

WITNESS INDEX

WITNESSES

DIRECT CROSS REDIRECT RECRSS

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- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24
- 25

EXHIBIT INDEX

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
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P R O C E E D I N G S

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2 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE JOHN H. CORBETT, JR.: We're
3 on the record at this time. This is the time and place
4 scheduled for a telephonic hearing on the complaint of
5 Sharon Johnson versus The Peoples Natural Gas Company doing
6 business as Dominion Peoples. This complaint was docketed
7 with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission at No.
8 C-20066947.

9 I'm Administrative Law Judge John Corbett, and I've
10 been assigned to hear this case and to render an initial
11 decision. We have on the telephone this afternoon Sharon
12 Johnson representing herself, Horace Payne representing The
13 Peoples Natural Gas Company, and a witness for Peoples by
14 the name of Terry Richey.

15 I should note for the benefit of the parties and for
16 the record that I'm sitting in a hearing room in Pittsburgh
17 with a court reporter. The court reporter is taking down
18 stenographically everything that we say while we are on the
19 record, but she is also running a tape-recorded backup. So
20 I alert the parties to the fact that everything that we say
21 while we are on the record is being tape-recorded.

22 I ask the parties to get as close to the speaker and
23 the phone as they can, speak up loudly and clearly, and try
24 to let only one party at a time talk. That way we'll get a
25 clear record of what transpires here this afternoon.

1 If, on the other hand, you don't hear something that
2 is said, then please feel free to interrupt and ask me to
3 have the party repeat whatever was said that you missed.

4 With those preliminary remarks out of the way, then
5 we'll turn to the matter at hand. Ms. Johnson, I've read
6 your complaint and the answer filed by Peoples. There seems
7 to be a dispute concerning the charges that Peoples claims
8 is due on these accounts.

9 At this point what I usually do is ask the parties if
10 they'd like to take a few minutes before we begin to hear
11 testimony to discuss this matter between themselves off the
12 record to see if the two sides can come together to reach
13 some kind of a settlement or a resolution.

14 Now, before going on the record Mr. Payne indicated
15 that he and his witness, Terry Richey, have discussed this
16 matter with you several weeks ago. Would it be worthwhile
17 at this point to take a few more minutes to discuss this
18 matter further to see if the two sides can settle this case?

19 MS. JOHNSON: So what are you saying you want us to
20 do?

21 JUDGE CORBETT: Well, I'm asking you if you want to
22 take a few minutes to discuss this between yourselves to see
23 if you can resolve it.

24 MS. JOHNSON: I thought that's what the call was
25 about.

1 JUDGE CORBETT: No, this call is about a hearing,
2 ma'am. I'll give you a few minutes to discuss this matter
3 between yourselves if you want, and if you can resolve the
4 matter then, fine, I'll come back and we can then close the
5 record. But if the parties are unable to settle it then
6 we'll proceed immediately into a hearing.

7 MS. JOHNSON: Right. Okay. Well, I have already
8 tried to discuss it with them, and they're still keeping,
9 you know, their resolution of what they're saying I owe
10 them.

11 JUDGE CORBETT: All right. Then I just want to make
12 sure that the parties have one last opportunity to discuss
13 this matter. I'll be glad to leave the room and you can
14 discuss this between yourselves.

15 MS. RICHEY: We would be willing to discuss this.

16 MR. PAYNE: Yes, we would take another crack at it if
17 Ms. Johnson is willing to do the same.

18 MS. JOHNSON: Okay.

19 JUDGE CORBETT: All right. Very good. Then what I'll
20 do is in a minute I'll leave the hearing room. The court
21 reporter will remain here, but she will not take down
22 anything that you say while you are talking or discussing
23 this matter among yourselves. The court reporter will only
24 remain here to monitor the telephone equipment.

25 The Commission encourages parties to try to settle a

1 case like this. I personally believe it is better for the
2 parties to try to resolve a matter like this among
3 themselves rather than have me hear the case and then later
4 write a discussion that may be unsatisfactory to everyone.
5 So I encourage you to try to settle it if at all possible.

