

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

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STATE OF NEW YORK
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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CASE 16-W-0259 - Proceeding on Motion of the
Commission as to the Rates,
Charges, Rules & Regulations of
New York American Water
Company, Inc. for Water Services
-----X

October 26, 2016
7:00 p.m.

Wantagh High School
3297 Beltagh Avenue
Wantagh, New York 11793

PUBLIC STATEMENT HEARING
TRANSCRIPTION OF PROCEEDINGS

BEFORE:

GUY MAZZA
Acting Director
Department of Public Service - Long Island
Office

REPORTED BY:

Nicole Ellis

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

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SPEAKERS:

Jack McCloy

Tracy Levy - Bancker Construction

Alfred Kaiser

Dave Denenberg - LI Clean Air Water Soil

Claudia Borecky - North Merrick Central Civic

Edward Steinman

Steven Rhoads - Nassau County Legislator 19th District

Sheldon Fassman

Michael Reid

Phil Glickman

Christopher Carini - Wantagh Seaford Homeowners
Association

Robert Delmonico

Thomas Gallagher

Tom Kohlman - Forest City Community Association

Dennis Kelleher - H2M Water

Jane Finkelstein

Barbara Sims

Bob Hasteadt

Ed Hickland

Paul Pepe

John Smith

Tova Poaut

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
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SPEAKERS: (Continued)

Audrey Ciuffo

Tim Gallagher

Deborah Peacock

Ron Bornico

Howard Nacht

Larry Kurtz

Daniel Basil

Maria Prisco

Veronica Hurley

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Proceedings

MR. MAZZA: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I ask that you please take your seats.

I will now open the record on Case 16-W-0259: Proceeding on Motion of the Commission as to the Rates, Charges, Rules and Regulations of New York American Water Company, Inc. for Water Service.

We're here today for a Public Statement Hearing that was noticed on October 6, 2016. The Public Statement Hearing concerns New York American Water's request to the New York State Public Service Commission to change its water rates and practices in its service territory.

My name is Guy Mazza. I'm the acting director of the Department of Public Service, Long Island office, and I'll be presiding over tonight's hearing.

The Department of Public Service is an agency that's charged with regulating public utilities in the State of New York. The presiding officer is responsible for

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Proceedings

ensuring the development of a complete record in this proceeding, and they make recommendations to the New York State Public Service Commission.

The Public Service Commission is the ultimate decision maker in the case. All of the statements given this evening will not only be heard by me, but they will become part of the record. They'll be transcribed by the Court Reporter and included in the official record of this proceeding so that they can be considered by all the Commissioners when they make their decision.

New York American Water filed new water service tariffs on April 29, 2016 to take effect April 2017. Review of the filing is currently underway. The Department of Public Service staff and other parties in this proceeding have reviewed and analyzed New York American Water's request and filed testimony in this proceeding. Evidentiary hearings were scheduled.

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Proceedings

However, before the commencement of those hearings, the parties entered into settlement negotiations. Currently, the parties are engaged in these negotiations. If a settlement is ultimately reached by some or all of the parties in this proceeding, they may join in a Joint Proposal to the Commission for its consideration that represents a compromise of their litigated positions.

If the parties reach an agreement and file a Joint Proposal with the Commission, the Commission will request public comment on that Joint Proposal before it makes any determination. If no settlement is reached by the parties, the case will follow a mitigated track and an evidentiary hearing will be held.

When the case is eventually brought before the Commission for a decision, the Commission may adopt, reject or modify the Company's proposal. In making its decision, the Commission will make its decision based on the entire record in

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Proceedings

this proceeding, of which the comments given tonight will be a part of.

The purpose of the hearing is to provide people the opportunity to tell the Commission your thoughts on New York American Water's proposal. The hearing is not an evidentiary hearing, a cross-examination or question-and-answer session, but, rather, is a forum to hear from you.

As I mentioned earlier, we have a Court Reporter here today so that a verbatim transcript of the hearing will be made for inclusion in the record in these proceedings. Once the transcript is prepared, it will be available for the Commission and the public's view on the Department's website.

I'd now like to explain the process that we'll follow here tonight in making our public statements. If you'd like to make a statement here tonight, please fill out a registration card. Many of you have already, but if there's anybody who wishes

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Proceedings

to speak and has not done so yet, please just step outside, get a card and fill it out for us.

I will call the speakers up one by one using the cards. And in view of the number of people here tonight, what I'll do is I'll call the person who will be on deck after the speaker, so that person can start getting ready to present their statement.

Please speak slowly and clearly for the Court Reporter so your statement will be accurately captured for the record. Speak into the microphone, and I would ask that you identify yourself and any affiliation that you're here on behalf of.

For the courtesy of your neighbors wishing to speak, please summarize written statements orally. And you can submit your written statements by e-mail or mail, as indicated on the Public Hearing Notice and on the informational sheet available at the door. You can also give them to me tonight, and we'll make them part of the

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Proceedings

record.

This will not be the only opportunity to comment. If, for any reason, you prefer not to give a statement here this evening but would like your views included in the record, there are a variety of other ways to cover it.

The fact sheet, which is available at the registration table, lists the other ways to deliver your comments. You can do so on the Department's website, by e-mail, regular mail or by phone.

I'll ask that any comments that you do wish to provide, other than tonight, be delivered by November 4th. The comments may be submitted and will be considered throughout the pendency of this proceeding. If you have any questions, please see our customer service representatives at the registration table.

And, finally, before we begin, I ask everyone to be respectful and not interrupt the other speakers. I will not be responding to your comments, and you

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Proceedings

should not interpret my silence as either agreement or disagreement of your position. This is your opportunity to speak without interruption.

I don't think we'll have to limit the time that anybody is required to speak. We do have, I think, sufficient time for the numerous speakers we have. But again, I would ask that you be respectful of others who wish to speak.

That being said, I'd like to call the first speaker. The first speaker will be Jack McCloy, followed by Tracy Levy.

MR. McCOY: Hello. My name is Jack McCloy. I'm a Baldwin resident, a member of the Baldwin Civic Association, Baldwin Oak Civic Association and the Baldwin Chamber of Commerce. I am not speaking on behalf of any of those organizations in an official capacity, but many of the people here know those organizations reflect the same viewpoint that I have.

I'd like to point out to you that the increase is an affront to many of us. I

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Proceedings

brought with me a bill that is for my mother's property from the South Huntington Water District. My mom is aging. She's 95. I pay all her bills. And this most recent bill that I received from her property is 9,000 gallons of water billed at under \$1 per 1,000 gallons.

This is my latest bill from New York American Water Company, and I use about 14,900 gallons. And I'm billed at over \$5 per gallon. To repeat, South Huntington Water District charges under \$1 per 1,000; New York American Water is charging over \$5 per 1,000 gallons.

Now, if you take the amount of water that I used last month and multiplied by 12 for the year and just consider the difference between what I paid and what I would have paid if I lived in South Huntington, the difference is almost \$900 per year.

It's an affront for us to have to pay this higher amount. And, instead of

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Proceedings

seeking an increase, we should demand a reduction of 60 percent of what we pay now, which would still give Long Island American Water double what we are paying above what the residents in South Huntington Water District pay.

Please look at these facts and cut our rates. Don't give them an increase. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Tracy Levy will be next followed by Alfred Kauser.

MS. LEVY: Thank you very much. This is to speak to the infrastructure portion of this proceeding.

Good evening. My name is Tracy Levy. I am with Bancker Construction. And public comments in cases like these often do no take into account for consideration the cost analysis of planned water infrastructure activity versus the replacement and unplanned emergency repair of water mains, which result from

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Proceedings

catastrophic pipe failure. The large cost implications go directly from a monetary point of view and comes from a societal point of view if capital projects are not planned for and budgeted for properly.

Bancker Construction is a civil construction company. It has been involved in Long Island water infrastructure, installation and replacement for more than 100 years in Nassau, Suffolk and five boroughs in the city. Originally based in Manhasset, we perform work for 32 water districts and authorities here on the island, as well as various municipal authorities in the City of New York and private clients.

When a water district or water company or authority plans a main replacement, they plan it out. The project costs for the most part are predictable. Capital improvement pipe costs can be planned for. They can be budgeted for based on an engineer's estimate. Labor and staffing can be

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Proceedings

anticipated. Outages with pre-notifications can be addressed. If foreclosures are needed, they can be mitigated or minimalized so customers do not become upset.

Fire departments, who depend on adequate water pressure, can be alerted to any situation and be ready for alternate ways of handling an emergency. In a nutshell, preplanning allows for proper budgeting, and that will correspond to the life of a pipe making for known, controlled costs going forward.

On the contrary, pipe failures are unpredictable. And due to the disruption of service, they damage roadways, reduce property, utilities and costs that far exceed through the proactive inspection, rehabilitation and replacement of a pipe in a well-planned, controlled environment.

These failures, sometimes catastrophic in size, represent the worst budgeting scenario. They have to be addressed immediately by outside services.

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Proceedings

The emergency response alone can boost the cost of that repair two, three, five, sometimes ten fold. There are added costs to perform these repairs.

Generally, they're off hours, and that costs overtime. The purchases for the repair have to be made without negotiation. The road restoration has to be done on an emergency basis. That's expensive. Insurance claims associated with the unforeseen repair are, you know, unpredictable. Residents, motorists, businesses see instantaneous issues that make a short-term inconvenience a longer-term problem.

And also, there are public health impacts. There are traffic impacts, reduced firefighting capability, impacts on power and utilities in the street, like underground electric, gas, traffic signals. Traffic on our -- impacts on public transportation, on parking, the value of people's time in traffic detours, their lost production of work, possible

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Proceedings

illness resulting from failure, the cost of flooding damage. It goes on and on and on.

So the cost of unplanned activity really amounts to direct costs plus societal costs equaling total cost. And that total cost of a planned project versus an unplanned one is many times the cost of the work performance.

On an annual basis, we do 15 miles of water main. Each installation represents a 100-year infrastructure replacement. So with routine maintenance and replacement, water mains installed today, 2016, should last until 2116.

Good planning, aggressive capital budgets should help ensure that water structure on Long Island will serve our generation and our future generations of our children's children.

We ask that these comments be entered into the public record. Thank you.

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Next will be Alfred Kaiser followed

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Proceedings

by Dave Denenberg.

MR. KAISER: My name's Al Kaiser.
I'm not here representing anyone. I'm
just here representing the residents.

I just feel, myself, that the rates
that they're getting today are outrageous.
I have a friend of mine that lives in
Massapequa. He pays \$30 every three
months. I'm paying \$263 every two months.
I don't know how they can come up with
they want more money.

And as far as the Public Service
Commission goes, they're not going to look
out for us. They're going to look out for
the Company. I think that this is
outrageous. And I think it's about time
that the people just stand up to this and
stop it.

They say -- they say that the reason
why the rates are so high is because it's
a privately-owned company, and they have
taxes that they have to pay. Well, I'm
sure, when they took this company over,
they knew about these taxes. It shouldn't

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Proceedings

be put on the people of the counties who are being squeezed by the federal government, who are being squeezed by the State government, we're being squeezed by Nassau County, and now we're going to be squeezed by people where we need water to live. I just think it's outrageous, and I think that the Public Service Commission should stop this.

And my other question is: When are they going to stop it? We're up to outrageous rates now. When are they going to stop charging us for all of these fees for water, which you actually need to live? Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Dave Denenberg, followed by Claudia Borecky.

MR. DENENBERG: I'm Dave Denenberg. I'm the director of Long Island Clean Air, Water & Soil. First of all, this is a great turnout. Why don't you give yourselves a round of applause?

1 Proceedings

2 Seriously, great turnout.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. DENENBERG: So you just heard it.
5 Who here thinks we're paying too much for
6 water?

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. DENENBERG: Who here thinks we're
9 paying too much for water?

10 (Applause.)

11 You know what? With all due respect,
12 I know you're an ALJ, and in the July
13 hearing -- there was a July hearing. Did
14 anyone know about it? I'm so proud that
15 Clean Air, Water & Soil found out about it
16 about maybe four hours beforehand, showed
17 up and then we made a motion to get
18 another public comment period, which is
19 today, October 26th.

20 Now, this hearing, this isn't about a
21 huge tax issue. This isn't about a huge
22 school issue. This isn't about a huge
23 environmental issue. You're seeing a room
24 packed because we're paying too much for a
25 basic necessity, water. Our water bill is

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Proceedings

so high.

Funny story. I'll say it quick. A friend of mine -- a friend of mine visited me from Chicago. No cheap area. He saw my water bill in July, which came in my house in July. It was \$275, July. My September bill was over \$400. He looked at my water bill in July and he said, Oh, wow, we pay about the same for electric. I said, That's not my electric bill; that's my water bill. He went, What? He pays about \$20 every three months for water. Our 10 percent increase that they're looking for would be more. It would average about \$100.

In East Meadow -- not Chicago, not Upstate New York -- in East Meadow where there's public water, your entire usage for a year is about \$100. We're paying, on average, more than three times what anyone else is paying for water.

And what the gentleman right before me -- and you spoke great; you were awesome -- why are we paying the taxes for

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Proceedings

New York American Water? Because you, the Public Service Commission and the State has allowed New York American Water to pass their tax burden -- their property tax burden, which goes to the county, towns and mostly school districts that get public water -- not even the school districts that we attend that are stuck on private water -- they passed that property tax burden on to us. It's to the tune of over \$30 million a year.

So when I spent years ago showing the Towns of Oyster Bay and Hempstead that there really existed the Southeast Nassau Water Authority -- and that water authority should be reconstituted and take over -- they did a study that said, if you took over -- when you consider that you had to buy these assets, you wouldn't save any money.

What was wrong with that study? They assumed that we would continue to pay property taxes in the form of payments in lieu of taxes. Why? 80 percent of the

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Proceedings

residents of Nassau and the Towns of Hempstead and Oyster Bay do not pay property taxes to get water. They're on public water, and that public water is tax exempt.

We want public water. We want public water.

(Applause.)

MR. DENENBERG: Now, let's look very carefully. We already pay three times, at least, maybe five times as much for water, and they want a 10 percent increase. For me, that's \$120 a year. If someone pays \$900 for water, that's another 90.

If you're lucky, and you're only paying \$600 a year for water, that's another 60. It's ridiculous that we -- and we're being taxed out -- you wonder why the middle class is gone.

We can't even afford water, much less education, much less real public services, much less the services to get streets done. It's ridiculous.

And when you look at what's trying to

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Proceedings

be passed on, on this almost 10 percent increase, it includes the cost of research and development for some prototype and solar program that will be installed in one school, happens to be in Lynbrook.

Nothing -- Lynbrook has the same problem. They're paying the same price we are for water. But in any other company, the research and development costs come out of what's distributed to the shareholders.

And just last year, New York American Water's shareholders saw record profits. They've seen record profits in about 50 percent of the last ten years, and it's on our backs. So they're entitled, according to the Public Service Commission, to a guaranteed 7.5 percent profit. Guaranteed. And they pass -- they pass the property taxes on to us.

Where else do they make profit? Who here gets a letter that, why don't you take out insurance on your lines that go from the street to your house?

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Proceedings

(Applause.)

MR. DENENBERG: Who's making money on that? Are any of us? You think New York Water -- New York American Water is? Of course. Of course. And by the way, they lie in those, take out insurance and say, This is the only place you can come for insurance.

So a friend of mine right here spoke to his homeowners. They added for about 20 bucks. No big deal. And they'll add for a little more. They're covered -- by the way, what's not talked about?

What's excluded if you buy New York Water's insurance? Lead. Lead. Just reported that in school districts right here, like Bellmore, lead has been found. If lead's in the schools and our -- our children are exposed -- it's even worse if it's in our homes 'cause they're in their homes even more. And no one's testing in the homes. That's a dirty secret that's not in this rate increase, right?

They're talking about upgrading the

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Proceedings

quality of our water. Who here thinks that it does look like gold coming out of our faucet? We're paying like it's gold, but it shouldn't look like it's gold. So there's real -- there's real quality issues.

And that's my third point. A lot of this rate increase talks about quality improvements or pressure improvements. On my street, McCord Avenue and Merrick, they just doubled the size of the line, supposedly. We paid for that in the last increase that went through in '11. My water pressure didn't get better at all, and nor did any of my neighbors.

Who here has trouble with water pressure?

(Applause.)

MR. DENENBERG: What about quality? Does it look brown? Does it look like gold? Lousy service. The most expensive prices in the country.

And I will say this: When you look -- when you look at a public takeover

1 Proceedings

2 and when you look at, why are we paying
3 for property taxes, let me tell you, if I
4 said, when I was county legislator, this
5 half of the room pays \$20 for every 100 on
6 your assessment, this half of the room
7 pays \$10, you would tell me,
8 unconstitutional, you can't do that.

9 But we're telling 20 percent of the
10 residents of Nassau County, us, that we,
11 effectively, are paying a higher rate
12 because we have to pay property taxes for
13 a basic necessity that we have to use,
14 even though we buy water 'cause we can't
15 drink their water, we do have to -- we do
16 have to use the water.

17 And we use more than most people
18 because we have to run it for five or ten
19 minutes, just to get it clear before we
20 can use it in the morning. It's
21 ridiculous.

22 It's -- I think it's violates due
23 process. And any time someone studies,
24 like this Southeast Nassau Water
25 Authority, studied and said we won't save

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Proceedings

money 'cause we're going to keep paying property taxes, we have to reject that. We don't have to pay more property taxes than everyone else in Nassau County. It's crazy. You with me on this?

(Applause.)

MR. DENENBERG: Thank you. Thank you very much.

The last thing I want to say. We were just talking, right? We're in the school. This school is protected by a great fire district. Do you know the school, which has a tax cap, which will be less than 1 percent? They didn't have to pay 10 percent or more for water. And if, God forbid, they don't want the kids -- I know we have a turf field, but we also have grass fields here.

If, God forbid, we don't want the kids playing on dead grass or dirt and we try to water it, over here, we're in Wantagh, the school taxes have to cover it, but that has a tax cap. Does New York American Water have a tax cap? No. How

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Proceedings

is that fair to us? It's not. It, obviously, is not.

The fire districts -- and North Merrick is the best example. Where North Merrick is served, sir -- where North America is served by New York American Water, guess what they pay for a fire hydrant? Over -- almost \$750. Here in Wantagh, I think it's over \$800.

