

BEFORE THE ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION)
REGULAR OPEN MEETING)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS had in the
above-entitled cause, taken by Karen Pileggi, a
Certified Realtime Reporter of said state, on
November 2, 2023 at the hour of 11:37 a.m.

1 PRESENT VIA WEBEX:

2

3 CHAIRMAN: Doug P. Scott

4

5 COMMISSIONERS: Michael T. Carrigan

6 Ann McCabe

7 Conrad R. Reddick

8 Stacey Paradis

9

10 ALSO PRESENT:

11 Judge Teague Kingsley

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23 REPORTED BY: Karen Pileggi, CSR, RPR, RMR, CRR,

24 CSR License No. 84-3404

1 (WHEREUPON, the court reporter
2 enters the meeting already in
3 progress.)

4 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Next, we'll hear from
5 Mr. Pinc.

6 Are you there?

7 MR. PINC: Yes, it's Chris Pinc. Thank you so
8 much for the opportunity to be here and to present
9 to the commission. I sincerely appreciate it.

10 Ladies and gentlemen of the commission,
11 I'd like to share my thoughts as a happy Nicor
12 customer. I live in Oak Park. I love the ability
13 to turn on the heat and take a warm shower,
14 especially when we've had crazy cold weather like
15 we've had over the past few days, and snow on
16 Halloween, which nobody appreciates here.

17 I definitely appreciate that, and I don't
18 take for granted the ability to stay warm when it's
19 cold out, or dry my clothes.

20 However, I am strongly opposed to the
21 rate increase that is being proposed for Nicor. The
22 reason for that is, that I believe very strongly
23 that the use of fossil gas is on the decline.

24 Over the past year, we have seen, already

1 in the United States, that new sales of heat pumps
2 have outpaced new sales of furnaces in our country,
3 and there are many municipalities around the country
4 that are passing ordinances to require all new
5 construction to be gas-free and all electric.

6 I am in Oak Park, as I mentioned. I'm
7 part of the Oak Park Climate Action Network, and
8 representing that group today, along with some of my
9 peers, we were part of helping pass such an
10 ordinance in Oak Park.

11 We know Chicago is considering a similar
12 ordinance. The state of Illinois is, similarly,
13 considering moving away from fossil gas towards
14 clean heat. So my concern is that this rate
15 increase is investing in a future for fossil gas
16 that is in decline.

17 I absolutely get that there needs to be
18 support for ongoing infrastructure and maintenance;
19 however, my understanding is that this investment is
20 going to go far beyond that and is assuming
21 expensive fossil gas that is not likely to happen.
22 In fact, more likely to result in us facing stranded
23 assets.

24 It reminds me of the pay phone industry

1 when cell phones came out. It made sense to
2 maintain the existing pay phones that were out
3 there, but definitely not to invest in that industry
4 in the long term.

5 I think expecting the long-term use of
6 fossil gas is an unrealistic expectation. The
7 future belongs to renewable energy. The sooner we
8 recognize this reality, the better.

9 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Pinc. I
10 appreciate your comments. I apologize for
11 mispronouncing your name.

12 Next, we'll hear from Ms. Buchanan. Are
13 you there? Susan Buchanan?

14 How about Jason Carter?

15 MR. CARTER: Yes. Hi. I'm here. How are you
16 today?

17 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Good. Thank you. You'll have
18 three minutes after you spell your name for the
19 recording.

20 MR. CARTER: My name is Jason, spelled
21 J-a-s-o-n. Last name Carter, C-a-r-t-e-r.

22 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Go ahead, sir.

23 MR. CARTER: My name is Jason Carter. I'm the
24 president of Gas Workers Union Local 18007. I've

1 been a Peoples Gas employee for 32 years and have
2 been in various union leadership roles since 2008.

3 I represent, approximately, 900 hourly
4 employees of Peoples Gas who are responsible for
5 safely delivering natural gas and staffing the
6 customer care center.

7 Our membership is almost 80 percent
8 diverse, 30 percent of veterans, more than half live
9 in the city and are also customers of PGL and
10 95 percent live in the Chicagoland area. We reflect
11 the diversity of PGL's customer base.

12 I'm here to speak on and emphasize the
13 commission on several key points. My first point is
14 to urge the commission to approve the funding
15 required to continue the safety modernization
16 program at its current pace.

