter; fourth,  
2 sustain and enhance diverse business partnerships  
3 throughout the utilities, expand education,  
4 development and access provided to qualified diverse  
5 businesses; five, utilize tools and reporting  
6 processes that assess progress, challenges and the  
7 effectiveness of our organization; and, six,  
8 demonstrate continuous improvement across processes,  
9 programs and communication.

10 Our goal is to sanction this plan over  
11 the next several weeks and align the committees in  
12 our respect organizations behind the goals and  
13 objectives as outlined in our strategic plan.

14 One of the key objectives of 2016 will  
15 be to continue the momentum we have generated  
16 through additional forums and events leading into  
17 2016.

18 Finally, I speak on behalf of the  
19 fellow board members when I say we are excited about  
20 the vision and the mission of the IUBDC. By working  
21 collectively, the member companies of the Council  
22 have added capacity to establish an accessible

1 network of industry leaders that will support the  
2 continued growth and utilization of diverse  
3 partners.

4 We remain committed to enhancing  
5 our individual business diversity efforts, making a  
6 greater impact in fueling our state's economy and  
7 honoring the core values of each one of our  
8 companies.

9 Thank you, and I'm available for  
10 questions if you have them.

11 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Thank you.

12 Commissioner McCabe.

13 COMMISSIONER McCABE: You mentioned consistent  
14 transparent reporting. What are the plans on that  
15 front in the coming year and the challenges to  
16 achieving it?

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Commissioner.

18 One of the -- the plan, first and  
19 foremost, is to continue to align within the five  
20 organizations our ability to be able to understand  
21 the information that each of our respective  
22 companies are reporting.

1                   As you might imagine when you are  
2 bringing together five organizations, each of those  
3 organizations having different processes, different  
4 systems, different means by which they're gathering,  
5 as well as reporting the information, it is quite an  
6 undertaking bringing five organizations together and  
7 trying to get into a single path around how we will  
8 be reporting, and that's going to be one of the  
9 focuses, particularly of one of our committees to  
10 ensure, and it's going to take time, particularly as  
11 a result of ensuring that that information that is  
12 being gathered within each of our respective  
13 utilities is being gathered in a consistent manner  
14 at each one of those utilities and then feeding into  
15 a central process that will allow us to gain  
16 consistency over time.

17           CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Any other questions?

18           COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Sure.

19           CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Commissioner Rosales.

20           COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Two questions that I have  
21 and I'm looking for the answers to, so that when I  
22 ask you about the recommendations that we were

1 reading, I'm looking for goals that you have set in  
2 terms of increasing the number of diverse suppliers  
3 within Illinois utilities.

4 The second question is what I'm  
5 looking for is what is the time line on achieving  
6 these goals? So I know you put this together, but  
7 that's what I'm looking for is some concrete  
8 tangible results.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Right. And we don't have specific  
10 goals related to increasing a certain number of  
11 diverse business partners, Commissioners.

12 Our goal is to ensure that we are  
13 availing ourselves among each of the utilities to  
14 ensure that we are, first and foremost, sharing our  
15 best practices, that we are sharing the  
16 opportunities within our respective companies in  
17 terms of the existing diverse business partners that  
18 we have today, and, to the extent that we can  
19 utilize leverage or allow those partners to be able  
20 to support our respective organizations, that's  
21 primarily our focus.

22 Our goal is also -- to your point

1 around how do we engage more diverse businesses into  
2 this overall process is going to be through  
3 advocacy, it's going to be through all the things  
4 that we have done last year, as well as what we are  
5 doing in terms of our strategic plan, how we connect  
6 with advocacy agencies within that state, meaning  
7 leveraging organizations like IPOs, leveraging  
8 organizations like the Illinois Black Chamber,  
9 leveraging organizations like the Illinois Hispanic  
10 Chamber, being able to create an environment that  
11 gives those diverse partners access to the Council  
12 but more specifically access to each one of our  
13 organizations.

14 Over time we will have specific  
15 measurements. We will have specific goals, but it's  
16 going to take us time in order to be able to ensure  
17 that we are aligned around our commitments,  
18 specifically related to our vision and mission of  
19 the organization, and I can't give you a specific  
20 timeline in terms of when we will get to that point  
21 but I assure you that as a part of 2016 and our  
22 strategic plan we are moving in that direction.

1           COMMISSIONER ROSALES:  Okay.  I appreciate that  
2           the IUBDC is moving forward.  I'm really looking to  
3           some tangible results.

4           MR. WILLIAMS:  I think you will find -- in fact,  
5           we will be reporting in about two months, and  
6           Commissioner, I am very confident that you will find  
7           that we have had measurable results both  
8           individually and collectively as a part of that  
9           reporting.

10          COMMISSIONER ROSALES:  Thank you.

11          COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS:  I did have a couple  
12          of questions, Mr. Chairman.

13                         Generally are the meetings open to the  
14          public or are they not?

15          MR. WILLIAMS:  The board meetings?  The board  
16          meetings are not open to the public right now.  We  
17          will create forums that we will allow advocacy  
18          groups, as well as the general public, to be able to  
19          come in and create dialogue with the Council.

