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| ` | **PENNSYLVANIA**  **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**  **Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265** | | |  |
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|  | | Public Meeting held June 9, 2011 | | |
| Commissioners Present: | | |  | |
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| Robert F. Powelson, Chairman | | |  | |
| John F. Coleman, Jr., Vice Chairman | | | | |
| Tyrone J. Christy | | | | |
| Wayne E. Gardner  James H. Cawley | | | | |
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| License Application of MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group for Approval to Offer, Render, Furnish or Supply Electricity or Electric Generation Services as a Broker/Marketer | | | A-2011-2235458 | |
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**ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSION:**

On September 29, 2010, MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group (Smith Energy Group) filed an application seeking to become a licensed electric generation supplier (EGS) in all of the electric distribution company (EDC) service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The application was filed pursuant to the Commission’s regulations at 52 Pa. Code §§ 54.31-54.43, which became effective on August 8, 1998, and which were established under Section 2809 of the Public Utility Code, 66 Pa. C.S. § 2809.

§ 2809 provides, in pertinent part, that:

License Requirement.--No person or corporation, including municipal corporations which choose to provide service outside their municipal limits except to the extent provided prior to the effective date of this chapter, brokers and marketers, aggregators and other entities, shall engage in the business of an electric generation supplier in this Commonwealth unless the person or corporation holds a license issued by the Commission.

An electric generation supplier is defined as:

A person or corporation, including municipal corporations which choose to provide service outside their municipal limits except to the extent provided prior to the effective date of this chapter, brokers and marketers, aggregators or any other entities, that sells to end-use customers electricity or related services utilizing the jurisdictional transmission and distribution facilities of an electric distribution company or that purchases, brokers, arranges or markets electricity or related services for sale to end-use customers utilizing the jurisdictional transmission and distribution facilities of an electric distribution company.

66 Pa. C.S. § 2803 (in pertinent part).

MobileNET, Inc. is a domestic corporation as registered by the Pennsylvania Department of State on September 5, 1995, and authorized to operate under the fictitious name Smith Energy Group on September 30, 2010. Smith Energy Group proposes to act as a broker/marketer of electricity to all customer classes in all of the EDC service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Smith Energy Group will prepare requests for proposals on behalf of its clients and act as an agent or intermediary in the sale and purchase of electricity. Smith Energy Group will present its clients with the option of being charged an up-front fee for consultation services or having Smith Energy Group’s commission included in the rate for electricity. Smith Energy Group states that at no time will it take title to electricity nor will it pay bills on behalf of its clients.

Since Smith Energy Group proposes to provide EGS services to residential customers it is required to comply with, and be governed by, applicable Chapter 56 residential service regulations as set forth in the Commission Order *Guidelines for Maintaining Customer Service at the Same Level of Quality Pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. § 2807(d), and Assuring Conformance with 52 Pa. Code Chapter 56 Pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. § 2809(e) and (f)*, at Docket No. M-00960890 F0011, Order entered July 11, 1997*.* Thus, we deem it appropriate to reiterate certain items with respect to Chapter 56 of our regulations. Chapter 56 (52 Pa Code Chapter 56) is applicable to residential accounts. An EGS cannot physically disconnect a residential customer from the electricity grid; therefore, the rules relating to residential service termination are not applicable to electric generation suppliers. An EGS may seek to terminate its generation service through an appropriate written notice to the customer and the distribution company. The residential customer can then attempt to repair their relationship with the supplier, seek a new supplier, or return to utility service at default service rates in accordance with the utility's obligations under Section 2807(e), 66 Pa. C.S. § 2807(e). The customer would only be disconnected from the electricity grid pursuant to appropriate regulations if the customer failed to meet its obligations to the utility or the electric generation supplier that has been designated by the Commission as the provider of last resort.

Additionally, we specifically note that the licensee must comply with, and ensure that its employees, agents, representatives, and independent contractors and subcontractors comply with the standards of conduct and disclosure for licensees set out in Commission regulations at 52 Pa. Code § 54.43 that were enacted to protect consumers of this Commonwealth. These standards include, *inter alia,* the provision of timely and accurate information about the services offered by the licensee, the practice of nondiscrimination in service in regard to race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, etc., the safeguarding of a consumer’s personal information, and compliance with applicable state and federal consumer protection laws. Also, we take this opportunity to remind the licensee of its agreement to abide by, and to ensure that its employees, representatives, agents, and independent contractors and subcontractors abide by all applicable federal and state laws, and Commission regulations, procedures and orders, including Emergency Orders, which may be issued verbally or in writing during any emergency situations that may unexpectedly develop from time to time in the course of doing business in Pennsylvania. *See, for example*, 52 Pa. Code § 54.43(f) (“A licensee is responsible for any fraudulent deceptive or other unlawful marketing or billing acts performed by the licensee, its employees, agents or representatives.”).