17 I am a Senior Service Specialist No. 1
18 and I see firsthand the poor condition of our
19 underground pipes. I can confirm for you that what
20 the engineering experts are telling you about the
21 underground pipes reaching the end of its useful
22 life is true.

23 My members' safety is of the utmost
24 importance to me. Equally important is the safety

1 of our customers. The work to replace the natural
2 gas delivery system, as well as to maintain it,
3 requires a skilled, experienced workforce.

4 We strongly urge the commission to
5 approve the additional union head counts requested
6 by Peoples Gas. Becoming skilled and experienced
7 takes time, years. The number of experienced gas
8 worker union field employees has been declining and
9 that trend must be reversed.

10 For the past three years we have seen
11 more than 25 percent of our membership retire or
12 leave Peoples Gas and that trend is expected to
13 continue over the next several years.

14 The negotiated hiring path commitments
15 must be paired with additional union head counts
16 requested by the company.

17 We also ask the commission to monitor on
18 an ongoing basis the filling of these positions so
19 that we can begin to grow the skills and experience
20 the next generation of gas worker union employees
21 and that folks like me can hand down our knowledge
22 before we leave. Improved head count and rates
23 should not go unfilled.

24 The evidence in the record of this case

1 highlight the effects of these problems: increasing
2 gas leak response time, the increasing number of gas
3 leaks not responded to within 60 minutes, and not
4 having enough gas workers to complete the meter
5 change-outs under the safety modernization program.

6 Additional union head count will solve
7 these very real issues. Today, only about one-third
8 of Peoples Gas customer calls are handled here in
9 Chicago. The rest are sent out of state or out of
10 the country to nonunion contractors.

11 Why are the customers of Peoples Gas
12 subsidizing the economies of other states and other
13 countries when Chicago's diverse residents could
14 benefit from good-paying careers?

15 Our call center contract is up for
16 negotiation next year and we urge the commission to
17 approve an increased budget that reflect today's
18 inflationary economy so it can combat the high
19 turnover.

20 It is a fact that customer satisfaction
21 scores --

22 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Mr. Carter, your -- your three
23 minutes are up, Mr. Carter. Thank you.

24 MR. CARTER: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Next, we'll hear from
2 Mr. Lavin.

3 Mr. Lavin, are you there?

4 MR. LAVIN: I'm here. Jack Lavin, J-a-c-k,
5 L-a-v-i-n.

6 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: You've got three minutes.
7 Thanks very much. Go right ahead, sir.

8 MR. LAVIN: Good morning, Chair Scott, and
9 distinguished commissioners. Thank you for this
10 opportunity.

11 My name is Jack Lavin, president and CEO
12 of the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. On behalf
13 of the more than 1,000 member businesses across
14 every sector and size represented by the Chicagoland
15 chamber, in addition to the wide array of small
16 businesses, not-for-profits, and civic partners
17 within our network, I want to speak to you in
18 support of the proposed rate case before the
19 commission.

20 One of the most significant selling
21 points and competitive advantages that Illinois has
22 to offer businesses wanting to do business in this
23 state is access to low cost and reliable energy.

24 In a time when labor shortages, product

1 delays and increased costs of goods have created
2 incredibly uncertain economic times, the
3 availability of reliable energy is vital to the
4 continued recovery of our state and regional
5 economy.

6 State regulators must consider the
7 importance of the significant investments being made
8 by key energy providers to ensure Illinois
9 businesses and residents alike have access to safe,
10 reliable and environmentally sustainable energy they
11 depend on, especially as weather patterns continue
12 to increasingly become unpredictable.

13 Peoples Gas' present rate case, it should
14 be noted, would represent the first time in nearly a
15 decade that Peoples Gas is requesting a general
16 increase in rates.

17 The proposal is the result of several
18 market factors, including increased costs and demand
19 for improved and expanded services for the over
20 884,000 Chicago customers that are serviced by
21 Peoples Gas.

22 In order to ensure that their heating
23 systems protect people's health, lives and safety,
24 Peoples Gas needs to be able to withstand the very

1 harshest of weather conditions.

2 The product of this rate increase will
3 result in better, cleaner service, especially when
4 you consider that some pipes in their system are
5 nearly at the end of their useful lives.

6 It should also be made clear that the
7 filing is not expected to increase the bottom line
8 of a typical customer's bill.

9 With natural gas prices forecasted to
10 decline this year, and in 2024, customer bills are
11 expected to stay largely flat as new rates take
12 effect next year.