Let's add the 10 percent increase. Let's say it's \$750 in North Merrick, which is about right. A 10 percent increase would be a \$75 increase. Guess what the price North Merrick pays with the certified Town of Hempstead water? They pay \$75 for a hydrant.

The increase to our Fire Departments is more than other Fire Departments or as much as other Fire Departments pay for an entire year. And guess where the Fire Departments have to get the money? Us. And guess who has a tax cap? The fire departments. The fire districts. We don't.

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Proceedings

So the State's got to look at this, and the State has to authorize a public takeover, because the 80 percent that are getting public water, whether it's from a Town of Hempstead water district or some separate water district, we're entitled to have that basic water service as well.

And I'll also say, one of the more egregious things about this increase and the last increase, part of that was to pay for what I call the Taj Mahal in Merrick, that wonderful brick building.

(Applause.)

MR. DENENBERG: Guess what? We got to pay for it. The Company will say, Well, you didn't pay for it, when we sold our Lynbrook building, instead of giving us a rate decrease. A rate decrease. Has anyone ever seen a rate decrease? Instead of giving us a rate decrease, they used that money to buy the building in Merrick. But they want to be -- they want to get that money back in three to five years.

If there ever is a public takeover,

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Proceedings

and I see it 'cause it's on their balance sheet, New York American Water considers that an asset. If we're paying for it, that's our asset. So if they want us to pay for it, tell them to take that out of their assets. And that will just be a public asset. And we'll be on our way for what we really need, which is public water. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Claudia Borecky, followed by Edward Steinman.

MS. BORECKY: I think Dave just said everything I was going to say. But it's very interesting that where we are right now, a few years ago, we were here fighting a water tower that they wanted to put up in Wantagh, if anyone remembers that.

What they decided to do at that point was, instead of saying -- people didn't want a big water tower, so they decided to do Wantagh -- they put in the booster

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Proceedings

pumps. That was part of a 2009 rate proposal. It was never done.

Guess what? It's back in this proposal now. So I'm nervous that the program -- of course, they all need improvements. We need improvements of our water. We need improvements of our water pressure.

But I don't trust that American Water is going to do the project that they're proposing because they haven't. And they're also, with this proposal -- they're supposed to put in, with this proposal, lay pipes from Central Avenue until New Bridge Road and Merrick Road. And now that's scrapped.

But did they lower the amount of money they're asking from us? No. There's -- there's the project that we mentioned about the geothermal project in Valley Stream, the school district of Valley Stream. That's costing 4.5 million. They want us to reimburse them for that. That -- that money -- that

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Proceedings

project does not help anyone, except for that school district of Valley Stream. And yet, we're paying for, basically, what is their research and development project.

Now, if you take that money out -- they're asking for 8.45 million, you take out the 4.5 for this, you take out the roads they never did, you do do the project that they promised to do, I think we can defeat this.

North and Central Merrick Civic, along with Long Island Clean Air, Water & Soil, which I'm also director with Dave with, we are in -- talking with the Public Service Commission and American Water in the settlement negotiations on dealing with a lot of these individual issues.

But in the long run, we need to have public water. And we need to call our -- when our county officials and town officials and state officials come here, let them say, we're tired of them taxing us. They can stop it. They can stop it. It takes a state representative to go

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Proceedings

there in Albany and say, You know what?
Don't charge them anymore. It takes a
town representative from the Towns of
Hempstead and Oyster Bay to say, We -- you
know, we want to take you over, we want
to -- you know, it's not fair that you
said -- they are getting, by the way, \$12
million that the other 80 percent of the
population got from us. That's how much
the town and county get out of our
property -- out of our water bills.

So they don't want to give that up.
That's obvious. They don't want to give
that up. But if they're truly
representative of us, if they're really
concerned about our overburden. This
bill -- (inaudible) then they'll come
forward on that. So thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Next will be Edward Steinman,
followed by Denise Ratinoff (phonetic)?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Denise left.

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

1 Proceedings

2 MR. STEINMAN: I wasn't going to get
3 into this thing, but I met Gloria just
4 outside the parking lot tonight.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Claudia.

6 MR. STEINMAN: Claudia. Okay --
7 well, all right. Claudia.

8 First of all, I'd like to thank her
9 for what she's doing --

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. STEINMAN: -- because it's an
12 endless job. And I'd also like to thank
13 Mr. Denenberg for his comments --

14 (Applause.)

15 MR. STEINMAN: -- because I think
16 there's a point.

17 I'm going to talk to you from a
18 couple of vantage points. No. 1, I'm a
19 handicapped veteran. I don't work. I
20 can't work. I'm just trying to survive.

21 When you guys come along with
22 something like this, you smack me right in
23 my mouth. Between Social Security and the
24 Veterans Administration, I wouldn't even
25 be standing up. Everything in my back is

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Proceedings

holding me up because they put it in, in '09.

When I see the bills come into the house -- and my wife purposely does not let me see the bills because I have to take medication that I take every day -- and, again, I say, if it wasn't for the Veterans Administration -- and I'm sure there are a couple veterans here that are going through the same thing -- and, Mr. Mazza, you and Mr. Bruce have no idea of what we're talking about.

You're not a veteran. You don't go to the VA. You don't look when you get a bill for twelve bucks to buy some pills or something like that. But if it wasn't for these organizations, the vets would get it right in the mouth. And they are. As far as I'm concerned, they are in many ways. I'm still scheduled to take two more operations, and I have to go through them. But I've been stalling them for two or three years now.

What you want to do is take your

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Proceedings

hands and put them into our pockets.
There's nothing left. By the time
National Grid, the oil companies, the gas
companies and all the conglomerations that
are sticking their hands in our pockets,
what's left? Nothing.

We have our grandchildren. I'm a
senior citizen. And don't misunderstand
me. Everyone's entitled to work and make
a living. But there's a thing between
making a living. And there's one thing
you guys never ever, ever want to talk
about, salaries.

What does a guy like Brian Bruce get
yearly? I'm very curious. You're not
going to answer me now because you made it
very clear you're not here to answer any
questions, right? And I respect that.
But that's a good way of getting out of it
because I really wish there was somebody
here who could answer some questions.

(Applause.)

MR. STEINMAN: One of these days --
and I'll tell you a couple of instances.

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Proceedings

About a year and a half ago at the corner in Bellmore where I live, at the corner of Glen Drive and Patricia Lane, there was a water main break.

I got up that morning, as I used to do when I was working, at, like, four o'clock in the morning. And I looked outside, and there was a river coming down from Judith Drive all the way down to Bellmore Avenue.

There was nobody around. So I called the police. The police send over two cars, and the two cars block off the street. Do you know how long it took American Water to come down? Just shake your head no. That's all.

MR. MAZZA: Sir, I can't respond to your questions. Please make your statement.

MR. STEINMAN: I'm not asking you to. You don't have to talk. Just shake your head. That's all.

(Applause.)

MR. STEINMAN: Because when you call

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Proceedings

American Water on the telephone, you get some idiot at the other end of the phone shaking his head. He's not going to give you a normal answer. It took 28 hours for your precious water to go into the sewer before they came.

And then they spent a week between stopping off at the shopping center for coffee in the morning and coming back to where the pipe was broken to fix it. Nobody rushed. It took eight days to fix a broken pipe.

You guys beat Con Edison. Usually, it takes them two years. But that's what's going on.

(Applause.)

MR. STEINMAN: Now, if the water was so important and the water is so expensive and it cost you so much to get it to us, why did it take 28 hours for a service truck to come down and stop that leak? And you know how much water came out in that 28 hours? And who paid for it anyway? All of Patricia Lane was flooded,

1 Proceedings

2 going all the way down to Ellen Street
3 behind my house.

4 I know you don't want to hear this,
5 and I know you're not interested. But
6 I'll give you another issue.

7 Fire hydrants. I was in the Fire
8 Department for 18 years.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. STEINMAN: Do you know what -- do
11 you have any idea what it is to pull up to
12 a hydrant with a pumper truck, get out,
13 hook up your hose and find no water
14 pressure? That's what you have in
15 Bellmore. If you turn on your sprinklers
16 in the summertime at five o'clock in the
17 morning, there's no water pressure.
18 There's nothing that comes out.

19 With all due respect to you, I go to
20 the bathroom with more water. The
21 pressure stinks. The water stinks.

22 And the last thing I'm going to leave
23 you with is my wife's dishwasher, which I
24 which I could. If you'd like to see it,
25 it's brown and gold on the inside, not the

1 Proceedings

2 outside. One of your inspectors came down
3 32 years ago. And, for some reason or
4 other, the same dishwasher is still
5 working. Now, it's even darker. You know
6 what he told me he? Took a water test,
7 called me back in about ten days. Said to
8 me, It's brownish iron.

9 So I said, What, are you telling me
10 to do, drink brownish iron? He said to
11 me, Well, it's legal. He was supposed to
12 get back to me and tell me by whose
13 authorization is it legal. By his?

14 With all due respect -- and this is
15 not to you -- the guy was a schmuck. He
16 didn't know what he was looking at, and he
17 didn't take it -- and I know that sample
18 probably ended up who knows where.

19 We don't want anything from you that
20 we don't deserve. And let me tell you
21 something.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. STEINMAN: Everybody here is a
24 working person, and everybody deserves it.
25 We deserve water. We deserve health. And

1 Proceedings

2 we deserve the best service that we can
3 possibly get. And right now, American
4 Water does not do it.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.
7 Legislator Steven Rhoads.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. RHOADS: Thank you so much.
10 My wife tells me I have a big enough
11 mouth anyway.

12 But we have a real problem in this
13 district, you know. And the problem seems
14 to be New York American Water.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. RHOADS: And I'm happy that
17 you're here, and I'm happy that you're
18 doing this Public Service Commission
19 hearing, so that you have an opportunity
20 to hear from all of the customers of New
21 York American Water so that you can get an
22 insight into what we've been dealing with
23 for generations at this point.

24 Now, I got my water bill -- I won't
25 say water bill. I got a termination

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Proceedings

notice. I didn't actually get a water bill. I got a termination notice for \$285. I live in Bellmore. It's my wife and myself. We water our lawn on the odd-even schedule, like we're supposed to do -- like we're supposed to. \$285.

My wife and I both work. What happens if you're somebody on a fixed income? What happens if you're somebody with a disability? How are you supposed to make that payment, on top of all of the other expenses that we have living here on Long Island, especially when you look at someone that lives in East Meadow, as my in-laws did before they passed, and realize that they're on public water and receiving a bill for \$35 for the same period of time, same two people that I got a bill for 285?

Now, I know that the Public Service Commission can't solve every single problem that we have, and you're here to determine whether or not a rate hike is appropriate under the circumstances. But

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Proceedings

we need the Public Service Commission to be our watch dogs. They are -- New York American Water is providing us with something that we already own. They're pumping water from a public aquifer that we own and delivering it to our tap. The comparison has been made at other hearings, and I had the opportunity to speak at your July 13th public hearing over in Oceanside.

They make the comparison that our water rates are not as significant as rates that we pay for other utilities. But you look at a utility like electric, they actually manufacture what they provide to us; whereas, New York American Water is simply a delivery system, a treatment and delivery system, giving us what we already own and allowing us to turn on our tap and allowing us to turn on our shower head and receive that service. It's not the same, and it's a false argument.

A gentleman here mentioned that he

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Proceedings

served in the Bellmore Fire Department for 18 years. Thank you very much for your service. I actually have served for the past 24 years in the Wantagh Fire Department.

(Applause.)

MR. RHOADS: Do you know -- do you know that last year alone, the Wantagh Fire Department paid \$528,000 for the opportunity to be able to use the fire hydrants that were provided by New York American Water at a cost of over \$600 per hydrant?

What we are dealing with -- what we are dealing with is an absolute absurdity. And I understand that New York American Water, because it's a private company, is allowed to make a profit of somewhere between seven and 8 percent. But are we receiving -- are our bills seven to 8 percent higher than public water? No. Our bills seem to be seven or 800 percent higher than public water.

And are we receiving a better service

1 Proceedings

2 as a result? I think -- I think you're
3 going to hear from the community that the
4 answer is clearly no. So, please. I
5 implore you to put New York American Water
6 to their proof and give them what they
7 need, not what they want, and stand up for
8 the ratepayers in this community that have
9 been putting up with this for far too
10 long. Thank you very much. I appreciate
11 it.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

14 Next will be Sheldon Fassman,
15 followed by Sheri Goldstein.

16 MR. FASSMAN: Good evening. My name
17 is Sheldon Fassman. I'm a Wantagh
18 resident. A few hours ago, I was online
19 checking out the salaries of the
20 executives of American Water.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. FASSMAN: The top earner is
23 making over \$3 million a year in salary.
24 And under this person, their executive is
25 making over a million dollars. Something

1 Proceedings

2 is wrong with that. Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. GOLDSTEIN: Good evening. I'm
5 Sherry Goldstein. I am a Wantagh
6 homeowner, and I'm also a business
7 manager. And I was able to do some
8 research because every single bill keeps
9 getting higher and higher. And I'm scared
10 to open up the envelope.

11 But I pulled up something called a
12 "White Paper," which is a woman who wrote
13 the "White Paper" by the name of Maureen
14 Duvy. Everybody can look that up on the
15 internet. She is actually a vice
16 president of corporate communications and
17 external affairs at American Water. And
18 she also worked for Long Island American
19 Water. So this is her perspective of what
20 a company should be doing. Obviously,
21 it's not happening.

22 I also -- by reading this segment and
23 also giving a response to Ms. Levy who
24 made the comments that I didn't agree
25 with.

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Proceedings

Established law provides that a well-run company should be able to obtain a reasonable rate of return on its invested capital and recovery of reasonable operating expenses. This gives investors the comfort of knowing that, if the Company delivers its product reliably -- it's not happening -- and consistently -- not happening -- it offers a stable investment opportunity.

The traditional regulatory structure provides that, while utilities can't choose whom they will serve in their franchise area, if they do a good job, they should have the opportunity to earn a fair return on investment.

So, the question is: Why aren't they doing a good job on their investments so the burden does not fall on the homeowner? Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Next, we'll hear from Michael Reid, followed by Christopher Carini.

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Proceedings

MR. REID: Good evening. My name is Michael Reid. I, too, am a volunteer firefighter. I think I got the other guy beat. I've been going on 40 years of service.

(Applause.)

Also, quite honestly, in the -- in the spirit of full disclosure, I am a candidate for office this November. And I'm running for the New York State Assembly here in the 14th District, which represents Merrick, Bellmore, Wantagh, Seaford and portions of Levittown, all covered by New York American Water.

Gentlemen, tonight, you see before you a strong and united community fighting to keep costs under control. Taxes on Long Island are too high, and the food on Long Island costs too much. Gas for our cars, heat for our homes and now even the water we drink is becoming an economic challenge.

As a candidate for public office, I'm often asked what can I do to help

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Proceedings

stimulate the economic growth of this community. There are many good ideas, but raising the cost of water is not one of them. Like high taxes and high utility rates, it drives up the cost of business here on Long Island. We need to control these costs and bring in new growth and new industry.

I want to see that growth here in Nassau County and here in the Town of Hempstead. So I'm urging you, as a taxpayer, not to allow this exorbitant rate increase.

(Applause.)

MR. REID: So what I addressed before is that we need to reopen the discussion on taking over New York American Water as a public water utility, much as we see in every other -- (inaudible). We need public water, and we need it now. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Next will be Phil Glickman, followed by Christopher Perini.

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Proceedings

MR. GLICKMAN: My name is Phil Glickman. I've been living in South Bellmore since 1969.

(Applause.)

MR. GLICKMAN: When I moved in, I got my water bills, and I paid them. I also put in a pool, and I had sprinkling systems and all the amenities that all -- most homeowners have. And I get the bill, and I paid it. And I never spoke about it to anybody, but I'm going to tell you something.

Sir, you're -- you're the Public Service Commission, right?

MR. MAZZA: Yes.

MR. GLICKMAN: Okay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: He answered a question.

MR. GLICKMAN: I, too, was sent a letter from American Water stating that they were going to shut my water. For whatever reason, I don't know. And when I called them, they didn't know. And I got a little upset because I don't like to get

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Proceedings

those kind of letters.

Now, tonight, I heard all kinds of complaints. And, believe me, I was ready to give the same thing to you guys. But I'm going to pass that because you know what the complaints are.

In the movie "Wall Street," the main character came out with a statement, "Greed is good." However, that does not -- that does not comply with American Water. They're a public utility, and they have to watch their Ps and Qs.

And I'm going to tell you something. Last month, I got a letter stating that the protection on the pipes in my part -- actually, the pipes that come into my home is not covered anymore, and they want to resell me a policy. I think it's \$60 a year. And according to this thing here -- let me read it. I don't have my glasses. Hold on.

"Water line repairs are typically not covered by insurance." That's wrong. They're completely wrong. I spoke to my

1 Proceedings

2 insurance company, and they -- they told
3 me that I could get this insurance that
4 they're trying to sell me for \$65 for 20
5 bucks on a rider to my homeowner's
6 insurance. And I applied for it. And I
7 have to wait until my insurance comes up
8 again in order to get it.

9 Can you imagine, if everybody here in
10 this room paid the \$65 to get the policy
11 covered? I'd go out and buy that stock in
12 a heartbeat.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. REID: They're probably in
15 violation. Now, I'm not an attorney. So
16 I can't say anything, but it's just
17 ridiculous. Well, I guess that's all I
18 have to say.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

21 Is there a Paul Bosio here in the
22 audience?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. MAZZA: Christopher Perini.

25 MR. PERINI: Thank you.

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Proceedings

My name is Chris Perini. I'm the corresponding secretary for the Wantagh Seaford Homeowners Association. I am here to take a (inaudible) for our water, that we fully are against the rate hike that you guys are proposing. We will be contacting your board through the Department of Public Service. You will be on notice that we will oppose, as a board, this rate hike.

We also encourage all our members and all our members and residents we will be sending out e-mail, posting to our websites, urging everybody else to contact them to get your neighbors to contact these people because we pay some of the highest water bills in this country.

Enough is enough. This is disgusting that this is going on.

(Applause.)

MR. PERINI: The Manhattan residents throughout the Wantagh, Seaford area you will be hearing from is that enough is enough.

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Proceedings

I do want to thank Legislator Steve Rhoads for contacting our organization to tell us about this event because we were not aware about this event. Thank you, Legislator Rhoads, for performing all the (inaudible).

(Applause.)