6 When you're ready for me to return to the hearing
7 room, just let the court reporter know and she'll summon me
8 from another part of the office. The court reporter's name
9 is Karen Cross, and when you're ready for me to return just
10 let her know.

11 At this point it is now about 1:38 in the afternoon
12 and we'll take a short recess. The hearing is now in recess
13 at this point. Thank you.

14 (Discussion held off the record.)

15 JUDGE CORBETT: It is now approximately, let's call
16 it, 10:40, I'm sorry, 2:40. Have the parties been able to
17 resolve this matter?

18 MR. PAYNE: Yes, we have, Your Honor.

19 JUDGE CORBETT: Mr. Payne, would you do the honors,
20 please, of summarizing for us the terms of settlement,
21 please.

22 MR. PAYNE: Yes, Your Honor. Your Honor, this matter
23 involves three finalized accounts. There's one at 1360
24 Virginia Avenue, 612 Franklin Street, and 325 Horner Street.
25 Dominion has, and the customer agrees with this, we've gone

1 in and we've made adjustments to the various accounts
2 whereby we have a new final account balance. It's the
3 compromised amount of \$1,219.98.

4 JUDGE CORBETT: All right. And there's no agreement
5 about the restoration of service or anything along that
6 line?

7 MR. PAYNE: Well, at the present time, Your Honor,
8 she's not a customer of Dominion Peoples. She's looking to
9 become a customer again, at which time she will be calling
10 Ms. Terry Richey, who spoke with her during our settlement
11 discussion pretty extensively, giving her her telephone
12 number and what have you.

13 When Ms. Johnson is ready to move into her new
14 apartment she's going to call Ms. Richey, and we will then
15 work with this 1,219.98 in terms of putting her on, perhaps,
16 a payment plan but more importantly, perhaps, being able to
17 get her into some other program that might be helpful to
18 her.

19 JUDGE CORBETT: Okay. Ms. Johnson, you've heard the
20 terms of the settlement as proposed by Mr. Payne. Do you
21 have any questions or comments with regards to those terms?

22 MS. JOHNSON: No, I don't.

23 JUDGE CORBETT: Do you understand and do you now wish
24 to withdraw your complaint?

25 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, I would like to withdraw my

1 complaint.

2 JUDGE CORBETT: Okay. Do you understand that you will
3 be bound by the terms of this settlement?

4 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.

5 JUDGE CORBETT: Okay. At this point, Mr. Payne, what
6 I would ask you to do is when you return to the office
7 prepare a letter of satisfaction for me--

8 MR. PAYNE: Yes, Your Honor.

9 JUDGE CORBETT: --indicating that the parties have
10 been able to settle this matter and send a copy to Ms.
11 Johnson and also fax a copy of that letter to me.

12 As soon as I receive a copy of that letter then I
13 will, in turn, send it to Harrisburg with a note to have the
14 docket in this case closed. The parties may receive a
15 notice from the secretary for the Commission indicating that
16 unless either party objects the docket will close within ten
17 days.

18 Does either party have any questions with regard to
19 the procedure from this point forward?

20 MR. PAYNE: Nothing from Dominion, Your Honor.

21 JUDGE CORBETT: Okay. Then any final comments, Mr.
22 Payne, before we adjourn?

23 MR. PAYNE: Yes. I'd just like to thank Ms. Johnson
24 for taking that one last try with us in terms of sitting
25 down and trying to work this out, which we did. I thank Ms.

1 Richey, of course, for doing an excellent job again at
2 working with the customer. I think everybody is going to
3 walk away from here pretty happy.

4 Is that correct, Ms. Johnson?

5 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, correct. I thank you, too, Ms.--
6 What's her name again?

7 MR. PAYNE: Richey.

8 MS. JOHNSON: Ms. Richey, I thank you so much for
9 being polite and being patient with me also.

10 MS. RICHEY: You're very welcome.

11 JUDGE CORBETT: Well, I thank the parties for their
12 participation and cooperation. The hearing is now
13 adjourned. Thank you very much.

14 MR. PAYNE: Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, at 2:42 p.m., the hearing adjourned.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter, that the foregoing proceedings were taken stenographically by me, and thereafter reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction; and that this transcript is a true and accurate record to the best of my ability.

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