13 Keeping costs down and improving service
14 delivery are central to the proposal and, of course,
15 the investments would be powered -- powered by this
16 rate case will, ultimately, continue to support the
17 thousands of union jobs that Peoples Gas employs and
18 the millions of dollars in contracts that are
19 effectuated to diverse and minority suppliers.

20 In short, the work being done by Peoples
21 Gas supports economic development and jobs in the
22 Chicagoland area and will ensure that Chicago has a
23 world class infrastructure that will be efficient,
24 reliable and able to transition into a new

1 generation of heating sources such as renewable
2 natural gas and hydrogen when commercially
3 available.

4 The rate case is balanced, reasonable and
5 a necessary proposal that will help Chicago
6 residents and businesses have access to continued
7 reliable and affordable energy while supporting
8 thousands of workers that fuel Chicago's economy.

9 For these reasons, we urge the
10 commission's favorable support. Thank you for your
11 time.

12 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Lavin.

13 I'm going to go back to the two folks we
14 missed the first time through.

15 Is Mr. William Arnold with us?
16 Mr. Arnold?

17 How about Susan Buchanan? Last call.

18 Okay. That concludes our request to
19 speak.

20 Moving on to our transportation agenda.
21 There are edits to the October 5th, 2023
22 transportation regular open meeting minutes.

23 Are there any objections to approving the
24 minutes as edited? Hearing none, the minutes are

1 approved as edited.

2 Item RR1 concerns a public safety
3 improvement project in Lawrence County. The order
4 approves the project, project cost allocation and
5 project deadline.

6 Are there any objections to approving the
7 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

8 This concludes our transportation agenda.
9 Moving on to our public utilities agenda.

10 There are edits to the September 28th
11 bipartisan infrastructure law and Inflation
12 Reduction Act policy session minutes, as well as the
13 September 28th and October 5th, 2023 public
14 utilities regular open meeting minutes.

15 Are there any objections to approving the
16 minutes as edited? Hearing none, the minutes are
17 approved as edited.

18 Items E1 through E3 concern petitions for
19 emergency relief to protect confidential versions of
20 the petitioner's reports of electric rates. The
21 orders deny the petitions finding that the statute
22 requires Aeries to make current rate information
23 available to the public.

24 Are there any objections to approving the

1 orders? Hearing none, the orders are approved.

2 Item E4 concerns reconciliation of
3 revenues collected by Mt. Carmel under its fuel
4 adjustment charges for 2022. The order approves the
5 reconciliation as set in the appendix to the order.

6 Are there any objections to approving the
7 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

8 Item E5 concerns a citation for failure
9 to comply with part 454 of the commission rules.
10 The respondent has since appeared before the
11 commission to show that it is now compliant with the
12 commission's rules. The order suspends the
13 respondent's certificate of service authority for
14 90 days.

15 There are substantive edits to the order.
16 The edits reduce the suspension to 30 days. The
17 edits find that the company's single violation and
18 efforts to reestablish compliance with the
19 commission's rule are consistent with recent
20 decisions, notably Dockets 23-0296 and 23-0293,
21 where the commission issued a 30-day suspension.

22 Is there a motion to move the edits?

23 COMMISSIONER McCABE: So moved.

24 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Moved by Commissioner McCabe.

1 Is there a second?

2 Seconded by Commissioner Reddick.

3 Are there any objections to approving the
4 edits? Hearing none, the edits are approved.

5 Are there any objections to approving the
6 order as edited? Hearing none, the order as edited
7 is approved.

8 Items E6 through E8 concern applications
9 for licenses to operate as retail electric agents,
10 brokers and consultants in Illinois. The orders
11 grant the licenses finding that applicants meet the
12 requirements.

13 Are there any objections to considering
14 these items together and approving the orders?
15 Hearing none, the orders are approved.

16 Items E9 through E15 concern applications
17 for certification to install distributed generation
18 facilities in Illinois. The orders grant the
19 certificates finding that the applicants meet the
20 requirements.

21 Are there any objections to considering
22 these items together and approving the orders?
23 Hearing none, the orders are approved.

24 Items E16 and E17 concern applications

1 for certificates of service authority to install,
2 maintain and repair electric vehicle charging
3 stations. The orders grant the certificates finding
4 that the applicants meet the requirements.