MR. PERINI: You will hear from the residents of Wantagh and Seaford, enough is enough; we're paying way too much. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Robert Delmonico, followed by Thomas Gallagher.

MR. DELMONICO: Good evening, everyone. My name is Robert Delmonico. I live in Merrick. And where I live in Merrick is north of Sunrise Highway and south of the Southern State Parkway.

I only became aware of the big discrepancy in the amount everybody else in Nassau County is paying for water. I'm a retired New York City employee. I do a

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Proceedings

lot of volunteer work, and I was
volunteering in a Freeport soup kitchen.

And one of the ladies -- I was
talking to her -- lives just north of the
Southern State Parkway and happened to get
on the subject of water bills. And I was
almost shocked when I heard how little she
was paying for water in comparison to what
we're paying for water.

Now, I'm living in Merrick for the
last 40 years, and it didn't seem that
water -- the price of water was a big
concern back then. And it was a private
water company. I believe it was the New
York Water Company that was later replaced
the last five, six years by New York
American Water.

And then the price jumped way up. So
I'm very surprised, and I'm shocked that
we're all getting hosed by the water
company. No pun intended.

But I would like to make a proposal
that the County of Nassau and the Town of
Hempstead, which I believe is -- Wantagh

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Proceedings

is also in the Town of Hempstead -- that we get some active tax credits.

I thank Mr. Denenberg, Ms. Borecky. I know they've been working on trying to convert over to a public utility, but, you know, this is a couple of years ago. And so far, that hasn't happened. I don't really see it happening.

But until it does, it would be nice if we could get tax credits from the County of Nassau and the Town of Hempstead to offset the cost of water that we're paying. Thank you. That's all I have to say.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Next person to speak will be Thomas Gallagher, followed by Tom Kohlman.

MR. GALLAGHER: I'm Thomas Gallagher. I used to live in Wantagh for 49 years, and I still come down here to support Wantagh and Bellmore because of what's happening here. They're going to drive our young people out of the neighborhood.

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Proceedings

THE REPORTER: Can you get him to talk into the microphone more.

MR. MAZZA: Mr. Gallagher, we're having trouble hearing you.

Would you please speak into the microphone?

MR. GALLAGHER: I'm in East Meadow right now.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hey, Tom. I don't think that mic is working. Why don't you use the other one?

MR. GALLAGHER: Okay. I live up in East Meadow. I used to live here in Wantagh for 49 years, and I do support Wantagh and all the people who live here.

And what's happening is, like, the Fire Department, and they get rates on that. Let's remember something. Our county swimming pools have utility water also. So the town is going to pay your taxes on the Fire Department issue because they -- and all your restaurants, your car washes, everything is going to snowball.

Like all utilities, it's taking us

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Proceedings

for a ride because we can't allow this stuff to happen to start with. And once they take over the sewer street plan privatization, you're going to see another boost. And it's going to throw people out of here.

And -- well, I feel it's going to happen with car washes or somebody with an investment to put in their own well and draw their own water. It cut New York Water off.

That's what's going to happen because we have cell towers up. We have now got electrical energy from solar panels. So why not start putting in wells in people's backyards and start getting your own water for your house and cut off this Company?

That's what's going to happen. People are going to get desperate. People have big, big problems. We have small properties, 60 by 100. But people with their mansions, and they have to water these golf courses and everything, that money, it's going to snowball where you

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Proceedings

wouldn't realize until it hits, if they do raise these rates. So let's hope they don't.

Right now, where I'm living, thank God I live in a nice place in East Meadow where the landlord pays the water bill. I pay a cost towards it, which is very, very low. And if I had lived here in Wantagh, it's probably the price I'd pay for maintenance costs of what you're paying per month for water.

I couldn't even afford oil bills or anything. And being the senior citizens here, we can't afford to keep spending and spending because it keeps costing us for medical bills and hospital bills and et cetera. So you got to look at the -- the hardships as this water company is going to create if they do raise the rates. It's -- it's going to drive people out of here. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Next person to speak will be Tom

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Proceedings

Kohlman, followed Ed Kirkland.

MR. KOHLMAN: Hi. My name is Tom Kohlman. I'm here tonight representing Forest City Community Association, which has 1100 homes.

To speak to this gentleman that had talked about drilling down and getting your own water, we've called a company. And they said they are not allowed to drill on Long Island. So we're screwed either way.

At one of our annual events, we had asked residents to come to the event and bring a water bill and that they would have a prize at the end of the day. Most of the residents brought their water bill, and the winner was a gentleman in our community with a family of five. Their water bill was \$550.

Yeah. And what we gave them as a prize was three cases of water -- Poland Spring Water and a water pitcher.

It's -- it's getting ridiculous that we can't get public water and that we're

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Proceedings

going to pay \$5.5 million for this company to do research and development? That's crazy.

Anybody that owns a company knows that they have to pay for their own research and development. But, here, they -- let's just keep screwing everybody and get what we can. It's time for public water --

(Applause.)

MR. KOHLMAN: -- and we just can't put up with this crap any longer. Thank you.

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Next, we'll hear from Ed Kirkland, followed by Dennis Kelleher.

Is Ed Kirkland here?

All right. Is Dennis Kelleher here?

MR. KELLEHER: Good evening. My name is Dennis Kelleher, and I'm the president of H2M Water. We're consulting engineers, and we're the engineer of record for about 30 public water suppliers in Nassau and Suffolk County, including the South

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Proceedings

Huntington Water District that was mentioned earlier.

Just about the South Huntington, I would like to clarify one thing, and I'm sure they're going to be very happy when I tell them tomorrow that their name came up having some of the lowest cost of water in Nassau and Suffolk County.

However, everybody who lives in the South Huntington Water District, besides paying that \$9 minimum water bill, they do get a water tax on their tax bill that they get from, in that case, the Town of Huntington. The typical homeowner pays about \$150 a year. So I wanted to clarify that.

Tonight -- tonight, I'd like to speak about all water suppliers on Long Island, including the New York American Water.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Louder.

MR. KELLEHER: I'd like to speak about all water suppliers in Nassau and Suffolk County, including New York American Water.

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Proceedings

There's a major challenge emerging across the country and Long Island. Our water infrastructure is aging, and we're not moving quick enough to replace or rehabilitate our water assets.

Why? Maybe because most of our assets are buried. Out of sight, out of mind. Maybe it's because we just take water for granted. The water industry has recently realized that we need to catch up on our infrastructure replacement.

Every year, the American Society of Civil Engineers puts out a report card on the conditions of the nation's infrastructure, roads, bridges and water systems.

Last year, the water industry received a grade of D plus. Nothing we should brag about. The American Water Works Association, a national association of water suppliers and water professionals, prepared a report evaluating the same issue entitled, "Buried No Longer."

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Proceedings

This report estimates that the water industry needs to invest \$1 trillion over the next 25 years to restore our existing water systems. The bottom line is water rates will continue to increase for all water suppliers across the country and on Long Island.

I've reviewed the list of projects that New York American Water has completed and that are part of this proposed rate increase. The projects are necessary to improve the water quality and to replace the aging water mains. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Is Jane Finkelstein here?

MS. FINKELSTEIN: Hi. I'm Jane Finkelstein. I would just like to ask that you strongly consider public water for these communities.

American Water's, I believe -- and if there's anybody here that can correct me if I'm wrong -- income last year was \$1.51 billion. The rate of the return on the

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Proceedings

profits was up 30 percent from 2011 to 2015. From 2012 to 2013, the cost of the water to buy went down \$40 million, but their revenues only went up by 20 million. In 2013 to 2014, the cost of the water went up by 40 million, and the revenue went up by 110 million.

I am -- I just cannot understand how a company like this making so much money is coming to us middle income people and telling us that we need close to a 10 percent increase when all the surrounding districts in Nassau County, as well as Suffolk, as well as districts like Cold Spring Harbor, Lloyd Harbor, do not pay -- at least I don't know the exact amount -- 30 percent of what the average homeowner pays here.

It really is criminal. And then they look for ways to market their goods and really get us, and especially for the poor seniors and vets who are frightened by some of the literature that they get. I think it's a travesty. Thank you.

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Proceedings

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Next, we'll hear from Barbara Sims,
followed by Bob Hasteadt.

MS. SIMS: My name is Barbara Sims,
and I'm a resident of North Bellmore. And
I represent middle class people that are
trying to survive on Long Island.

I came to the Malverne meeting this
afternoon, and I was one the first persons
there with my friends. We had heard about
it about a week or two ago, and we did
everything that we could to e-mail,
Facebook. We called Channel 12 news. We
called Newsday. We e-mailed. We faxed.
My son is a landscaper. He texted his
customers to tell them about the water
rate 'cause they let their lawns die
because they can't afford the water bill.

I came over to you to ask you some
questions, and you smiled. And that was
my first meeting at the public meeting.
And I really wasn't sure how everything
ran. I was very disappointed that all you

1 Proceedings

2 got to do was stand here and bitch and
3 moan 'cause that's not what I want to do.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. SIMS: I want to be heard, and I
6 got the impression that you were there for
7 us. And I don't understand -- I don't
8 understand the whole system. One person
9 after another -- many of them are here --
10 got up with facts and figures. I don't
11 understand how we even got to this point
12 to get this far that they are where they
13 are, able to charge us and not do what
14 they're supposed to do.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. SIMS: Hello. This is what I
17 drink in, okay? We have to buy bottled
18 water, okay? I filled my bathtub to give
19 my nephew a bath. I was so embarrassed
20 because it was brown. It was brown, and I
21 had to tell his mother not to put the kid
22 in the water. That is not acceptable.

23 But yet, we come to a meeting.

24 People come with facts and figures.

25 They've done research. They know what's

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Proceedings

going on. I don't know everything that's going on. I only know that my water bill is almost \$600 so far this year. I do not have a pool. There's two people in the house. We're not that clean. It's ridiculous.

So I don't understand what is the point of our coming here, expressing our feeling. People who have degrees or whatever and background and came up with facts and figures and intelligent information, and there's no damn answer. You're required to be here.

(Applause.)

MS. SIMS: This afternoon, I sat there and listened. And I was just amazed. There was a woman that explained that there was particles and dirt and brown in the water. And the New York Water Company, they did nothing. They did nothing.

And then to hear someone saying that they put in their paper frightening people. I have the papers in my file that

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Proceedings

I should look into research and getting extra insurance. And to hear that you can do it for \$20 for your homeowners? How do you allow them to put that in print and send it out to the public when it's a lie? It's a lie.

(Applause.)

MS. SIMS: Where are the answers? Where are we going to find the answers to our questions of what we're telling you here today? Where are the answers? Does anybody know?

This is why nobody comes. Everyone that I talk to that comes to the meeting, I'm telling you over and over again, I approach people. What's the point?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: There is no point because they're going to give the raise anyway.

MS. SIMS: Right. Where's the point? Why am I to have an upset stomach --

MR. MAZZA: Just to reiterate. The point of tonight is so the Commission will hear your views and take -- ma'am,

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Proceedings

please -- and take into account in making its decision in this water case.

And this is how they -- excuse me, sir -- and this is how they know what the concerns of the residents and the ratepayers are and are able to make a reasonable decision, ultimately, in this rate proceeding. And that is the very valuable purpose of the comments that we're hearing here tonight.

MS. SIMS: And be that as it may, where are we going to see the results of these comments, because these comments were made before and we already took them on as our water company when people did not want it to begin with?

The water bill. After you use 12,000 gallons, the rate is .6285. That's almost 65 cents a gallon of water. I might as well take this and put it in the tap. That doesn't make any sense.

And it's brown. I had the health department at my house a couple years ago. They told me the water was fine, but they

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Proceedings

didn't drink it. They didn't drink it.
This procedure is unacceptable of what you
are doing to the people in this community.
I'm recently retired.

And even if you're not retired on a
fixed income, why the hell should you pay
for what's not acceptable? It's not
acceptable.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Next, we'll hear from Bob Hasteadt,
followed by Ed Hickland.

MR. HASTEADT: I'm going to be kind
of brief because I think most of the facts
and the matter have been stated by other
people, but I'd like to remind the
gentleman in the front here that the title
of where he works is Public Service
Commission.

(Applause.)

MR. HASTEADT: Now, the way I
translate that, that means serving the
public, not serving the Company. We
have --

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Proceedings

(Applause.)

MR. HASTEADT: Many of the people in this room are senior citizens, like myself. And when these kind of raises come up in the -- in the needs, like water and things, they are very difficult for us to handle.

And I'd like to remind them, too, that my sister-in-law in Massapequa pays less per year for water than I pay in a month. And it all comes out of the same aquifer. So it's not like they got it from some place different that was cheaper. It all comes out of the same aquifer and the same basic delivery product.

The product isn't good. Frankly, I think they should be penalized by about a 20 or 30 percent decrease --

(Applause.)

MR. HASTEADT: -- until they get the water up to standard, because it's not up to standard now. So I think you should be penalized because the assumption in the

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Proceedings

rates that you're giving us is that they're providing a good service. But everybody here can tell you they're not. So it's time for them to get a decrease.

The other thing I recommend for all of us to do is to sit down and write a letter to the people that are in the Town of Hempstead and tell them to get off their ass and get us a public water supply.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Next, we'll hear Ed Hickland, followed by Paul Pepe.

MR. HICKLAND: I don't know which way I want to direct my comments, but I think I want to direct my comments to the Public Service Commission.

Anyway, the Public Service Commission, I think, has failed the people from American Water. And the reason why I say that is I look at my water bill, okay? 13,900 gallons, I'm charged for in my basic service charge every month -- every

1 Proceedings

2 two months -- I'm sorry -- every two
3 months. That's 231 gallons a day.

4 Now, it's me and my wife. We're
5 retired. We use about -- in the
6 wintertime, we use about 9,000 gallons.
7 So New York Water is actually charging us
8 for 4,900 gallons of water we don't even
9 use. And this has been going on for a
10 long time.

11 But the Public Service Commission has
12 not stepped forward to change the rate,
13 and we still get charged that high rate.
14 Hopefully -- and I say "hopefully" 'cause
15 I don't know if it's going to happen or
16 not -- we'll get a better rate.

17 I look at the water bill. We
18 actually moved to Merrick about 17 years
19 ago. And I look at the water 'cause my
20 wife ran a business in the New York Water
21 area where they charged a lower service
22 charge. And we are being charged about
23 twice as much as they were charged. So
24 now, I don't know how the Public Service
25 Commission stands for this.

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Proceedings

Also, we all remember Sandy back in 2012. We were at our house for three months. Three months, our house was -- we got water in the house. We were out. Our water heater went out. Our stove was out. There was no way that our house was useable. And during that period of time, we used very little water. I think the contractors were there. They used a little bit.

What was my present when I got home? A collection notice from New York Water that they were going to shut our water off. We used very little water during that period. But, yet, you know, they said, Oh, well, this is our rate. And, of course, the 13,900 gallons for two months -- it was actually three months, so it was half of another month.

On top of that, poor service that they provide. A couple years ago, we got a bill from New York Water. It said we were using 500 gallons of water a day. And the answer I got, You must have a

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Proceedings

leak. Now, if you think about it, 500 gallons of water, if it's leaking in our yard, we'd have a lake outside. There was no lake outside. We do have a (inaudible) that runs outside the house, but that's something different.

It took about a month to solve it. When they solved the problem, what did they do? Well, the problem came from their programing and their new meters. When they solved it, they said, Well, we don't know how much water you used, but we're going to charge you based upon how much water you used last year, even though it was not a good year.

And what they did -- when I called up, I said, Well, you know, how did you come up with this. They said, Well, we estimated it. And the customer service agent says to me, Do you think we make up these numbers? Yeah, that's what an estimate is, a made-up number.

Okay. So now, you know, we're looking at New York Water, and we're

1 Proceedings

2 saying, you know, how much are we being
3 charged? In fact, to come up with this
4 number, I called the other day. And I
5 said, Okay, so how many gallons do we get
6 charged? And the customer service agent
7 says, Oh, we charged you for the first
8 gallon of water. I said, No, you don't.
9 I'm looking here at the bill, and you
10 don't charge me. I had to -- I said,
11 Well, okay. Have a supervisor call me.
12 Well, we'll have the supervisor call you
13 in the next day or so.

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Still waiting.

15 MR. HICKLAND: And I'm still waiting.
16 You're absolutely right. I'm still
17 waiting.

18 I did finally get a hold of somebody
19 there who told me 13,900 gallons is what
20 I'm charged for, whether I use it or not.
21 Thank you.

22 And, hopefully, the Public Service
23 Commission is going to do their job and
24 they're going to actually step in.

25 I don't know if anybody's ever been

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Proceedings

to New York Water's -- to American Water's headquarters. I was there a few years ago, and they have some really nice paneled offices. Of course, we're paying for them. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

The next speaker will be Paul Pepe, followed by Beth Jean Freeman.

MR. PEPE: Hi. I just want to let everybody know that we already have public water. It's in the ground. It's ours. We have a private monopoly that's rating us.

Now, the PSC is supposed to be our watch dog, but they're unelected. So they allow New York un-American Water Company to charge whatever they feel like charging.

Now, my son lives in Massapequa like I do, but he lives in the Massapequa part of the water. And he pays about \$150 a year. I pay -- well, about six times that.

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Proceedings

I know they have to make a profit. I know they pay taxes, but, gee, nobody pays 600 percent taxes. I don't think that's what's happening. So we have to go to -- I know the vote today is all privatization is going to save money.

Not in this case. We have to go the other way and have somebody who's elected and who's responsible to us and can be removed by us if they don't do a good job. Now we can't even do that. I can't go any place else. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Next, we'll hear from Beth Jean Freeman, followed by John Smith.

Is John Smith here?

MR. SMITH: Good evening. My name is John Smith. I'm a resident of Wantagh for 35 years. When I first came here, Brooklyn Water was in charge of our water. That is no longer true.

For some reason, they sold us to another company who sold it to another

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Proceedings

company for profit. I'd like to know, from the Town of Hempstead, I'd like to see a transparency of who was the brain trust that decided to sell that water company privately when they knew that shouldn't be planned.

(Applause.)

MR. SMITH: And I'd like to see the transparency from all the way down.

And my next attack on this is the Public Service Commission. Let me tell you what you've given us over the years -- the 35 years I've been here.

Much higher electric bills. Every time they asked for it, you gave it to them. Oh, school taxes. Of course, everything goes up because, guess what? The electric bill goes up, the water bill goes up and now sewage. Guess what the brain trust thought for us now? Let's have American Water do our sewerage.

