

**Minutes of the  
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's  
Consumer Advisory Council**

**Meeting of May 23, 2017**

P.O. Box 3265

[www.puc.pa.gov](http://www.puc.pa.gov)

Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Chairman Ralph Douglass called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

The Council could not approve the minutes for the January 24, 2017, meeting due to not having a quorum.

**Attendance**

The following members of the Council were present:

Ralph Douglass, Chairman  
Troy Geanopolos (telephone)

Joe Toner (telephone)

The following members of the Council were unable to be present:

Tim Hennessey, Vice Chairman  
Lillian Carpenter  
Patrick Cicero  
Chad Quinn  
Tina Serafini

George Silvestri  
Bill Sterner  
Lee Tolbert  
Javier Toro

Public Utility Commission Staff Present:

Joe Witmer, Chairman Brown's Office  
Labros Pilalis, Vice Chairman Place's Office  
Matt Totino, Commissioner Coleman's Office  
Regina Matz, Commissioner Sweet's Office  
Angela Kassahun, Commissioner Sweet's Office  
Tom Charles, Office of Communications  
Lori Shumberger, Office of Communications  
Rhonda Daviston, Law Bureau  
Tom Beene, Legislative Affairs  
Matt Hrivnak, Bureau of Consumer Services

Guests Present:

Christopher Cardenas, PPL  
Melinda Stumpf, PPL  
Heather Yoder, Office of Consumer Advocate

## Legislative Update

Tom Beene, from Legislative Affairs, was asked to give an update on legislation.

Tom Beene said the legislative session has been quiet, but will be getting busy very soon.

Senate Bill 242, One Call legislation, is in the Senate. At this time, the Senate is reviewing some language. On June 5, there will be a House hearing. Ralph Douglass asked if the PUC will gain enforcement authority over One Call. Tom Beene said yes.

Tom Beene said the nuclear caucus has met, but there is no legislation yet. The caucus is trying to put language together. Ralph Douglass said nuclear energy is not in much demand as it once was. Tom Beene said, by the next meeting, there should be more to report.

Ralph Douglass asked about solar and home installation. Tom Beene said the net metering program is under discussion.

Tom Beene than said Commissioner Coleman's term is up and he would like to be reappointed for another term. At this time, no one has heard anything yet.

Tom Beene said Commissioner Powelson has been nominated to serve on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by President Trump. The nomination hearing will be held on Thursday, May 25, 2017. Anyone can watch the hearing online.

Tom Beene believes Governor Wolf is planning to nominate two Commissioners at one time, (renomination of Commissioner Coleman and a possible replacement for Commissioner Powelson) but may not be able to, due to the time. Both nominees will be Republicans since the other three Commissioners are Democrats.

House Bill 373 is the Commission's budget. The budget was introduced in both the House and Senate. Our budget looks good, but it is still early. Ralph Douglass asked if the Commission is asking for more money. Tom Beene said yes.

## Chapter 56, Comprehensive Review of Programs and Energy Affordability for Low-Income Customers, and Terminations/Reconnections Updates

Ralph Douglass said the Council's comments for Chapter 56 were submitted, and he thanked Tom Charles and Lori Shumberger for their help.

Matt Hrivnak, from the Bureau of Consumer Services, was invited to give an update on Chapter 56, comprehensive reviews of programs and energy affordability for low-income customers, and terminations and reconnection numbers.

Matt Hrivnak said the Chapter 56 comment period is closed, and the staff is reviewing the comments. Ralph Douglass asked about the next step. Matt Hrivnak said staff is meeting

to discuss how to proceed. All comments must be reviewed and then the PUC will determine the next step.

At the March 16 Public Meeting, the PUC approved a Joint Motion introduced by Vice Chairman Place and Commissioner Sweet to initiate a study regarding affordable home energy burdens for low-income consumers. A copy of the Motion, Secretarial Letter, information on energy assistance programs from the PUC web site and press releases are in the packets.

In May, the PUC issued an order on the study and BCS will finalize the scope around mid-June. BCS will work with other PUC offices on the study. The study will determine what the energy burden is to low-income households. There may need to be changes done to the energy programs.

In the April Joint Motion, the request for a broad evaluation of the PUC policies related to universal service and energy conservation programs. The Law Bureau is doing a review on the statutory and legislative requirements. The PUC has started reviewing the Low Income Usage Reduction Program (LIURP) program at this time.

This study will serve as a starting point for evaluation of the effectiveness of customer assistance programs (CAP) and other universal service programs by the Commission.

Ralph Douglass asked who is working on the study. Matt Hrivnak said the Law Bureau and BCS. The Law Bureau hopes to issue their comments by this summer. Once the comments are received, the PUC plans to hold a stakeholder meeting and could reconvene the working group. The PUC hopes to have everything final by next January and February.

Ralph Douglass asked why the PUC is looking into this issue now. Matt Hrivnak said the CAP program has not been updated since 1992, and the programs need to be brought up to date.

Matt Hrivnak said there are many opportunities for the Council to be involved with comments or stakeholder meetings.

The March terminations and reconnection numbers are lower than 2016, but the utility companies are still under the winter termination procedures. The April numbers are back to regular termination procedures. The PGW numbers are higher than 2016. In 2016, PGW had phone issues that kept the numbers lower than 2017.

Ralph Douglass asked, if a consumer had a medical condition that needed the air conditioning, would that keep the utility from terminating a household. Matt Hrivnak said if a consumer had a doctor's medical certificate, then the utility cannot terminate the service.

## Council Appointments and Elections

Tom Charles said he has worked with Colin Scott to recommend the ratification of the Council's appointments at the June Public Meeting. There will be two new members to be appointed, and Lee Tolbert requested not to be reappointed.

Troy Geanopulos and Ralph Douglass will be reappointed by the legislative members. Joe Toner also requested to be reappointed to Council by the PUC.

At the July meeting, the new members can attend and the Chairman and Vice Chairman positions of the Council will be voted on and appointed.

Tom Charles stated that Ralph Douglass has only served one term as Council Chairman and could be appointed for a second term as Chairman.

## Subcommittee Discussion

Troy Geanopulos said the PUC is changing the way municipalities can sell wastewater treatment plants for closer to their value. It is very hard for municipalities to stay up to date on the equipment which can change how they are valued. He would like to receive information on this. Tom Charles said he would look into this issue for a future agenda.

Joe Toner brought up the Sunoco pipeline and legislation on eminent domain. There are still people out there that believe they can stop the pipeline. Ralph Douglass said Penn pipeline has the same issues. Troy Geanopulos stated the Texas pipelines will be starting again. Tom Charles said he would look into this issue for a future agenda.

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