5 Are there any objections to considering
6 these items together and approving the orders?

7 Hearing none, the orders are approved.

8 Item E18 concerns Ameren's petition for
9 authority to incur up to \$300 million in debt
10 pursuant to Section 6-102 Sub D of the Public
11 Utilities Act. The order grants the authority.

12 Are there any objections to approving the
13 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

14 Items E19 through E30 concern
15 applications for certification to install energy
16 efficiency measures in Illinois. The orders grant
17 the certificates finding that the applicants meet
18 the requirements.

19 Are there any objections to considering
20 these items together and approving the orders?

21 Hearing none, the orders are approved.

22 Moving on to our gas items. Item G1
23 concerns a petition for confidential treatment of
24 the petitioner's annual rate report. The order

1 denies the petition, finding that information in the
2 report must be made available to the public.

3 Are there any objections to approving the
4 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

5 Item G2 concerns Mt. Carmel's petition to
6 reconcile revenues under gas adjustment charges for
7 the 2022 calendar year. The order approves the
8 reconciliation as set in the appendix to the order
9 finding that the costs during the reconciliation
10 period were prudently incurred.

11 Are there any objections to approving the
12 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

13 Item G3 concerns a complaint against
14 Peoples Gas in Chicago. The order denies the
15 complaint finding that the complainant failed to
16 state a cause of action that would be actionable
17 under the Public Utilities Act, commission rules or
18 commission-approved tariffs.

19 Are there any objections to approving the
20 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

21 Items G4 and G5 concern complaints
22 against Peoples Gas and Nicor in Chicago and
23 Rockford, respectively.

24 The parties in both dockets have filed a

1 stipulation and a joint motion to dismiss,
2 indicating that all matters in the disputes have
3 been settled.

4 The ALJ is recommending granting the
5 motions and dismissing the matters with prejudice.

6 Are there any objections to hearing these
7 items together, granting the motions and dismissing
8 the matters with prejudice? Hearing none, the
9 motions are granted and the matters are dismissed
10 with prejudice.

11 Moving on to our telecommunications
12 items. Item T1 concerns a petition to cancel
13 service authority to provide commercial radio
14 service. The order cancels the certificate.

15 Are there any objections to approving the
16 order? Hearing none, the order is approved.

17 Moving on to water and sewer. Items W1
18 through W3 concern reconciliations under various
19 riders for Aqua Illinois and Illinois American
20 Water.

21 The orders approve the reconciliations as
22 set forth in the appendices to the orders finding
23 that the costs for each reconciliation were
24 prudently incurred.

1 Are there any objections to hearing these
2 items together and approving the orders? Hearing
3 none, the orders are approved.

4 Items W4 and W5 concern petitions by
5 Illinois American Water and Aqua for a certificate
6 of public convenience and necessity to provide
7 wastewater and water service and for the approval of
8 the purchase of certain assets.

9 The companies seek commission approval of
10 the engagement agreements for the appraisers who
11 will determine the market value of the facilities to
12 be acquired by each utility. The interim orders
13 approve the appraiser engagement agreements.

14 Are there any objections to hearing these
15 items together and approving the interim orders?
16 Hearing none, the interim orders are approved.

17 Moving on to other business. Items 01
18 and 02 concern approval of batches, contracts and
19 confirmations under the Illinois Adjustable Block
20 Program and the Illinois Solar For All Program.

21 Are there any objections to considering
22 these items together and to approving the program
23 administrator submissions? Hearing none, the
24 submissions are approved.

1 This concludes our public utilities
2 agenda.

3 Judge Teague Kingsley, do we have any
4 other matters to come before the commission today?

5 JUDGE KINGSLEY: No, Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN SCOTT: Thank you.

7 Do the commissioners have any other
8 business to discuss? Hearing none, and without
9 objections, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

10 (WHEREUPON, at 11:55 a.m.,
11 the proceedings were adjourned.)

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF DUPAGE)

4 I, KAREN L. PILEGGI, a Certified
5 Shorthand Reporter of the State of Illinois, do
6 hereby certify that I reported in shorthand the
7 proceedings had at the hearing aforesaid, and that
8 the foregoing is a true, complete and correct
9 transcript of the proceedings of said hearing as
10 appears from my stenographic notes so taken and
11 transcribed under my personal direction.

12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I do hereunto
13 set my hand at Chicago, Illinois, this 18th day of
14 November, 2023.

15
16 *Karen L Pileggi*

17 Certified Shorthand Reporter

18
19
20 CSR Certificate No. 84-3404

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22
23
24



Magna

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