Have you been to the plant at Cedar Creek? We spent millions and millions of dollars there. And guess what? It's

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Proceedings

falling apart. The place is a dump.

When I used to go down there, they had tours on one side only because the other side was falling apart. But nobody from the Public Service Commission ever went down there because, if you did, you would have said, Hey, you're going to jail.

And you know what? There has to be accountability. And I'm sick of it. I bet you if you saw that movie "Network" when somebody said, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to put up with it anymore," when you've got a group of people here in mass telling you and you wonder why the place isn't packed to the rafters because there's no respect for anybody in the Public Service Commission because, when we really feel you are representatives of every major company.

Now, a couple experts came up before, and they were all talking about how, Oh, how the infrastructure is bad. You know what? I bought a house 35 years ago in

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Proceedings

Wantagh. I had to replace some plumbing in the house. Did I go to the Public Service Commission and say, Excuse me, I need you to give me a 10 percent increase in my salary because there was problems with my house, so I need a deduction in my taxes? No, we have no forum for that.

This is a joke. You know what? Without people being held accountable, it's a joke. We have people in our federal government that say, I take full responsibility. They take full responsibility for what? For nothing. They don't get punished. Nobody goes to jail. That's just a bunch of garbage.

So if you wonder why we have no faith in you -- and this is nothing personal to you -- but I'm sick and tired of somebody saying, I'm taking full responsibility. Well, the next person that says that, maybe we should take them and make them have full responsibility. Maybe they should spend ten or 15 years in jail because most of the people in these

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Proceedings

companies have never been to a prison.

(Applause.)

MR. SMITH: Now, I've been to every single prison in New York State. I've been to every single one of them. And guess what? They're not really pretty or not really nice on the inside. But if more people who were elected who screw things up and they still think that there's a record some place, you know, did you ever hear of (inaudible) someplace. Somewhere in a little envelope in a little file in a little drawer, there are the names of people who sold us down the toilet from the Brooklyn Water Company.

And it's about time we start with them, and we go down the chain and we get rid of American Water.

(Applause.)

MR. SMITH: Let me tell you about the water tower that this woman was talking about before. What a joke. I stood here. I sat here for two hours listening to people, and I thought I had a good

1 Proceedings

2 argument.

3 Then this little lady came down here
4 and said, Excuse me, but wouldn't it be
5 cheaper if you just owned another well
6 right here where the other one was and
7 just ran that water to it. And the man
8 that stood here who was the expert who was
9 very caring -- I live in Wantagh myself,
10 he said, for at least the last 20
11 minutes -- and he said, You know what?
12 You're right. That's all we have to do is
13 dig another well. It was going to cost \$2
14 million to build this tower.

15 The question was asked, You ever put
16 cell towers on this so we can have cell
17 phones on top of this. No, we're not
18 doing that. And this young lady said,
19 Excuse me, I know you said that before,
20 but can you put them on the sides. Well,
21 yeah, we're going to do that. We're
22 considering that.

23 So that's American Water for you. I
24 had -- I ran a brand new line from my
25 house all the way out to the street. I

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Proceedings

used KD copper. It's tube copper. It's the best copper you can get. One inch. Six months later, I put a new meter in and a casing for it. I paid for everything. I get a call telling me, We're going to come replace your meter. And I said, Why. Oh, they said, 'cause your meter is in your basement.

I said, No. I think it was, like, six months ago, I replaced all that. No, you didn't. You don't know what you're talking about. I'm, like, Excuse me, I used to work for a plumber when I was in high school, and the guy was really knowledgeable, and I learned a lot. But I do know when a meter is not in my basement. It's out in front of my house.

Well, of course, I had to get the new meter put in. I asked them if you could do one inch to one inch, not one inch to five-eighths because that's the typical way they boost your water pressure up. That's another problem, the water pressure.

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Proceedings

Take a look at the pipes they're using in the street. I'm using KD copper. Guess what they're using? Probably plastic pipe or some PVC piece of garbage with it. Oh -- what?

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Lead. Lead pipe.

MR. SMITH: No, no, no. It's not the old stuff, the new stuff. The old stuff is lead.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, there is plenty of lead pipe.

MR. SMITH: Oh, there is plenty of lead pipe around.

But when a company buys another company, they buy their entire assets. And they knew from the very beginning what they were getting themselves into. You know what? If you're married, you're married to somebody, and they have debts and you marry them, guess what? You're responsible for those debts, you know, even if they're buried someplace.

Another man mentioned, Oh, I'm an expert. I know we're going to have a lot

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Proceedings

of pipes breaking, and we're going to this and that. You know what? Yeah, when you bought the company, you knew it. So guess what? You don't deserve any more money. You're charging us eight times what everybody else is. I think what this is, this is a Ponzi scheme against the people of our town.

(Applause.)

MR. SMITH: And it's time we had a federal investigation. Never mind getting (inaudible) federal investigation and pull everybody's butt who's been hiding for years with this nonsense. And if we don't get it, maybe we need to do something else. We're getting a lot of nonsense here.

We're getting ten million gallons of sewerage from another plant here to another. I was there four years ago when they were going to pump another ten million gallons from Great Neck down here. But, then, of course, somebody had to mention the fact that, you know, it's like

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Proceedings

a giant pipe under your sink, you know.
And if you do that, something happens.
You got ten million gallons of sewerage
coming through. It was a guy who was the
Mayor of Great Neck who finally came in
and said, Guys, this is not going to work.

Now we're going use a water pipe
underneath the Sunrise Highway -- I don't
know if you're aware of this -- and
they're going to pump ten million gallons
of sewerage every day from all over Long
Island into Cedar Creek, which is falling
apart, it's a piece of junk. The guy
that's running it doesn't even have the
right education. Most of the people that
work there are hard workers. Management
there hasn't a clue what they're doing.

And now, just one more problem here.
We have a hospital annex that's going to
be open on Wantagh Avenue. They're going
to have 8,000 cars circling the
neighborhood every day 'cause there's no
parking for it. But did anybody look?
Nobody even knows. This is nonsense.

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Proceedings

We need to all get together and say,
You know what? If we don't stop this
nonsense now, we're going to be overrun.
That's 8,400 cars a day. They went there,
too, and bought the Verizon building.
They have 176 parking spaces. They need
284, just for the staff in the building.

Every doctor generates 100 cars a
day. That's 8,400 cars. You know how
many parking spaces are from Willow
between Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road?
There's about 2,000. That's if we let
people park there eight hours a day. And
there's no signs being up there.

Let me get back on the point about
this American -- this is what I'm trying
to say. This is all nonsense. Total
nonsense. And you know what? That's why
there's no respect when people say, the
Public Service Commission, we really think
of you guys as just another branch of
whatever major company is here.

You know what? And it might be
insulting, but, you know, it's true when

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Proceedings

you see people come up here and get so aggravated and so pissed off at everything that people say, We need somebody to look out for us. And, eventually, we're going to have to. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

The next speaker will be Catherine Moran, followed by Tova Poaut.

Is there a Catherine Moran here?

(No response.)

AUDIENCE MEMBER: They got frustrated and left.

MR. MAZZA: Is there a Tova Poaut? Followed by Philip Whitman.

MS. POAUT: Hi, everybody. Hello. My name is Tova Poaut. I'm a resident of said Cedarhurst for 20 years. I'm a resident of Long Island for my entire life, other than a brief stint in New Jersey.

I grew up on Long Island in Suffolk County. I'm a resident of Cedarhurst for 20 years, and I have been fighting with

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Proceedings

American Water since I moved in to clean up our water.

American Water does not just overcharge us, but they underservice us. And they are putting our children in danger from -- from their dirty water. I have a water filter in my house. Water filters come with a time that they tell you to change it, generally four to six months. Some say even a little bit longer.

Mine says six months. I put in the best water filter I could find. I went to Blackman in my neighborhood, and they go, Oh, you want a five towns filter. They actually understood what I needed. This is what my filter looks like after six weeks. Not six months. Six weeks. Six weeks. This is what I live with.

After four and a half weeks, that's what the water looks like coming out of my house, okay? That's what I live with. That's what my children are asked to bathe in. That's what I'm asked to brush my

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Proceedings

teeth with. That's what I'm asked to cook my children's pasta in.

So on top of the rates that we pay that are so high, I now pay for Poland Spring. I brush my teeth with Poland Spring. For 20 years. This is inappropriate. My husband doesn't like --

(Applause.)

MS. POAUT: Do you know why he doesn't like when I buy white shirts? Because I can't wash them. They come out brown, even with bleach. I can only send my stuff to a cleaners outside my neighborhood so that he can have white shirts for work.

So these are some of the things that some of us in the five towns are dealing with. So this rate hike is atrocious. It's really preposterous to ask us to pay more for such a horrific service.

On top of that, I already pay a \$5.41 surcharge every single month for -- and I'm going to give you the exact word on my bill, so that we don't get this wrong --

1 Proceedings

2 that \$5.41 is a "system improvement
3 charge."

4 I'd like to know what system
5 improvement they've put in, in my 20 years
6 that I'm living with this. This is
7 horrific. This is -- I might as well be
8 living in a third world country
9 considering the water that I'm getting out
10 of my faucet.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. POAUT: I'm going to give you
13 some of the other hidden costs that come
14 with brown water. Water heaters die
15 earlier. We replace them on a more
16 regular basis than anywhere else on Long
17 Island, okay? That's one of the hidden
18 costs that we have, other than our spring
19 water that we all buy.

20 Some of the other hidden costs are
21 sewer back-up. Why is our water brown?
22 Does anybody know what's causing this
23 brown water? Sediment. Rust. Rust from
24 the pipes in our streets are coming off
25 and going into our homes. And they're

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Proceedings

clogging our systems at home. And we're paying to get those systems ground out and cleaned up and replacing our pipes because we have this sitting inside our homes. This is inappropriate. This is another hidden cost that we are paying to have American Water as our service.

Other hidden costs include delayed bathing our children. That's a hidden cost. That's a health cost. When I have to delay bathing my child, that's a problem. When I have to send my child to school the next day not as clean as I would like because I can't put them in the bathtub, that's a cost.

We have to remember that this is a lifestyle that we live that we are battling every single day. And even with water filters, we are failing.

Now, some of the other things that we don't know about -- a lot of people don't realize about American Water is that we have lead pipes running through our streets. 3,000 of our pipes are lead.

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Proceedings

That's not including the ones that are running from the street to our homes 'cause we don't know how many of those are lead.

But we know that we have 3,000 pipes in our streets that are lead. That's a health risk, there's a health hazard to every single person sitting in this room, including your children, your grandchildren and every child.

As a teacher and as a board member of a school district, I understand what those learning disabilities, how they affect children's lives. And lead -- the possibility of lead leaking into our water is real.

Most places no longer use lead pipes. These should have been replaced many years ago. We've known the risk of lead for decades. This is not a new risk.

So when we talk about giving American Water a rate hike, we can be considering throwing them in the garbage because there's no rate hike for this kind of

1 Proceedings

2 service, for this lack of respect for all
3 of us.

4 This is a -- this is really an
5 abomination to the way they feel about us.
6 They feel that we are so low that they do
7 not care about our health. They do not
8 care about our children. And we do not
9 have the right to sit here and let them
10 continue this.

11 Without -- with a rate increase, all
12 we're saying to them is, Good job, you've
13 done a great job, you deserve a rate hike.
14 This is not what they deserve. They
15 deserve to be thrown out.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. POAUT: I've been working on this
18 issue for almost 20 years since I moved
19 in. The president of American Water
20 Company came to visit my home and wouldn't
21 drink the water out of my faucet.

22 So I will tell you that that really
23 bothered me, but I would really like to
24 thank Claudia and Dave. I'm sorry. I'm
25 losing my voice. I am a teacher. I talk

1 Proceedings

2 all day.

3 I'd really like to thank Claudia and
4 Dave for making sure that we have this
5 hearing and that people knew about it.
6 And I want to thank all of you for coming
7 out here tonight --

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. POAUT: -- and voicing your
10 opinion and letting the Public Service
11 Commission know how important it is that
12 we no longer stand for these increases
13 without better service. And you know
14 what? I'm perfectly willing to reward
15 anybody, like an employee or anybody who
16 does a good job. They don't deserve a
17 reward.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

20 The next speaker will be Philip
21 Whitman, followed by Audrey Ciuffo.

22 MS. CIUFFO: I'm a former teacher.
23 I'm a retired teacher, so I know how to
24 speak in a very kind of interesting voice
25 so that everyone can hear me.

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Proceedings

I understand what so many of the people said, and I'm here kind of to reiterate that. I am retired. I am on a fixed income, and I also have a disabled son who lives with me, a 30-year-old disabled son.

So I get that, with these horrendous water rates, I mean, it's ridiculous. I also, like a couple of people said, I got that termination bill.

Why? I've never had that. I mean, all the other bills, they're not ready to threaten me with termination. First of all, I don't even think that I deserved it. I don't remember not paying the bill. They're, like, threatening.

They're, like, in a movie, you know, they're charging us these exorbitant usury rates and they're not providing service. I mean, what Tova said about the water in her house is beyond belief.

I'm very grateful my water is not like that, but there are so many people that are paying these rates and have the

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Proceedings

water like that. Even though my water looks okay, I still shouldn't be paying these rates.

And we tried. I remember that Dave Denenberg and Claudia Borecky tried to get the town to take over the water. You know, they tried so hard, but they wouldn't have any of it. I mean, we need to get the government officials invested in taking over the water. We need public water.

(Applause.)

MS. CIUFFO: We need public water. We have to demand it. We have to demand it. We cannot stop. You have to tell your neighbors. We should have had the auditorium filled. We've got to have public water. We need to tell all of our representatives to stand up and find out what it is that has to be done to take it over.

Enough with the rhetoric. Enough with the delays. And I agree with everybody who said that the Public Service

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Proceedings

Commission -- I'm horrified to know they weren't really serving us. I thought "public service" means to serve the public. Well, we need service, and we need it now.

(Applause.)

MS. CIUFFO: And, you know, that's all I can say is that, once again, this meeting, you know, was set into motion by Dave Denenberg and Claudia Borecky.

So, again, you deserve a lot of thanks for getting everybody here, for notifying everybody and we need help now.

(Applause.)

MS. CIUFFO: We need restitution for the harm that's been done to all of us here. We need restitution, and we need public water.

Let's all say it. We need public water. Public water now. Public water now. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the next

1 Proceedings

2 speaker will be Audrey Ciuffo, followed by
3 Deborah Peacock, please.

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can I ask you,
5 where do you live?

6 MR. MAZZA: Deborah Peacock, followed
7 by Tom Gallagher.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can you glass of
9 water from home?

10 MR. MAZZA: You have to be quiet.

11 Ron Bornico will be following Deborah
12 Peacock.

13 MS. PEACOCK: Hi. My name's Deborah
14 Peacock, and I've lived in Wantagh for 39
15 years. And I've seen a lot of changes and
16 a lot of times change, like everybody
17 else. And I want to thank everybody here
18 that came and spoke 'cause I've learned a
19 few things.

20 And I'm really appalled, you know,
21 that we're being treated this way. And I
22 don't understand. You know, my mother
23 lives in East Meadow, and her water bill
24 is nothing. And same thing, my
25 father-in-law lives in Massapequa Park.

1 Proceedings

2 And the water bill is nothing compared to
3 what we pay.

4 I mean, I can't even put my sprinkler
5 system on. Why do I pay a gardener that
6 can't put the water on the lawn? It's,
7 like, contradiction. And, you know, it's
8 very frustrating to see, like, the brown
9 water. I know what she's talking about.

10 I work in the airport, and I've been
11 to many places around the world. And for
12 me to come here and to see that and we're
13 supposed to be the United States of
14 America and we pay -- why are we like
15 this? Why don't you people be
16 accountable?

17 I mean, why do we have to pay these
18 high rates and the people in the next few
19 districts don't pay the same? Who
20 monitors you? Who controls you? Enough
21 is enough, you know.

22 And I'm just really -- it's very
23 upsetting that people have to come up here
24 and do that in this time and age and date
25 because people don't do their job. And

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Proceedings

people have to be held accountable.

(Applause.)

MS. PEACOCK: And I'm glad where I live, and I'm glad to see people coming up and speaking. And I'm very proud, and I want to thank you all up for coming up. And I heard a lot of things. And I can go on for -- and a lot of people already said what I intended to, but not enough people get up and speak.

I mean, we need to get together and do something or get a petition to do something and, you know, volunteer. I have no problem doing it, but enough is enough, you know. And we deserve better. And that's it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

Tim Gallagher.

MR. GALLAGHER: Good evening. I'm Tim Gallagher. I'm not related to Tom, whoever he is. I'm a veteran. I'm retired, living on a fixed income. I've lived in Merrick since 1956. I'm younger

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Proceedings

than that, actually.

A couple things about American Water. My wife and I like to walk. A few months back, on (inaudible) they replaced main water pipes up and down the street. They made a big junction box. They dug a big hole, filled it in and threw some half-ass patch down on it.

About three weeks later, I go to -- I was walking. The patch was sunk in about a foot and a half, maybe two feet. So three, four days walking past it, I said, Geez, you know, a car comes down here, it's a pretty dark street, they're going to lose their rear end. Somebody walking doesn't see it, falls in that hole, they're going to break a leg.

My last two water bills, \$325 and \$385, typical North Merrick house, nothing special, I actually thought about breaking my leg, going down in the hole and suing them so I can at least pay for my water bill.

But I tried to look on my bill. I

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Proceedings

called. I couldn't get any number. They weren't open. But I tried to get somebody to report that it was a hazard. Finally called Nassau County Police, and they put a code in there or something like that. Monday, I called up. I was finally able to get a hold of somebody 'cause, you know, can't get a hold of you folks on weekends. What happens if there's a water leak? What do we do?

No answer. Took them about another five days. They patched it. Pretty good job. They patched it. Took a long time.

Now, as I said, I lived in Merrick since 1956. And another thing I really have a problem with is I, too, get these letters every year about taking out insurance on the water pipes from my house to the curb.

I think it's kind of criminal, actually, because in -- I don't know -- the 60 years I've lived in Merrick, I don't know one person who ever had a water leak in one of those pipes going from

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Proceedings

their house out to the street.