20          COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS:  Okay.  With that, so  
21          what's the primary method of communication between  
22          the Council and the vendors, so to speak?



1           MR. WILLIAMS: So the primary focus has been, and  
2 this is the part of our strategic planning,  
3 Commissioners, a couple of things that we are  
4 planning to do, one is to, as I said a moment ago,  
5 create the opportunity to bring advocacy groups into  
6 specific forums so that we can create the dialogue  
7 around the mission and the vision; secondly,  
8 developing a website and other communications. We  
9 have a communications group that will be directly  
10 focused on that level of engagement with our  
11 external stakeholders and that continues to evolve,  
12 but that will be a key aspect of our strategic plan  
13 for 2016.

14           COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Just a recommendation  
15 and merely a recommendation. I know you are  
16 Chairman of the Communication and Awareness  
17 Committee.

18                           Have you all considered perhaps  
19 bringing in maybe a vendor as someone on a  
20 consulting basis just to, you know, see their  
21 perspective from your shoes? And, obviously,  
22 everyone on this Council and everyone on the

1 committees are members of the utilities. I actually  
2 love how the committees made up and I love how every  
3 utility is represented, but you guys are seeing it  
4 from one lens.

5 Have you thought about bringing  
6 somebody in from the vendor side to give their  
7 perspective, maybe what would work for them, what  
8 works maybe for some other programming and somebody  
9 on collaborative implementation?

10 MR. WILLIAMS: I will allow Meena the opportunity  
11 to discuss the communication.

12 MS. BEYERS: Thank you. Thank you,  
13 Commissioners. At one point we, as Melvin  
14 mentioned, as part of the strategic planning  
15 process, wanted to emphasize what each committee  
16 needed to do is to develop a preliminary budget.

17 As a part of the preliminary budget  
18 for the Communications Committee, we requested some  
19 funding for consulting services so we can do just  
20 that, not only be able to apply funds towards  
21 different communication methods but to bring in  
22 some consulting services to figure out what is the

1 best way to communicate as well as the frequency,  
2 because we know all these groups are very busy in  
3 the private marketplace.

4 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: I want to be clear.  
5 I was not suggesting that you retain a consultant,  
6 but perhaps you could get a vendor to join a  
7 committee, you know, just to get their perspective.

8 I do understand that a vendor can be a  
9 consultant, but you understand what I mean, more so  
10 let's say a Loretta Rosenmayer or, you know,  
11 somebody to give their perspective to see what it's  
12 like to be in the shoes of the vendor, just some  
13 idea.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you for the suggestion, and  
15 the other thing that we will ensure that happens is  
16 we are going to be meeting leverage, external  
17 partners on a number of different fronts, and one of  
18 the things that we will also ensure is that there  
19 are diverse partners that are supporting the  
20 organization as well.

21 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Okay. Thank you.

22 And then on the same front as my last

1 question how is the IUBDC funded? You probably  
2 mentioned that in your report.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: We are self-funded. Each of the  
4 organizations have made a financial commitment to  
5 collectively fund to provide the support for our  
6 budget for 2016.

7 COMMISSIONER MAYE EDWARDS: Okay. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: One more questions.

9 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Commissioner Rosales.

10 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Let me start off by saying  
11 presently you spoke about developing best practices  
12 within the State of Illinois.

13 What are your thoughts about best  
14 practices outside of the State of Illinois? Some  
15 other states seem to do a better job than we have in  
16 the past in terms of disparity and lack of diversity  
17 around suppliers.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, we have. In fact, we have  
19 Jim Lowry who, as many of you know, spoke before the  
20 Commission last year or the year prior. Jim is an  
21 important resource for the Council in order to be  
22 able to gauge what other organizations are doing

1 around the country and around the nation, and so we  
2 are relying on Jim as a critical part of our  
3 strategic planning process to be able to bring that  
4 type of information back to the Council.

5 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Any other questions?

6 (No response.)

7 Mr. Williams, thank you for being  
8 here. We appreciate all your hard work.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Commissioners.

10 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: We will move back into our  
11 Public Utility agenda briefly to approve the Minutes  
12 of our December 16, 2015 Bench Session.

13 Is there a motion to approve the  
14 edits.

15 COMMISSIONER McCABE: So move.

16 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Is there a second?

17 COMMISSIONER ROSALES: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: All those in favor say aye.

19 (Chorus of ayes.)

20 Opposed say nay.

21 (No response.)

22 The Minutes of December 16th are

1 approved.

2 We have no further items to discuss  
3 under the Public Utility Bench Session.

4 Judge Kimbrel, do we have any other  
5 items today?

6 JUDGE KIMBREL: Mr. Chairman, I see we have a  
7 FERC matter.

8 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: We had that as a place holder.  
9 We did not have an update today, but we will at our  
10 next meeting.

11 JUDGE KIMBREL: Okay. There is nothing further.

12 CHAIRMAN SHEAHAN: Commissioners, do we have any  
13 new business?

14 (No response.)

15 Hearing none, we stand adjourned.

16 Thank you.

17 (Whereupon, the above matter  
18 was adjourned.)

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