Smith Energy Group has provided proof of publication in Pennsylvania newspapers of general circulation in the geographical territories affected by the application and proofs of service to the interested parties as required by the Commission.

Regarding the financial and technical fitness requirements of the license application, Smith Energy Group has provided two years of federal tax returns including full schedules of assets, liabilities and retained earnings. Smith Energy Group has also supplied professional resume information for its President in addition to organizational charts and a summary of its experience in the consulting and utility industries. Sufficient information has been provided by Smith Energy Group to demonstrate its financial and technical fitness in order to be licensed as a broker/marketer in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Smith Energy Group did not provide a $250,000 bond as required by the license application; however, it did provide a bond in the amount of $10,000 and requests that the Commission reduce its security requirement from $250,000 to $10,000. In support of this request, Smith Energy Group states that it will be operating as a broker between customers and providers of electricity. Smith Energy Group further asserts that it will not take title to electricity nor will it pay electric bills on behalf of its clients.

The Commission believes that the reasoning on which Smith Energy Group bases its request for a bond reduction from $250,000 to $10,000 is similar to that offered by the other EGSs that have successfully petitioned the Commission for a bonding level of $10,000. Two of the EGSs are Co-eXprise, Inc. (Co-eX), at Docket No. A-110166, whose request was granted January 20, 2006, and Premier Energy Solutions (Premier), at Docket No. A-110170, whose request was granted July 26, 2006. In the case of Co-eX, the company explained that, as a consultant, it will provide its customers with an evaluation and selection process from which to select the best positioned licensed electricity supplier/generator and award business. In the case of Premier, the company explained that it requested an EGS license to become EDI certified with the utilities, in order to be able to efficiently and effectively obtain electricity usage information for the customers to whom it provides consulting services. Premier intended to utilize the information to help its customers reduce their overall spending for electricity. Premier also stated that it will not take title to electricity.

The Commission believes that Smith Energy Group operates in a similar manner and therefore should be granted similar relief and be permitted to provide a bond or other approved security in the reduced amount of $10,000. However, Smith Energy Group’s bonding level is contingent upon the company’s business model as described in this Order. If Smith Energy Group takes title to generation supply for its customers, and/or charges customers directly for that generation supply, a $10,000 level of bonding may not be appropriate. Therefore, we will direct Smith Energy Group to notify the Commission 45 days prior to a change in its business model, whereby Smith Energy Group takes title to generation supply and/or bills its customers directly for that generation supply. This will provide the Commission with an opportunity to review and adjust Smith Energy Group’s approved bonding level prior to Smith Energy Group implementing those changes.

As of May 31, 2011, no protests have been filed.

We find that the applicant:

1. Is fit, willing and able to properly perform the service proposed in conformance with applicable provisions of the Public Utility Code and lawful Commission Orders and regulations.

2. Has agreed to lawfully abide by all Commission regulations, procedures and Orders, including Emergency Orders, which may be issued verbally or in writing during any emergency situations that may unexpectedly develop from time to time in the course of doing business in Pennsylvania.

We further find that the proposed service, to the extent authorized by the license, will be consistent with the public interest and the policy declared in the Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act.

Upon full consideration of all matters of record, we find that approval of this application is necessary and proper for the service, accommodation and convenience of the public; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the application of MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group is hereby approved, consistent with this Order.

2. That MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group’s request for a reduction in the bond level from $250,000 to $10,000 is hereby granted.

3. That the security amount of $10,000 shall remain in effect for MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group as long as MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group does not make a change to its business model in Pennsylvania, whereby it would take title to generation supply and/or bill its customers directly for generation supply.

4. That a license be issued authorizing MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group to begin to offer, render, furnish or supply electric generation supplier services to all customer classes in all of the electric distribution company service territories throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

5. That if MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group proposes to change its business model as described in Ordering Paragraph No. 3, it must notify the Commission at least 45 days prior to the changes. With the notice, MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group must provide an update to the nature and scope of business information that was required by 52 Pa. Code § 54.40(c) to justify the modification granted in Ordering Paragraph No. 3. This will provide the Commission the opportunity to review MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group’s bonding level and adjust as appropriate, prior to MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group implementing the proposed changes to its business model.

6. That if MobileNET, Inc. d/b/a Smith Energy Group changes its business model without providing to the Commission the notice and information required in Ordering Paragraph No. 5, then the reduced bonding level permitted by Ordering Paragraph No. 2 shall cease effective with the date of the change in the business model. The level of bonding effective at that time shall be $250,000 or the level required by 52 Pa. Code § 54.40, whichever is greater.

7. That this proceeding at Docket No. A-2011-2235458 be closed.

**BY THE COMMISSION,**



Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: June 9, 2011

ORDER ENTERED: June 10, 2011