Has anybody ever had a water leak? I could see some old people. And what's kind of scary that made me kind of say, Oooh, you know, if this happens, you're going to be paying a lot of money. I see where a lot of maybe old people or maybe some people, you know, who are kind of prone to those things, paying those ridiculous monies and it's really just -- you're throwing your money away. It's like taking out an insurance policy on a refrigerator or something like that. So they should really stop doing that. I think it's wrong.

But I think this whole thing -- well, I have a friend in Bellmore. He pays \$75 for his water bill, and I pay 385. He's a mile away. You look at his street. You look at my street, paved the same way, same houses, same median income. He pays 75; I pay 385.

You look all through Nassau County. All the streets look basically the same.

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Proceedings

I mean, the houses may be different, but the streets all look the same with water pipes running through. So why are some people in one community having to pay five or six times as much for a commodity running under that street as people in the other communities?

I mean, if you look at Verizon cable and you look at electric, you know, the houses, the poles, you know, charges are the same. A line charge is a line charge from Verizon, right? It's whatever it is, 810 a month for Lynbrook, 810 in Merrick, 810 North Merrick, so there's no disparaging. It's a commodity.

So there shouldn't be a big price, but maybe the simple solution -- I'm not sure, you know, where you live -- and I'm not sure what your role is even in this, other than to sit here and take shots all day.

But I would ask every Public Service Commission member, you know, do unto others as you do unto yourself. Look at

1 Proceedings

2 your water bill, and look at what you're
3 paying. And then look at what we're
4 paying. And just ask yourself, Would I
5 want to pay that rate? Is it fair for me
6 to pay the rate that I'm paying --

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. GALLAGHER: -- and not -- we have
9 some folks here that are legislators or
10 maybe running for legislature. Why don't
11 we pass a law that says, you can't pass a
12 rate hike 5 percent greater than the
13 lowest rate in any Public Service
14 Commission member who's making that
15 decision has to pay for their water?
16 Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

19 The next speaker we hear from will be
20 Ron Bornico, followed by Howard Nacht.

21 MR. BORNICO: I got here a few
22 minutes late, but I've been here at least
23 a good hour. And I've heard some great
24 arguments from all of these people here.
25 I've only seen two people get up in favor

1 Proceedings

2 of the water company.

3 And what was their argument? We have
4 pipes to fix. We have infrastructure.
5 That's your job. That's what we hire you
6 for, right? That's your argument? And I
7 know they're not even here anymore. They
8 ran out after they spoke.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, they're not
10 paying --

11 MR. BORNICO: Okay. Well --

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We're not making \$3
13 million a year.

14 MR. BORNICO: If that's their
15 argument, I think the evidence is
16 overwhelming for the people here, right?
17 And if, like you said, you're here to make
18 a decision based on what you hear, I think
19 it's a no-brainer decision, right?

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. BORNICO: Not only should you
22 deny the rate hike, but here -- and, thank
23 God, some of you people are talking about
24 brown water. Thank God, I don't have
25 brown water. I got to say, I consider

1 Proceedings

2 myself lucky.

3 But my bill is still sky high. But
4 based on what I hear here, not only should
5 you deny the rate hike, but you should
6 consider getting a whole new company to
7 run this, either public water or a company
8 that's not going to gouge us for five
9 times what everybody else is paying,
10 right?

11 I mean, how -- how is it the other
12 water districts do it for that price,
13 right? They have -- they have pipes to
14 maintain. They have infrastructure. They
15 have broken pipes. Same issues as
16 American Water, but they're charging us
17 five times as much for the same service.

18 What's that?

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: They're not making
20 \$3 million a year, they can use that money
21 for the infrastructure.

22 MR. BORNICO: Yeah. Well, it's time
23 to get a new company or public water, all
24 right? Thank you very much.

25 (Applause.)

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Proceedings

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Next, we'll hear from Howard Nacht,
followed by Larry Kurtz.

MR. NACHT: My name is Howard Nacht.
I've lived in Merrick for 37 years. When
we moved there, a cousin of ours who lived
in Scarsdale said, Oh, you're going love
the water rates. Yeah, in Scarsdale,
because we were paying five times what
they were paying in Scarsdale 37 years
ago.

I really only have one point to make.
They might really deserve a rate hike, if
they really put the money into replacing
the infrastructure and curing the problems
with the water. But all you have to do is
come to Merrick and look at the beautiful
building that they just put up for the
comfort of their employees and themselves.

This is just a deplorable disregard
of the ratepayers. If they put the money
where it belongs instead of into the
salaries and their own comforts, then they
would deserve it. We need to put the

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Proceedings

public back in public utilities.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you.

Next is Larry Kurtz, followed by
Daniel Basil.

MR. KURTZ: Good evening, everybody.
My name is Larry Kurtz. I'm a long-time
resident of Bellmore. And I've been
following this matter fairly closely
'cause I've been involved with New York
Water -- going on a number of years.

For the record, I'd like the PSC to
know that I have an active complaint
against the New York Water, PSC Case
112866. For your reference, the "11"
stands for 2011 when the case was opened
up. The matter started sometime in 2009.

I came home from work. My wife
mentioned to me -- 'cause I've heard some
outrageous water bills here -- that we owe
the water company \$1,000.

When my head finished snapping
around, I asked to take a look at it. The
reason why I had no idea what I paid for

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Proceedings

my water bill is, by profession, I'm a public utility consultant. I analyze companies, governments, utility bills, water rates, electric bills and represent complaints against the Public Service Commission.

So I knew that I couldn't have possibly used 21,000 gallons of water a day. And I thought, I'll give you a call. So I did call. And Public Service Commission regulations that are very -- are supposed to be designed to protect residential users.

The Public Service Commission exists because you cannot sue a utility company because it's such a specialized area. So if you have a million dollar complaint or a hundred dollar complaint, it's the Public Service Commission that you're relying on to adjudicate your complaint, your issues, to advocate for you. And they've done a horrible job.

And I have avoided escalating my complaint. I can't stand complaining. I

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Proceedings

generally could work things out with utility companies. I'm not into badgering utility companies.

You know, we have light, power. It comes in pretty reliably. Most utility bills are all right. But when they do something, they do it wrong tremendously. And they're tremendously arrogant and don't acknowledge and don't take responsibility for their actions.

When I called to complain about my bill, I was told that it was probably a catch-up from a prior estimate. When I explained, with an engineering background, that, if we used this kind of water, the house would just explode from the volume, and you just cannot put, you know, a hundred pounds of sugar in a five-pound sack.

You send me 2,000 gallons water -- that's what it says on your rate material -- I could have not used the two million gallons that you billed me for. Maybe I'd like to speak to a supervisor.

1 Proceedings

2 I didn't get a call back. Didn't get a
3 call back. Followed up.

4 We get billed bimonthly. January, I
5 finally spoke to somebody. Started
6 putting things in writing. This is
7 January 2010. Now I'm escalating things.
8 I get a response. And I'm told that,
9 You're right, there's something wrong.
10 You know, I know that. And the meters
11 generally are fairly accurate. Water
12 meters are more likely to run slow than
13 fast, but it happens.

14 And New York Water, at the time,
15 We're going to replace your meter, we're
16 going to monitor it for a year. And
17 that's what they said. I said, I use
18 summer usage, I use winter usage. I can
19 tell you exactly how much I'm using. To
20 put an ultrasonic meter outside, it will
21 tell you what I'm testing for a week.
22 There's a lot of things you can do. I let
23 them do their thing.

24 Never heard from them again.
25 Followed up. Told them that I need a

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Proceedings

response. Got a letter saying, We need two more months. Next month, I got a disconnect notice. I filed a complaint against the Public Service Commission with the Public Service Commission. Following month, I got a letter with an adjustment of about \$3500.

I was outraged. Didn't touch the amount they owed me. And that's for several reasons. First of all, didn't provide a breakdown of where they came up with their numbers. They adjusted the bill for 11 periods. There's a statute of limitations that runs from six years from the date they are aware or they should have been aware of the situation.

So anyone with estimated bills or anyone who still has the meter in their basement, Public Service Commission needs to take a look at consumer complaints, their levels of estimated readings, what they do about them because there's systemic overbilling going on.

If DEP and New York City would have

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Proceedings

seen excess usage, they would have acted, they would have had an inspector out here. They would have had an inspector out there. Another meter problem would be, like, where is the conservation efforts? I heard someone mention leaks before.

We pay for our -- within our water rates, tremendous amounts of monies for leaks and waste throughout the system. We all pay for it. But there's no leak and ways forgiveness. We had frozen pipe. Someone blows a pipe, they're going use a lot of water, most of the utilities have a leak and ways forgiveness program, which is something else.

And back to my bill. This happened recently. This is 2011. I appealed it. This is 2016. I'm still at the consumer services department, which is the first level of consumer complaints. Then you go to the informal hearing unit. The informal hearing unit, if you get an informal hearing, which you can request, you go to the formal hearing unit.

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Proceedings

They can revise, modify, reverse, which can be appealed. Or you can get to an administrative law judge. If you look on the Public Service Commission under consumer complain determinations, you'll see ten, 12 years transpire before a complaint gets processed.

It's obscene, which is a reason why I generally try to work out reasonable issues with the water company. And what they've done is they've constantly sent me a letter, they're reviewing the matter, and I never hear from them. They're reviewing the matter; never hear from them.

This case is public record. Anyone can see all these letters, and I just have had it with them. Before I came to the hearing, while this was going on, they finally got in touch with me. You know what you're entitled to? Someone mentioned a termination notice.

Late charges, one and a half percent. You are late on your bill, they charge you

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Proceedings

one and a half percent. They estimate the bill. They estimate it high. Do they correct it? Do they give you back your money with interest? They're obligated to give you one and a half percent a month compounded on customer overcharges.

They finally recognized that they owed me interest on the overpayment from 2011, which had to do with the 2008 bill. On the adjustment, it was about \$5500 in interest that they offered me, which I summarily rejected. Reason being is, they only looked at two years' worth of my bills.

I complained in 2009. That gives me 2003. And when I looked at my bills, I was floored to find that my bills weren't just \$1,000 once. This was happening on a regular basis. \$50 is what my bill should have been. When they replaced the meter, my usage went down from 21,000 gallons a day immediately to 230 gallons a day, where it should have been immediately and stayed at that level for a year while they

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Proceedings

were reviewing my case supposedly.

But what they were doing is they were selling the Company. So when I followed up during this interim, they said, We'll get back to you. And then, We no longer own the Company. Now you have to go to New York American Water.

Okay. So now I'm five years into New York American Water. And, if anything, you guys got to put the brakes on and ask to investigate the customer service, the number of complaints, have they adjudicated those complaints, what their response time is, what do you as far as charging them in rate cases, which is what you typically do to a utility company. You incentivize them not to make mistakes.

What are they doing about conservation? There's no conservation program. You should keep them paying for your low flow toilets, aerators, things like that. They should give them away, things like that.

Another thing that's really

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Proceedings

bothersome to me is the tier grade structure. What a tier grade structure is they take X dollars from the first amount. Then you pay X dollars. And as it goes up, the rates change.

Most water companies, you have a reverse tier structure. As you use more, your rates go up. Now, you have someone on a fixed income, a small family, maybe just a husband and wife, a retired couple. They use the minimum amount. So they pay the minimum rate, so they're going to pay for at least 1600 cubic feet at the highest tier.

Now, you go out and you have someone with a very large property, a boat, a pool. Their rates go down as they consume more. So the people who are using less are subsidizing the people who are using more. And it's completely inequitable. It is just complete backwards logic. And it doesn't have to do with coverage conservation.

They need better software. These

1 Proceedings

2 high bills, low bills. They shouldn't
3 happen. They should have tolerance checks
4 that kick out and counter investigation.
5 They should be out there finding out why
6 my bill is low, why my bill that's high
7 because, if that's the service, it's on
8 meter service, that all gets to the rate
9 case.

10 And what this rate case is for, where
11 all the money is that they're required
12 needs to be looked through with a fine
13 toothed comb. And it's supposed to be
14 justified for everything, not
15 administrative or inefficiency, which
16 they're ripe with.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: They have a flat
18 fee, we don't use any water anymore. On
19 the bill itself, it shows X amount of
20 dollars, not --

21 MR. MAZZA: Ma'am, if you wish to
22 make a comment --

23 MR. KURTZ: Mathematically -- I'll
24 say it again -- it's very easy to overbill
25 that way.

1 Proceedings

2 You use 12 units instead of 16. They
3 bill you for 16. You use 12. They
4 estimate your bill. They finally get a
5 reading. And, you know, in three months,
6 four months, they use 40 units. Then
7 they'll go back and average your bill out.
8 You've paid for the 16, even though you
9 didn't use it. And then they're going to
10 bill you for 100 percent of that bill
11 'cause their estimates were low.

12 It doesn't do any good on one side or
13 the other. They're going to get your
14 money. They're going to hold it. They're
15 not going to correct your bills when you
16 return with interest as they're obligated
17 to. And even if you know what you're
18 doing -- 'cause I am absolutely convinced,
19 I will never have gotten a nickel out of
20 these people, if I didn't know my rights
21 and if I didn't stand on their backs and
22 continue to do so -- so I know that
23 general consumers with a complaint,
24 nobody's getting any kind of satisfaction.

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: And you're a

1 Proceedings

2 professional. We don't have a chance.

3 MR. KURTZ: Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

6 The next speaker will be Daniel

7 Basil, followed by Maria Prisco.

8 MR. BASIL: Good evening, everybody.

9 My name is Daniel Basil, and I live in
10 Wantagh, D Section. 2001, I was down at
11 Ground Zero. I can't work anymore. I'm
12 one of the lucky ones. I'm still alive.
13 I'm on Social Security.

14 I can't afford what you guys are
15 doing. You're going to kick me out of
16 here. You know, I was down there doing
17 the right thing. Why don't you guys do
18 the right thing? Say no. Just say no.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

21 Maria.

22 MS. PRISCO: Good evening. I'm Maria
23 Prisco. I'm a 18-year-resident of
24 Seaford. And I, too, am a public service
25 employee. I teach here at Wantagh High

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Proceedings

School, and I would like to tell you that, as a public service employee, I have responsibilities. And I'm held to a certain level where my community certainly has a right to abide by my job and making sure I do my job efficiently.

What I'd like to do is read your New York State, Department of Public Service mission statement. And I would like to grade your department the way I have to be graded. And we are based on --

(Applause.)

MS. PRISCO: We are based on a four-degree grading system. It goes highly effective, which not everyone earns; effective; developing; and ineffective.

The mission statement says, "The primary mission of the New York State, Department of Public Service, is to ensure affordable, safe, secure, reliable access to electric, gas, telecommunications, water services for New York State residential and business consumers, while

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Proceedings

protecting the natural environment.

"The Department also seeks to stimulate effective, competitive markets that benefit New York consumers through strategic investments as well as product and service innovations."

I would like to now grade the Department, as I would be graded. The services that you must provide state, "ensure safe and reliable utility service." I will grade you, ineffective.

"Set just and reasonable utility rates." That, too, is ineffective.

"Assist utility customers with service or billing problems," that is below ineffective.

"To educate consumers about their utility rights and protections," where are we being protected? We're not. There's no backing. There's no support.

This community and the surrounding communities are crying out, we need someone to support us. I implore you, please, to do something. We're squeezing

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Proceedings

our families out of these communities.

I have been working for 14 years here at Wantagh High School. I started out as a part-time teacher, and I needed to go back to work full-time because I could not afford to stay home between taxes, our utilities, et cetera, et cetera.

It's a very expensive county to live in, and parents need to work in order to survive. This is unacceptable for a basic, basic necessity. You're squeezing us to no end. I -- that's all I can say.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Veronica Hurley.

After Veronica, I have no additional speakers. If there's anybody who wishes to speak, please fill out a card. Otherwise, Veronica will be our final speaker.

MS. HURLEY: I'd like to be the last one. My name is Veronica Hurley. I live here in Wantagh, and I think I beat the evening's record, since 1954. I have lived in three different homes within the

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Proceedings

vicinity of three blocks here in South
Wantagh.

I've been through the situation that
most of you spoke of this evening, and
it's horrendous. However, one thing I
must say. We have to blame our county
officials for a lot of this that's going
on.

First of all, they've privatized
Cedar Creek, which is going to be a
nightmare for us. And now they privatized
water, which is now a nightmare for us.
We're paying ridiculous taxes. We're
paying ridiculous rates for our water.
We're paying ridiculous rates, and we're
going to be paying more for our sewage.
And if New York Water becomes involved
with Cedar Creek, we're really going to be
up a creek without a paddle.

So I'd like to thank the Commission
for being here tonight. And with all due
respect, I hope you go back to your
counterparts and explain to them that the
people here on Long Island are bleeding.

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Proceedings

I'm a senior citizen. I've worked in the Wantagh School District for 33 years. I retired, but now still work part-time so that I can afford to live here.

And I don't want to leave here. I want to stay here, and I want to stay here in Wantagh. But it's becoming very difficult. And I'd like to thank everybody who made tonight possible. And I know the hour is late. And thank all of you people who did come out and encourage more people to come out and more people to write to their legislators, to their county representatives and to our county executive. He'll probably need the mail. And, hopefully, maybe we can all meet again on better circumstances in the future.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Thank you very much.

EVERYBODY: Public water now. Public water now.

MS. BORECKY: I know I already spoke, but I forgot to hand these in. We got

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Proceedings

petitions of hundreds of people that are -- that each one of these is a statement and opposition. So I want to submit that to you.

Also, 700 people -- more than 700 people have commented online. Thank you very much. So we have close to 1,000 people opposing this.

Many people ask, where do we go from here. Fighting this rate hike is the first step. Public water is the next. There's some fliers back there. You could look up online LICAWS.com -- L-I-C-A-W-S -- I'm sorry -- .org and you can see what we've been doing, find out the history of this water authority that's -- for a long time and see that this doesn't end here. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. MAZZA: Let the record -- let the record reflect that there have been several pages of signatures submitted by the previous speaker, 13 pages.

I'd like to thank everybody for

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Proceedings

coming and expressing your views. It's very important for the Public Service Commission to know how everybody feels, and it is a valuable exercise for you tonight.

Thank you, again. And I'm going to close the hearing. Good night.

(Time noted: 9:17 p.m.)

**Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016**

A		
abide (1) 125:6	Air (4) 2:6 18:22 19:15 32:13	61:11 64:15 66:2 67:4,15 68:15
able (6) 44:11 46:7 47:3 67:13 70:7 105:7	airport (1) 102:10	69:8 71:10,21 72:2,21 73:12 78:7
abomination (1) 96:5	Al (1) 17:3	79:14 80:8 83:3,20 87:10 90:7
absolute (1) 44:16	Albany (1) 33:2	92:9 93:11 96:16 97:8,18 99:13
absolutely (2) 77:16 123:18	alerted (1) 14:8	100:7,15,23 103:3,18 108:7,17
absurdity (1) 44:16	Alfred (3) 2:5 12:14 16:25	109:20 110:25 112:3 124:4,19
acceptable (3) 67:22 71:8,9	alive (1) 124:12	125:13 127:14 129:20 130:20
access (1) 125:22	ALJ (1) 19:12	applied (1) 52:6
account (2) 12:21 70:2	allow (4) 49:13 58:2 69:5 78:18	appreciate (1) 45:10
accountability (1) 81:11	allowed (3) 21:4 44:19 60:10	approach (1) 69:17
accountable (3) 82:10 102:16 103:2	allowing (2) 43:20,21	appropriate (1) 42:25
accurate (1) 115:11	allows (1) 14:11	April (2) 5:17,18
accurately (1) 8:14	alternate (1) 14:9	aquifer (3) 43:6 72:13,16
acknowledge (1) 114:10	amazed (1) 68:18	area (5) 20:5 47:15 53:23 74:21 113:17
acted (1) 117:2	amenities (1) 50:9	argument (5) 43:24 84:2 109:3,6 109:15
acting (2) 1:16 4:18	America (2) 28:7 102:14	arguments (1) 108:24
action (1) 132:12	American (58) 1:5 4:8,13 5:16,22 7:7 11:11,15 12:5 21:2,4 23:13 24:5 27:25 28:7 30:3 31:10 32:16 37:16 38:2 41:3,14,21 43:4,17 44:13,17 45:5,20 46:17,18 48:15 49:18 50:21 51:11 55:18 62:20 62:25 63:13,20 64:10,22 73:22 78:2 80:22 83:19 84:23 89:17 91:2,4 94:8,23 95:22 96:19 104:3 110:16 120:8,10	arrogant (1) 114:9
actions (1) 114:11	amount (9) 11:17,25 31:18 54:23 65:18 116:10 121:4,12 122:19	asked (9) 48:25 60:14 80:16 84:15 85:20 91:24,25 92:2 112:24
active (2) 56:3 112:14	amounts (2) 16:6 117:9	asking (3) 31:19 32:7 37:21
activity (2) 12:23 16:5	analysis (1) 12:22	ass (1) 73:10
add (2) 24:12 28:11	analyze (1) 113:3	Assembly (1) 48:12
added (2) 15:4 24:11	analyzed (1) 5:22	assessment (1) 26:6
additional (1) 127:16	annex (1) 88:20	asset (3) 30:4,5,8
addressed (3) 14:3,25 49:16	annual (2) 16:11 60:13	assets (5) 21:20 30:7 63:6,8 86:16
adequate (1) 14:8	answer (8) 36:17,18,22 38:5 45:4 68:13 75:25 105:12	Assist (1) 126:15
adjudicate (1) 113:21	answered (1) 50:18	associated (1) 15:11
adjudicated (1) 120:14	answers (3) 69:9,10,12	association (8) 2:13,16 10:17,18 53:4 60:5 63:21,21
adjusted (1) 116:13	anticipated (1) 14:2	assumed (1) 21:23
adjustment (2) 116:7 119:11	anybody (13) 7:25 10:7 50:12 61:5 64:23 69:13 81:18 88:24 93:22 97:15,15 106:3 127:17	assumption (1) 72:25
Administration (2) 34:24 35:9	anybody's (1) 77:25	atrocious (1) 92:19
administrative (2) 118:4 122:15	anyone (6) 33:3 51:18 81:14 109:7 122:18 124:11	attack (1) 80:11
adopt (1) 6:22	anyway (4) 38:25 41:11 69:20 73:20	attend (1) 21:9
advocate (1) 113:22	apart (3) 81:2,5 88:14	attorney (1) 52:15
aerators (1) 120:22	appalled (1) 101:20	audience (18) 33:24 34:5 50:18 52:22 57:10 62:21 69:18 77:14 86:7,11 90:13 101:4,8 109:9,12 110:19 122:17 123:25
affairs (1) 46:17	appealed (2) 117:18 118:3	auditorium (1) 99:18
affect (1) 95:14	applause (80) 12:11 18:17,25 19:3 19:7,10 22:9 24:2 25:19 27:7 29:14 30:11 33:20 34:10,14 36:23 37:24 38:17 39:9 40:22 41:5,8,15 44:7 45:12,21 46:3 47:22 48:7 49:15,23 50:5 52:13 52:19 53:21 54:8,13 56:16 59:23	Audrey (3) 3:3 97:21 101:2
affiliation (1) 8:17		authorities (2) 13:15,16
afford (7) 22:21 59:13,15 66:20 124:14 127:7 129:5		authority (5) 13:19 21:16,17 26:25 130:17
affordable (1) 125:22		authorization (1) 40:13
affront (2) 10:25 11:24		authorize (1) 29:3
afternoon (2) 66:11 68:16		available (3) 7:17 8:23 9:9
age (1) 102:24		Avenue (5) 1:9 25:11 31:15 37:11 88:21
agency (1) 4:23		average (4) 20:16,21 65:18 123:7
agent (2) 76:21 77:6		avoided (1) 113:24
aggravated (1) 90:3		aware (5) 54:5,22 88:10 116:16,17
aggressive (1) 16:17		awesome (1) 20:25
aging (3) 11:5 63:4 64:14		
ago (16) 21:13 30:18 37:2 40:3 45:18 56:7 66:13 70:24 74:19 75:22 78:4 81:25 85:11 87:21 95:20 111:12		
agree (2) 46:24 99:24		
agreement (2) 6:12 10:3		
		B

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

back (20) 29:24 31:4 34:25 38:10
40:7,12 55:14 75:2 89:16 104:5
112:2 115:2,3 117:17 119:4
120:6 123:7 127:6 128:23 130:13
back-up (1) 93:21
background (2) 68:11 114:15
backing (1) 126:21
backs (2) 23:17 123:21
backwards (1) 121:22
backyards (1) 58:17
bad (1) 81:24
badgering (1) 114:3
balance (1) 30:2
Baldwin (4) 10:16,17,17,18
Bancker (3) 2:4 12:19 13:7
Barbara (3) 2:19 66:4,6
based (8) 6:25 13:13,24 76:14
109:18 110:4 125:12,14
basement (3) 85:9,18 116:20
basic (7) 19:25 26:13 29:8 72:16
73:25 127:12,12
basically (2) 32:4 106:25
Basil (5) 3:9 112:6 124:7,8,9
basis (4) 15:10 16:11 93:16 119:20
bath (1) 67:19
bathe (1) 91:24
bathing (2) 94:10,12
bathroom (1) 39:20
bathtub (2) 67:18 94:16
battling (1) 94:19
Bay (3) 21:14 22:3 33:5
beat (3) 38:14 48:5 127:23
beautiful (1) 111:18
becoming (2) 48:22 129:8
beginning (1) 86:17
behalf (2) 8:17 10:20
belief (1) 98:22
believe (4) 51:4 55:15,25 64:22
Bellmore (12) 24:18 37:3,11 39:15
42:4 44:2 48:13 50:4 56:23 66:7
106:18 112:9
belongs (1) 111:23
Beltagh (1) 1:9
benefit (1) 126:5
best (4) 28:5 41:2 85:3 91:14
bet (1) 81:12
Beth (2) 78:10 79:16
better (7) 25:15 44:25 74:16 97:13
103:16 121:25 129:18
beyond (1) 98:22
big (10) 24:12 30:24 41:10 54:22
55:13 58:21,21 104:7,7 107:17
bill (59) 11:2,6,10 19:25 20:6,8,9
20:11,12 33:18 35:16 41:24,25
42:3,18,20 46:8 50:10 59:7 60:15
60:17,20 62:12,13 66:20 68:3
70:18 73:23 74:17 75:23 77:9

80:19,19 92:25 98:11,16 101:23
102:2 104:24,25 106:19 108:2
110:3 113:2 114:13 116:14
117:17 118:25 119:3,10,20 122:6
122:6,19 123:3,4,7,10,10
billed (4) 11:8,12 114:24 115:4
billing (1) 126:16
billion (1) 64:25
bills (26) 11:5 33:12 35:4,6 44:21
44:23 50:7 53:18 55:7 59:13,17
59:17 80:15 98:13 104:19 112:21
113:4,5 114:7 116:18 119:15,17
119:18 122:2,2 123:15
bimonthly (1) 115:4
bit (2) 75:11 91:11
bitch (1) 67:2
Blackman (1) 91:15
blame (1) 128:7
bleach (1) 92:13
bleeding (1) 128:25
block (1) 37:14
blocks (1) 128:2
blood (1) 132:12
blows (1) 117:13
board (3) 53:8,10 95:12
boat (1) 121:17
Bob (3) 2:20 66:5 71:12
boost (3) 15:2 58:6 85:23
booster (1) 30:25
Borecky (8) 2:7 18:20 30:13,15
56:4 99:6 100:11 129:24
Bornico (8) 3:6 101:11 108:20,21
109:11,14,21 110:22
boroughs (1) 13:12
Bosio (1) 52:21
bothered (1) 96:23
bothersome (1) 121:2
bottled (1) 67:17
bottom (1) 64:5
bought (3) 81:25 87:4 89:6
box (1) 104:7
brag (1) 63:20
brain (2) 80:4,21
brakes (1) 120:11
branch (1) 89:22
brand (1) 84:24
break (2) 37:5 104:18
breakdown (1) 116:12
breaking (2) 87:2 104:21
Brian (1) 36:15
brick (1) 29:13
Bridge (1) 31:16
bridges (1) 63:16
brief (2) 71:15 90:21
bring (2) 49:8 60:15
broken (3) 38:11,13 110:15
Brooklyn (2) 79:22 83:16

brought (3) 6:20 11:2 60:17
brown (13) 25:21 39:25 67:20,20
68:20 70:23 92:13 93:14,21,23
102:8 109:24,25
brownish (2) 40:8,10
Bruce (2) 35:12 36:15
brush (2) 91:25 92:6
bucks (3) 24:12 35:16 52:5
budgeted (2) 13:6,24
budgeting (2) 14:12,24
budgets (1) 16:18
build (1) 84:14
building (6) 29:13,18,22 89:6,8
111:19
bunch (1) 82:16
burden (4) 21:5,6,11 47:20
buried (3) 63:8,25 86:23
business (4) 46:6 49:6 74:20
125:25
businesses (1) 15:14
butt (1) 87:14
buy (11) 21:20 24:15 26:14 29:22
35:16 52:11 65:4 67:17 86:16
92:11 93:19
buys (1) 86:15

C

C (2) 132:1,1
cable (1) 107:9
call (13) 8:5,8 10:12 29:12 32:20
37:25 77:11,12 85:6 113:10,11
115:2,3
called (13) 37:12 40:7 46:11 50:24
60:9 66:15,16 76:17 77:4 105:2,5
105:7 114:12
candidate (2) 48:10,24
cap (4) 27:14,24,25 28:23
capability (1) 15:19
capacity (1) 10:21
capital (4) 13:5,22 16:17 47:5
captured (1) 8:14
car (3) 57:23 58:9 104:14
card (4) 7:24 8:3 63:14 127:18
cards (1) 8:6
care (2) 96:7,8
carefully (1) 22:11
caring (1) 84:9
Carini (2) 2:13 47:25
cars (7) 37:14,14 48:21 88:22 89:5
89:9,10
case (14) 1:3 4:6 5:7 6:17,20 62:14
70:3 79:8 112:15,17 118:17
120:2 122:9,10
cases (3) 12:20 60:22 120:16
casing (1) 85:5
catastrophic (2) 13:2 14:23
catch (1) 63:11

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

3

catch-up (1) 114:14
Catherine (2) 90:9,11
cause (17) 24:21 26:14 27:2 30:2
66:19 67:3 74:14,19 85:8 88:23
95:4 101:18 105:8 112:11,20
123:11,18
causing (1) 93:22
Cedar (4) 80:23 88:13 128:11,19
Cedarhurst (2) 90:19,24
cell (3) 58:14 84:16,16
center (1) 38:9
Central (3) 2:7 31:15 32:12
cents (1) 70:20
certain (1) 125:5
certainly (1) 125:5
certified (1) 28:16
certify (2) 132:7,11
cetera (3) 59:18 127:8,8
chain (1) 83:18
challenge (2) 48:23 63:2
Chamber (1) 10:19
chance (1) 124:2
change (5) 4:15 74:12 91:10
101:16 121:6
changes (1) 101:15
Channel (1) 66:15
character (1) 51:9
charge (12) 33:3 67:13 73:25
74:22 76:14 77:10 78:19 79:22
93:3 107:12,12 118:25
charged (10) 4:23 73:24 74:13,21
74:22,23 77:3,6,7,20
charges (5) 1:4 4:7 11:14 107:11
118:24
charging (8) 11:15 18:14 74:7
78:20 87:6 98:19 110:16 120:16
cheap (1) 20:5
cheaper (2) 72:15 84:5
checking (1) 45:19
checks (1) 122:3
Chicago (2) 20:5,17
child (3) 94:12,13 95:11
children (7) 16:21 24:20 91:6,24
94:10 95:10 96:8
children's (3) 16:21 92:3 95:15
choose (1) 47:14
Chris (1) 53:2
Christopher (4) 2:13 47:25 49:25
52:24
circling (1) 88:22
circumstances (2) 42:25 129:18
citizen (2) 36:9 129:2
citizens (2) 59:14 72:4
city (6) 2:16 13:13,16 54:25 60:5
116:25
Ciuffo (7) 3:3 97:21,22 99:14 100:8
100:16 101:2

Civic (4) 2:7 10:17,18 32:12
civil (2) 13:7 63:14
claims (1) 15:11
clarify (2) 62:5,16
class (2) 22:20 66:8
Claudia (10) 2:7 18:19 30:13 34:5
34:6,7 96:24 97:3 99:6 100:11
clean (7) 2:6 18:22 19:15 32:13
68:6 91:2 94:14
cleaned (1) 94:4
cleaners (1) 92:14
clear (2) 26:19 36:18
clearly (2) 8:12 45:4
clients (1) 13:17
clogging (1) 94:2
close (3) 65:12 130:8 131:8
closely (1) 112:10
clue (1) 88:18
code (1) 105:6
coffee (1) 38:10
Cold (1) 65:16
collection (1) 75:13
comb (1) 122:13
come (27) 17:11 23:10 24:8 32:22
33:18 34:21 35:4 37:16 38:22
51:17 56:22 60:14 67:23,24 72:6
76:19 77:3 85:7 90:2 91:9 92:12
93:13 102:12,23 111:18 129:12
129:13
comes (9) 13:4 39:18 52:7 69:14
69:15 72:12,15 104:14 114:6
comfort (2) 47:7 111:20
comforts (1) 111:24
coming (12) 25:3 37:9 38:10 65:11
68:9 88:5 91:22 93:24 97:6 103:5
103:7 131:2
commencement (1) 6:2
comment (4) 6:14 9:4 19:18
122:22
commented (1) 130:7
comments (14) 7:2 9:11,14,16,25
12:20 16:22 34:13 46:24 70:10
70:14,14 73:17,18
Commerce (1) 10:19
Commission (49) 1:2,4 4:7,15 5:5
5:6 6:9,13,14,21,22,24 7:6,18
17:14 18:9 21:3 23:19 32:16
41:18 42:22 43:2 50:15 69:24
71:20 73:19,21 74:11,25 77:23
80:12 81:6,19 82:4 89:21 97:11
100:2 107:24 108:14 113:7,12,15
113:20 116:5,6,20 118:5 128:21
131:4
Commissioners (1) 5:14
commodity (2) 107:6,16
communications (1) 46:16
communities (4) 64:21 107:8

126:23 127:2
community (11) 2:16 45:3,8 48:17
49:3 60:5,19 71:4 107:5 125:5
126:22
companies (7) 36:4,5 83:2 113:4
114:3,4 121:7
company (48) 1:5 4:9 11:11 13:8
13:19 17:16,22,24 23:9 29:16
44:18 46:20 47:3,8 52:2 55:15,16
55:22 58:18 59:19 60:9 61:2,5
65:10 68:21 70:16 71:24 78:18
79:25 80:2,6 81:21 83:16 86:15
86:16 87:4 89:23 96:20 109:2
110:6,7,23 112:22 113:16 118:11
120:4,7,17
Company's (1) 6:23
compared (1) 102:2
comparison (3) 43:8,12 55:9
competitive (1) 126:4
complain (2) 114:12 118:6
complained (1) 119:16
complaining (1) 113:25
complaint (8) 112:14 113:18,19,21
113:25 116:4 118:8 123:23
complaints (7) 51:4,7 113:6
116:21 117:21 120:13,14
complete (2) 5:2 121:22
completed (1) 64:10
completely (2) 51:25 121:21
comply (1) 51:11
compounded (1) 119:7
compromise (1) 6:10
Con (1) 38:14
concern (1) 55:14
concerned (2) 33:17 35:20
concerns (2) 4:13 70:6
conditions (1) 63:15
conglomerations (1) 36:5
conservation (4) 117:6 120:20,20
121:24
consider (5) 11:19 21:19 64:20
109:25 110:6
consideration (2) 6:10 12:21
considered (2) 5:13 9:17
considering (3) 84:22 93:9 95:23
considers (1) 30:3
consistently (1) 47:10
constantly (1) 118:12
construction (4) 2:4 12:19 13:7,8
consultant (1) 113:3
consulting (1) 61:22
consume (1) 121:18
consumer (4) 116:21 117:19,21
118:6
consumers (4) 123:23 125:25
126:5,18
contact (2) 53:15,16

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

contacting (2) 53:8 54:3
continue (4) 21:23 64:6 96:10
123:22
Continued (1) 3:2
contractors (1) 75:10
contradiction (1) 102:7
contrary (1) 14:15
control (2) 48:18 49:7
controlled (2) 14:14,21
controls (1) 102:20
convert (1) 56:6
convinced (1) 123:18
cook (1) 92:2
copper (4) 85:2,2,3 86:3
corner (2) 37:2,3
corporate (1) 46:16
correct (3) 64:23 119:4 123:15
correspond (1) 14:12
corresponding (1) 53:3
cost (23) 12:22 13:2 15:3 16:2,5,7
16:8,10 23:3 38:20 44:13 49:4,6
56:13 59:8 62:8 65:3,6 84:13
94:7,11,11,16
costing (2) 31:23 59:16
costs (17) 13:21,23 14:14,18 15:4
15:7 16:6,7 23:10 48:18,20 49:8
59:11 93:13,18,20 94:9
counter (1) 122:4
counterparts (1) 128:24
counties (1) 18:2
country (5) 25:23 53:18 63:3 64:7
93:8
county (25) 2:9 18:6 21:6 26:4,10
27:5 32:21 33:11 49:11 54:24
55:24 56:12 57:20 61:25 62:9,24
65:14 90:24 105:5 106:24 127:9
128:7 129:15,15 132:4
couple (10) 34:18 35:10 36:25 56:7
70:24 75:22 81:22 98:10 104:3
121:11
course (8) 24:6,6 31:6 75:18 78:5
80:17 85:19 87:24
courses (1) 58:24
Court (3) 5:11 7:13 8:13
courtesy (1) 8:18
cousin (1) 111:7
cover (2) 9:8 27:23
coverage (1) 121:23
covered (5) 24:13 48:15 51:18,24
52:11
crap (1) 61:13
crazy (2) 27:6 61:4
create (1) 59:20
credits (2) 56:3,11
creek (5) 80:24 88:13 128:11,19,20
criminal (2) 65:20 105:21
cross-examination (1) 7:9

crying (1) 126:23
cubic (1) 121:14
curb (1) 105:20
curing (1) 111:16
curious (1) 36:16
currently (2) 5:19 6:4
customer (5) 9:20 76:20 77:6
119:7 120:12
customers (4) 14:5 41:20 66:18
126:15
cut (3) 12:8 58:11,18

D

D (2) 63:19 124:10
damage (2) 14:17 16:3
damn (1) 68:13
danger (1) 91:7
Daniel (4) 3:9 112:6 124:6,9
dark (1) 104:15
darker (1) 40:5
date (2) 102:24 116:16
Dave (10) 2:6 17:2 18:19,21 30:15
32:14 96:24 97:4 99:5 100:11
day (19) 35:7 60:16 74:3 75:24
77:4,13 88:12,23 89:5,10,14
94:14,19 97:2 107:22 113:10
119:23,23 132:16
days (5) 36:24 38:12 40:7 104:13
105:13
dead (1) 27:21
deal (1) 24:12
dealing (5) 32:17 41:22 44:15,16
92:18
Deborah (5) 3:5 101:3,6,11,13
debts (2) 86:20,22
decades (1) 95:21
decided (3) 30:22,24 80:5
decision (10) 5:7,15 6:21,24,25
70:3,8 108:15 109:18,19
deck (1) 8:9
decrease (6) 29:19,19,20,21 72:20
73:5
deduction (1) 82:7
defeat (1) 32:11
degrees (1) 68:10
delay (1) 94:12
delayed (1) 94:9
delays (1) 99:24
deliver (1) 9:11
delivered (1) 9:16
delivering (1) 43:7
delivers (1) 47:8
delivery (3) 43:18,19 72:16
Delmonico (4) 2:14 54:15,17,18
demand (3) 12:2 99:15,15
Denenberg (16) 2:6 17:2 18:19,21
18:21 19:4,8 22:10 24:3 25:20

27:8 29:15 34:13 56:4 99:6
100:11
Denise (2) 33:23,24
Dennis (4) 2:17 61:17,19,21
deny (2) 109:22 110:5
DEP (1) 116:25
department (18) 1:17 4:19,22 5:20
39:8 44:2,6,10 53:9 57:18,22
70:24 117:20 125:9,11,21 126:3
126:9
Department's (2) 7:19 9:12
departments (6) 14:7 28:18,19,20
28:22,24
depend (1) 14:7
deplorable (1) 111:21
deserve (13) 40:20,25,25 41:2 87:5
96:13,14,15 97:16 100:12 103:16
111:14,25
deserved (1) 98:15
deserves (1) 40:24
designed (1) 113:13
desperate (1) 58:20
determination (1) 6:16
determinations (1) 118:6
determine (1) 42:24
detours (1) 15:24
developing (1) 125:17
development (6) 5:2 23:4,10 32:5
61:3,7
die (2) 66:19 93:14
difference (2) 11:20,22
different (4) 72:14 76:7 107:2
127:25
difficult (2) 72:7 129:9
dig (1) 84:13
direct (3) 16:6 73:17,18
directly (1) 13:3
director (4) 1:16 4:19 18:22 32:14
dirt (2) 27:21 68:19
dirty (2) 24:23 91:7
disabilities (1) 95:14
disability (1) 42:11
disabled (2) 98:5,7
disagreement (1) 10:3
disappointed (1) 66:25
disclosure (1) 48:9
disconnect (1) 116:4
discrepancy (1) 54:23
discussion (1) 49:17
disgusting (1) 53:19
dishwasher (2) 39:23 40:4
disparaging (1) 107:16
disregard (1) 111:21
disruption (1) 14:16
distributed (1) 23:11
district (16) 2:9 11:4,14 12:7 13:18
27:13 29:6,7 31:22 32:3 41:13

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

5

48:12 62:2,11 95:13 129:3
districts (10) 13:14 21:7,9 24:17
28:4,24 65:14,15 102:19 110:12
doctor (1) 89:9
dog (1) 78:17
dogs (1) 43:3
doing (15) 34:9 41:18 46:20 47:19
71:4 84:18 88:18 103:15 106:15
120:3,19 123:18 124:15,16
130:16
dollar (2) 113:18,19
dollars (5) 45:25 80:25 121:4,5
122:20
door (1) 8:24
double (1) 12:5
doubled (1) 25:12
draw (1) 58:11
drawer (1) 83:14
drill (1) 60:11
drilling (1) 60:8
drink (7) 26:15 40:10 48:22 67:17
71:2,2 96:21
drive (4) 37:4,10 56:24 59:21
drives (1) 49:6
due (6) 14:16 19:11 26:22 39:19
40:14 128:22
dug (1) 104:7
dump (1) 81:2
Duvy (1) 46:14

E

E (2) 132:1,1
e-mail (4) 8:21 9:12 53:14 66:14
e-mailed (1) 66:16
earlier (3) 7:12 62:3 93:15
earn (1) 47:16
earner (1) 45:22
earns (1) 125:17
East (7) 20:17,18 42:15 57:8,14
59:6 101:23
easy (1) 122:24
economic (2) 48:22 49:2
Ed (6) 2:21 60:2 61:16,18 71:13
73:14
Edison (1) 38:14
educate (1) 126:18
education (2) 22:22 88:16
Edward (3) 2:8 30:13 33:22
effect (1) 5:18
effective (3) 125:16,17 126:4
effectively (1) 26:11
efficiently (1) 125:7
efforts (1) 117:6
egregious (1) 29:10
eight (3) 38:12 87:6 89:14
either (3) 10:2 60:12 110:7
elected (2) 79:9 83:9

electric (9) 15:21 20:10,11 43:15
80:15,19 107:10 113:5 125:23
electrical (1) 58:15
Ellen (1) 39:2
Ellis (3) 1:23 132:6,18
embarrassed (1) 67:19
emergency (4) 12:24 14:10 15:2
15:10
emerging (1) 63:2
employee (4) 54:25 97:15 124:25
125:3
employees (1) 111:20
encourage (2) 53:12 129:12
ended (1) 40:18
endless (1) 34:12
energy (1) 58:15
engaged (1) 6:5
engineer (1) 61:23
engineer's (1) 13:24
engineering (1) 114:15
engineers (2) 61:22 63:14
ensure (3) 16:18 125:21 126:11
ensuring (1) 5:2
entered (2) 6:3 16:22
entire (5) 6:25 20:19 28:21 86:16
90:20
entitled (5) 23:17 29:7 36:10 63:24
118:22
envelope (2) 46:10 83:13
environment (2) 14:21 126:2
environmental (1) 19:23
equaling (1) 16:7
escalating (2) 113:24 115:7
especially (2) 42:14 65:22
Established (1) 47:2
estimate (6) 13:25 76:23 114:14
119:2,3 123:4
estimated (3) 76:20 116:18,22
estimates (2) 64:2 123:11
et (3) 59:18 127:8,8
evaluating (1) 63:24
evening (15) 4:2 5:8 9:6 12:18
45:16 46:4 48:2 54:17 61:20
79:19 103:21 112:7 124:8,22
128:5
evening's (1) 127:24
event (3) 54:4,5 60:14
events (1) 60:13
eventually (2) 6:20 90:5
everybody (24) 40:23,24 46:14
52:9 53:15 54:23 61:8 62:10 73:4
78:12 87:7 90:17 99:25 100:13
100:14 101:16,17 110:9 112:7
124:8 129:10,22 130:25 131:4
everybody's (1) 87:14
Everyone's (1) 36:10
evidence (1) 109:15

evidentiary (3) 5:24 6:19 7:8
exact (2) 65:17 92:24
exactly (1) 115:19
example (1) 28:5
exceed (1) 14:19
excess (1) 117:2
excluded (1) 24:15
excuse (5) 70:4 82:4 84:4,19 85:13
executive (2) 45:24 129:16
executives (1) 45:20
exempt (1) 22:6
exercise (1) 131:5
existed (1) 21:15
existing (1) 64:4
exists (1) 113:15
exorbitant (2) 49:13 98:19
expenses (2) 42:13 47:6
expensive (4) 15:11 25:22 38:19
127:9
expert (2) 84:8 86:25
experts (1) 81:22
explain (2) 7:20 128:24
explained (2) 68:18 114:15
explode (1) 114:17
exposed (1) 24:20
expressing (2) 68:9 131:2
external (1) 46:17
extra (1) 69:3

F

F (1) 132:1
Facebook (1) 66:15
fact (3) 9:9 77:3 87:25
facts (5) 12:8 67:10,24 68:12 71:15
failed (1) 73:21
failing (1) 94:20
failure (2) 13:2 16:2
failures (2) 14:15,22
fair (4) 28:2 33:7 47:17 108:5
fairly (2) 112:10 115:11
faith (1) 82:17
fall (1) 47:20
falling (3) 81:2,5 88:13
falls (1) 104:17
false (1) 43:23
families (1) 127:2
family (2) 60:19 121:10
far (8) 14:18 17:13 35:19 45:9 56:8
67:12 68:4 120:15
Fassman (5) 2:10 45:14,16,17,22
fast (1) 115:13
father-in-law (1) 101:25
faucet (3) 25:4 93:10 96:21
favor (1) 108:25
faxed (1) 66:16
federal (4) 18:3 82:12 87:12,13
fee (1) 122:18

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

feel (6) 17:6 58:8 78:19 81:20 96:5
96:6
feeling (1) 68:10
feels (1) 131:4
fees (1) 18:14
feet (2) 104:12 121:14
field (1) 27:18
fields (1) 27:19
fighting (4) 30:19 48:17 90:25
130:11
figures (3) 67:10,24 68:12
file (3) 6:13 68:25 83:14
filed (3) 5:16,23 116:4
filing (1) 5:19
fill (3) 7:23 8:3 127:18
filled (3) 67:18 99:18 104:8
filter (4) 91:8,14,16,18
filters (2) 91:9 94:20
final (1) 127:19
finally (9) 9:22 77:18 88:6 105:4,7
115:5 118:21 119:8 123:4
find (6) 39:13 69:10 91:14 99:20
119:18 130:16
finding (1) 122:5
fine (2) 70:25 122:12
finished (1) 112:23
Finkelstein (4) 2:18 64:17,18,19
fire (18) 14:7 27:13 28:4,8,18,19
28:20,21,23,24 39:7,7 44:2,5,10
44:11 57:18,22
firefighter (1) 48:4
firefighting (1) 15:19
first (14) 10:13,13 18:23 34:8
66:11,23 77:7 79:21 98:14
116:11 117:20 121:4 128:10
130:12
five (16) 13:12 15:3 22:12 26:18
29:24 39:16 55:17 60:19 91:16
92:18 105:13 107:5 110:8,17
111:10 120:9
five-eighths (1) 85:22
five-pound (1) 114:19
fix (3) 38:11,12 109:4
fixed (5) 42:9 71:7 98:5 103:24
121:10
flat (1) 122:17
fliers (1) 130:13
flooded (1) 38:25
flooding (1) 16:3
floored (1) 119:18
flow (1) 120:22
fold (1) 15:4
folks (2) 105:9 108:9
follow (2) 6:18 7:21
followed (30) 10:14 12:13 16:25
18:19 30:13 33:23 45:15 47:25
49:25 54:15 56:19 60:2 61:17

66:5 71:13 73:15 78:10 79:17
90:10,16 97:21 101:2,6 108:20
111:4 112:5 115:3,25 120:4
124:7
following (3) 101:11 112:10 116:6
food (1) 48:19
foot (1) 104:12
forbid (2) 27:17,20
foreclosures (1) 14:4
Forest (2) 2:16 60:5
forgiveness (2) 117:12,15
forgot (1) 129:25
form (1) 21:24
formal (1) 117:25
former (1) 97:22
forum (2) 7:10 82:8
forward (3) 14:14 33:19 74:12
found (2) 19:15 24:18
four (7) 19:16 37:7 87:21 91:10,21
104:13 123:6
four-degree (1) 125:15
franchise (1) 47:15
Frankly (1) 72:18
Freeman (2) 78:10 79:17
Freeport (1) 55:3
friend (5) 17:8 20:4,4 24:10 106:18
friends (1) 66:12
frightened (1) 65:23
frightening (1) 68:24
front (2) 71:18 85:18
frozen (1) 117:12
frustrated (1) 90:13
frustrating (1) 102:8
full (5) 48:9 82:12,13,20,23
full-time (1) 127:6
fully (1) 53:6
Funny (1) 20:3
further (1) 132:11
future (2) 16:20 129:19

G

Gallagher (14) 2:15 3:4 54:16
56:19,20,20 57:4,8,13 101:7
103:20,21,22 108:8
gallon (3) 11:13 70:20 77:8
gallons (23) 11:7,9,12,16 70:19
73:24 74:3,6,8 75:18,24 76:3
77:5,19 87:19,23 88:4,11 113:9
114:21,24 119:22,23
garbage (3) 82:16 86:5 95:24
gardener (1) 102:5
gas (4) 15:21 36:4 48:20 125:23
gee (1) 79:3
Geez (1) 104:14
general (1) 123:23
generally (5) 15:6 91:10 114:2
115:11 118:10

generates (1) 89:9
generation (1) 16:20
generations (2) 16:20 41:23
gentleman (5) 20:23 43:25 60:7,18
71:18
gentlemen (3) 4:3 48:16 100:25
geothermal (1) 31:21
getting (19) 8:10 17:7 29:5 33:8
36:20 46:9 55:21 58:17 60:8,24
69:2 86:18 87:12,17,19 93:9
100:13 110:6 123:24
giant (1) 88:2
give (20) 8:24 9:5 12:4,9 18:24
33:13,14 38:4 39:6 45:6 51:5
67:18 69:19 82:5 92:24 93:12
113:10 119:4,6 120:23
given (3) 5:8 7:3 80:13
gives (2) 47:6 119:16
giving (6) 29:18,21 43:19 46:23
73:2 95:22
glad (2) 103:4,5
glass (1) 101:8
glasses (1) 51:21
Glen (1) 37:4
Glickman (7) 2:12 49:25 50:2,3,6
50:17,20
Gloria (1) 34:3
go (27) 13:3 23:24 32:25 35:14,22
38:6 39:19 52:11 79:5,8,12 81:3
82:3 83:18 91:15 103:8 104:10
117:21,25 120:7 121:9,16,18
123:7 127:5 128:23 130:10
God (5) 27:17,20 59:6 109:23,24
goes (9) 16:3 17:14 21:6 80:18,19
80:20 82:15 121:5 125:15
going (93) 14:14 17:14,15 18:6,12
18:13 27:2 30:16 31:11 34:2,17
35:11 36:17 38:4,16 39:2,22 45:3
48:5 50:12,22 51:6,14 53:20
56:24 57:21,24 58:5,6,8,13,19,20
58:25 59:20,21 61:2 62:6 68:2,3
69:10,19 70:13 71:14 74:9,15
75:14 76:14 77:23,24 79:7 81:8
81:14 84:13,21 85:6 86:25 87:2
87:22 88:7,8,11,20,21 89:4 90:5
92:24 93:12,25 104:15,18,22
105:25 106:7 110:8 111:8 112:12
115:15,16 116:24 117:13 118:20
121:13 123:9,13,14,15 124:15
128:8,11,17,19 131:7
gold (5) 25:3,4,5,22 39:25
Goldstein (3) 45:15 46:4,5
golf (1) 58:24
good (29) 4:2 12:18 16:17 36:20
45:16 46:4 47:15,19 48:2 49:3
51:10 54:17 61:20 72:18 73:3
76:16 79:11,19 83:25 96:12

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

97:16 103:21 105:13 108:23
112:7 123:12 124:8,22 131:8
goods (1) 65:21
gotten (1) 123:19
gouge (1) 110:8
government (4) 18:4,5 82:12 99:10
governments (1) 113:4
grade (6) 63:19 121:2,3 125:11
126:8,12
graded (2) 125:12 126:9
grading (1) 125:15
grandchildren (2) 36:8 95:11
granted (1) 63:10
grass (2) 27:19,21
grateful (1) 98:23
great (8) 18:24 19:2 20:24 27:13
87:23 88:6 96:13 108:23
greater (1) 108:12
Greed (1) 51:10
grew (1) 90:23
Grid (1) 36:4
ground (3) 78:13 94:3 124:11
group (1) 81:15
growth (3) 49:2,8,10
guaranteed (2) 23:19,20
guess (14) 28:8,14,21,23 29:15
31:4 52:17 80:18,20,25 83:7 86:4
86:21 87:4
guy (8) 1:16 4:18 36:15 40:15 48:4
85:15 88:5,14
guys (10) 34:21 36:13 38:14 51:5
53:7 88:7 89:22 120:11 124:14
124:17

H

H2M (2) 2:17 61:22
half (9) 26:5,6 37:2 75:20 91:21
104:12 118:24 119:2,6
half-ass (1) 104:8
hand (2) 129:25 132:15
handicapped (1) 34:19
handle (1) 72:8
handling (1) 14:10
hands (2) 36:2,6
happen (6) 58:3,9,13,19 74:15
122:3
happened (3) 55:6 56:8 117:17
happening (8) 46:21 47:9,10 56:9
56:24 57:17 79:5 119:19
happens (7) 23:6 42:9,10 88:3
105:10 106:6 115:13
happy (3) 41:16,17 62:6
Harbor (2) 65:16,16
hard (2) 88:17 99:8
hardships (1) 59:19
harm (1) 100:17
Hasteadt (7) 2:20 66:5 71:12,14,22

72:3,22
hazard (2) 95:8 105:4
He'll (1) 129:16
head (5) 37:17,23 38:4 43:22
112:23
headquarters (1) 78:3
health (7) 15:17 40:25 70:23 94:11
95:8,8 96:7
hear (22) 7:10 39:4 41:20 45:3
47:24 54:9 61:16 66:4 68:23 69:3
69:25 71:12 73:14 79:16 83:12
97:25 108:19 109:18 110:4 111:3
118:14,15
heard (11) 5:9 19:4 51:3 55:8
66:12 67:5 103:8 108:23 112:20
115:24 117:7
hearing (25) 1:12 4:11,13,21 6:19
7:4,7,8,14 8:22 19:13,13,20
41:19 43:10 53:24 57:5 70:11
97:5 117:22,23,24,25 118:20
131:8
hearings (3) 5:24 6:3 43:9
heartbeat (1) 52:12
heat (1) 48:21
heater (1) 75:6
heaters (1) 93:14
held (4) 6:19 82:10 103:2 125:4
hell (2) 71:7 81:13
Hello (3) 10:15 67:16 90:17
help (4) 16:18 32:2 48:25 100:14
Hempstead (11) 21:14 22:3 28:16
29:6 33:5 49:12 55:25 56:2,12
73:9 80:3
hereunto (1) 132:15
Hey (2) 57:10 81:8
Hi (5) 60:3 64:18 78:11 90:17
101:13
Hickland (5) 2:21 71:13 73:14,16
77:15
hidden (6) 93:13,17,20 94:7,9,10
hiding (1) 87:14
high (16) 1:9 17:21 20:2 48:19 49:5
49:5 74:13 85:15 92:5 102:18
110:3 119:3 122:2,6 124:25
127:4
higher (7) 11:25 26:11 44:22,24
46:9,9 80:15
highest (2) 53:18 121:15
highly (1) 125:16
Highway (3) 54:20 88:9 89:12
hike (12) 42:24 53:6,11 92:19
95:23,25 96:13 108:12 109:22
110:5 111:14 130:11
hire (1) 109:5
history (1) 130:17
hits (1) 59:2
hold (5) 51:22 77:18 105:8,9

123:14
holding (1) 35:2
hole (3) 104:8,17,22
home (7) 51:17 75:12 94:2 96:20
101:9 112:19 127:7
homeowner (4) 46:6 47:20 62:15
65:19
homeowner's (1) 52:5
homeowners (5) 2:13 24:11 50:10
53:4 69:4
homes (9) 24:21,22,23 48:21 60:6
93:25 94:5 95:3 127:25
honestly (1) 48:8
hook (1) 39:13
hope (2) 59:3 128:23
hopefully (4) 74:14,14 77:22
129:17
horrendous (2) 98:8 128:6
horrible (1) 113:23
horrific (2) 92:21 93:7
horrified (1) 100:2
hose (1) 39:13
hosed (1) 55:21
hospital (2) 59:17 88:20
hour (2) 108:23 129:11
hours (8) 15:6 19:16 38:5,21,24
45:18 83:24 89:14
house (24) 20:7 23:25 35:5 39:3
58:18 68:6 70:24 75:3,4,5,7 76:6
81:25 82:3,7 84:25 85:18 91:8,23
98:22 104:20 105:19 106:2
114:17
houses (3) 106:22 107:2,11
Howard (4) 3:7 108:20 111:3,5
huge (3) 19:21,21,22
hundred (2) 113:19 114:19
hundreds (1) 130:2
Huntington (8) 11:4,13,22 12:7
62:2,4,11,15
Hurley (4) 3:11 127:15,21,22
husband (2) 92:8 121:11
hydrant (4) 28:9,17 39:12 44:14
hydrants (2) 39:7 44:12

I

idea (3) 35:12 39:11 112:25
ideas (1) 49:3
identify (1) 8:16
idiot (1) 38:3
illness (1) 16:2
imagine (1) 52:9
immediately (3) 14:25 119:23,24
impacts (4) 15:18,18,19,22
implications (1) 13:3
implore (2) 45:5 126:24
important (3) 38:19 97:11 131:3
impression (1) 67:6

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

improve (1) 64:13
improvement (3) 13:22 93:2,5
improvements (5) 25:10,10 31:7,7
31:8
in-laws (1) 42:16
inappropriate (2) 92:8 94:6
inaudible (8) 33:18 49:20 53:5
54:7 76:5 83:12 87:13 104:5
incentivize (1) 120:18
inch (4) 85:3,21,21,21
include (1) 94:9
included (2) 5:12 9:6
includes (1) 23:3
including (5) 61:25 62:20,24 95:2
95:10
inclusion (1) 7:15
income (8) 42:10 64:24 65:11 71:7
98:5 103:24 106:22 121:10
inconvenience (1) 15:15
increase (21) 10:25 12:2,9 20:14
22:13 23:3 24:24 25:9,14 28:11
28:14,14,18 29:10,11 49:14 64:6
64:12 65:13 82:5 96:11
increases (1) 97:12
indicated (1) 8:22
individual (1) 32:18
industry (4) 49:9 63:10,18 64:3
ineffective (4) 125:18 126:12,14
126:17
inefficiency (1) 122:15
inequitable (1) 121:21
informal (3) 117:22,23,24
information (1) 68:13
informational (1) 8:23
infrastructure (12) 12:16,23 13:10
16:13 63:4,12,16 81:24 109:4
110:14,21 111:16
innovations (1) 126:7
inside (3) 39:25 83:8 94:5
insight (1) 41:22
inspection (1) 14:19
inspector (2) 117:3,4
inspectors (1) 40:2
installation (2) 13:10 16:12
installed (2) 16:15 23:5
instances (1) 36:25
instantaneous (1) 15:14
insulting (1) 89:25
insurance (13) 15:11 23:24 24:7,9
24:16 51:24 52:2,3,6,7 69:3
105:19 106:13
intelligent (1) 68:12
intended (2) 55:22 103:10
interest (4) 119:5,9,12 123:16
interested (2) 39:5 132:13
interesting (2) 30:17 97:24
interim (1) 120:5

internet (1) 46:15
interpret (1) 10:2
interrupt (1) 9:24
interruption (1) 10:5
invest (1) 64:3
invested (2) 47:5 99:10
investigate (1) 120:12
investigation (3) 87:12,13 122:4
investment (3) 47:11,17 58:10
investments (2) 47:19 126:6
investors (1) 47:7
involved (3) 13:9 112:11 128:18
iron (2) 40:8,10
island (23) 1:17 4:20 12:4 13:9,15
16:19 18:22 32:13 42:14 46:18
48:19,20 49:7 60:11 62:19 63:3
64:8 66:9 88:13 90:20,23 93:17
128:25
issue (7) 19:21,22,23 39:6 57:22
63:24 96:18
issues (6) 15:14 25:7 32:18 110:15
113:22 118:11

J

Jack (3) 2:3 10:14,15
jail (3) 81:9 82:16,24
Jane (3) 2:18 64:17,18
January (2) 115:4,7
Jean (2) 78:10 79:16
Jersey (1) 90:22
job (14) 34:12 47:15,19 77:23
79:11 96:12,13 97:16 102:25
105:14 109:5 113:23 125:6,7
John (4) 2:23 79:17,18,20
join (1) 6:8
Joint (3) 6:8,13,15
joke (3) 82:9,11 83:23
judge (1) 118:4
Judith (1) 37:10
July (7) 19:12,13 20:6,7,7,9 43:10
jumped (1) 55:19
junction (1) 104:7
junk (1) 88:14
justified (1) 122:14

K

Kaiser (4) 2:5 16:25 17:3,3
Kauser (1) 12:14
KD (2) 85:2 86:3
keep (5) 27:2 48:18 59:15 61:8
120:21
keeps (2) 46:8 59:16
Kelleher (6) 2:17 61:17,19,20,21
62:22
kick (2) 122:4 124:15
kid (1) 67:21
kids (2) 27:17,21

kind (12) 51:2 71:14 72:5 95:25
97:24 98:3 105:21 106:5,5,9
114:16 123:24
kinds (1) 51:3
Kirkland (3) 60:2 61:16,18
kitchen (1) 55:3
knew (6) 17:25 80:6 86:17 87:4
97:5 113:8
knowing (1) 47:7
knowledgeable (1) 85:16
known (2) 14:13 95:20
knows (3) 40:18 61:5 88:25
Kohlman (6) 2:16 56:19 60:2,3,4
61:12
Kurtz (7) 3:8 111:4 112:5,7,8
122:23 124:3

L

L-I-C-A-W-S (1) 130:15
Labor (1) 13:25
lack (1) 96:2
ladies (3) 4:2 55:4 100:25
lady (2) 84:3,18
lake (2) 76:4,5
landlord (1) 59:7
landscaper (1) 66:17
Lane (2) 37:4 38:25
large (2) 13:2 121:17
Larry (4) 3:8 111:4 112:5,8
late (4) 108:22 118:24,25 129:11
latest (1) 11:10
law (3) 47:2 108:11 118:4
lawn (2) 42:5 102:6
lawns (1) 66:19
lay (1) 31:15
lead (16) 24:16,16,18 86:7,7,10,12
86:14 94:24,25 95:5,7,15,16,18
95:20
lead's (1) 24:19
leak (7) 38:22 76:2 105:11,25
106:3 117:11,15
leaking (2) 76:3 95:16
leaks (2) 117:7,10
learned (2) 85:16 101:18
learning (1) 95:14
leave (2) 39:22 129:6
left (4) 33:24 36:3,7 90:14
leg (2) 104:18,22
legal (2) 40:11,13
legislator (5) 2:9 26:4 41:7 54:2,6
legislators (2) 108:9 129:14
legislature (1) 108:10
let's (8) 22:10 28:11,12 57:19 59:3
61:8 80:21 100:20
letter (7) 23:23 50:21 51:15 73:8
116:2,7 118:13
letters (3) 51:2 105:18 118:18

**Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016**

<p>letting (1) 97:10 level (3) 117:21 119:25 125:5 levels (1) 116:22 Levittown (1) 48:14 Levy (6) 2:4 10:14 12:13,15,18 46:23 LI (1) 2:6 LICAWS.com (1) 130:14 lie (3) 24:7 69:6,7 lieu (1) 21:25 life (2) 14:13 90:21 lifestyle (1) 94:18 light (1) 114:5 limit (1) 10:6 limitations (1) 116:15 line (6) 25:12 51:23 64:5 84:24 107:12,12 lines (1) 23:24 list (1) 64:9 listened (1) 68:17 listening (1) 83:24 lists (1) 9:10 literature (1) 65:24 litigated (1) 6:11 little (11) 24:13 50:25 55:8 75:9,11 75:15 83:13,13,14 84:3 91:11 live (22) 18:8,16 37:3 42:4 54:19 54:19 56:21 57:13,14,16 59:6 84:9 91:20,23 94:18 101:5 103:5 107:19 124:9 127:9,22 129:5 lived (9) 11:21 59:9 101:14 103:25 105:15,23 111:6,7 127:25 lives (10) 17:8 42:15 55:5 62:10 78:21,22 95:15 98:6 101:23,25 living (9) 36:11,12 42:13 50:3 55:11 59:5 93:6,8 103:24 Lloyd (1) 65:16 logic (1) 121:22 long (28) 1:17 4:20 12:4 13:9 16:19 18:22 32:13,19 37:15 42:14 45:10 46:18 48:19,20 49:7 60:11 62:19 63:3 64:8 66:9 74:10 88:12 90:20,23 93:16 105:14 128:25 130:18 long-time (1) 112:8 longer (7) 61:13 63:25 79:23 91:12 95:18 97:12 120:6 longer-term (1) 15:16 look (42) 12:8 17:14,15 22:10,25 25:3,5,21,21,25,25 26:2 29:2 35:15 42:14 43:15 46:14 59:18 65:21 69:2 73:23 74:17,19 86:2 88:24 90:4 104:25 106:20,21,24 106:25 107:3,9,10,25 108:2,3 111:18 112:24 116:21 118:4 130:14 looked (5) 20:8 37:8 119:14,17</p>	<p>122:12 looking (4) 20:15 40:16 76:25 77:9 looks (3) 91:18,22 99:3 lose (1) 104:16 losing (1) 96:25 lost (1) 15:25 lot (18) 25:8 32:18 34:4 55:2 85:16 86:25 87:17 94:22 100:12 101:15 101:16 103:8,9 106:7,8 115:22 117:14 128:8 Louder (1) 62:21 Lousy (1) 25:22 love (1) 111:8 low (6) 59:9 96:6 120:22 122:2,6 123:11 lower (2) 31:18 74:21 lowest (1) 62:8 108:13 lucky (3) 22:16 110:2 124:12 Lynbrook (4) 23:6,7 29:18 107:14</p> <hr/> <p align="center">M</p> <hr/> <p>ma'am (2) 69:25 122:21 mad (1) 81:13 made-up (1) 76:23 Mahal (1) 29:12 mail (3) 8:21 9:13 129:16 main (5) 13:19 16:12 37:5 51:8 104:5 mains (3) 12:25 16:15 64:14 maintain (1) 110:14 maintenance (2) 16:14 59:11 major (3) 63:2 81:21 89:23 maker (1) 5:7 making (14) 6:23 7:21 14:13 24:3 36:12 45:23,25 65:10 70:2 97:4 108:14 109:12 110:19 125:6 Malverne (1) 66:10 man (2) 84:7 86:24 Management (1) 88:17 manager (1) 46:7 Manhasset (1) 13:13 Manhattan (1) 53:22 mansions (1) 58:23 manufacture (1) 43:16 Maria (4) 3:10 124:7,21,22 market (1) 65:21 markets (1) 126:4 marriage (1) 132:12 married (2) 86:19,20 marry (1) 86:21 mass (1) 81:16 Massapequa (5) 17:9 72:10 78:21 78:22 101:25 material (1) 114:23 Mathematically (1) 122:23 matter (7) 71:16 112:10,18 118:13 118:15 132:9,14</p>	<p>Maureen (1) 46:13 Mayor (1) 88:6 Mazza (46) 1:16 4:2,18 12:12 16:24 18:18 30:12 33:21,25 35:12 37:18 41:6 45:13 47:23 49:24 50:16 52:20,24 54:14 56:17 57:4 59:24 61:15 64:16 66:3 69:23 71:11 73:13 78:8 79:15 90:8,15 97:19 100:24 101:6,10 103:19 108:18 111:2 112:4 122:21 124:5,20 127:15 129:21 130:21 McCloy (3) 2:3 10:14,16 McCord (1) 25:11 McCOY (1) 10:15 Meadow (7) 20:17,18 42:15 57:8 57:14 59:6 101:23 mean (10) 98:9,12,21 99:9 102:4 102:17 103:12 107:2,9 110:11 means (2) 71:23 100:4 median (1) 106:22 medical (1) 59:17 medication (1) 35:7 meet (1) 129:17 meeting (6) 66:10,23,23 67:23 69:15 100:10 member (20) 10:16 33:24 34:5 50:18 57:10 62:21 69:18 77:14 86:11 90:13 95:12 101:4,8 107:24 108:14 109:9,12 110:19 122:17 123:25 members (3) 53:12,13 86:7 mention (2) 87:25 117:7 mentioned (7) 7:12 31:21 43:25 62:3 86:24 112:20 118:23 Merrick (24) 2:7 25:11 28:5,6,12 28:15 29:12,22 31:16 32:12 48:13 54:19,20 55:11 74:18 89:12 103:25 104:20 105:15,23 107:14,15 111:6,18 met (1) 34:3 meter (11) 85:4,7,8,17,20 115:15 115:20 116:19 117:5 119:21 122:8 meters (3) 76:11 115:10,12 mic (1) 57:11 Michael (3) 2:11 47:24 48:3 microphone (3) 8:15 57:3,7 middle (3) 22:20 65:11 66:8 mile (1) 106:20 miles (1) 16:11 million (20) 21:12 31:24 32:7 33:9 45:23,25 61:2 65:4,5,7,8 84:14 87:19,23 88:4,11 109:13 110:20 113:18 114:24 millions (2) 80:24,24 mind (2) 63:9 87:12</p>
---	---	---

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

mine (5) 17:8 20:4,4 24:10 91:13
minimalized (1) 14:5
minimum (3) 62:12 121:12,13
minutes (3) 26:19 84:11 108:22
mission (3) 125:10,19,20
mistakes (1) 120:18
misunderstand (1) 36:9
mitigated (2) 6:18 14:5
moan (1) 67:3
modify (2) 6:22 118:2
mom (1) 11:4
Monday (1) 105:7
monetary (1) 13:3
money (22) 17:12 21:21 24:3 27:2
28:22 29:22,24 31:19,25 32:6
58:25 65:10 79:7 87:5 106:7,12
110:20 111:15,22 119:5 122:11
123:14
monies (2) 106:11 117:9
monitor (1) 115:16
monitors (1) 102:20
monopoly (1) 78:14
month (12) 11:18 51:15 59:12
72:12 73:25 75:20 76:8 92:23
107:14 116:3,7 119:6
months (18) 17:10,10 20:13 74:2,3
75:4,4,19,19 85:4,11 91:11,13,19
104:4 116:3 123:5,6
Moran (2) 90:10,11
morning (5) 26:20 37:6,8 38:10
39:17
mother (2) 67:21 101:22
mother's (1) 11:3
motion (4) 1:3 4:6 19:17 100:10
motorists (1) 15:13
mouth (3) 34:23 35:19 41:11
moved (5) 50:6 74:18 91:2 96:18
111:7
movie (3) 51:8 81:12 98:18
moving (1) 63:5
multiplied (1) 11:18
municipal (1) 13:16

N

Nacht (5) 3:7 108:20 111:3,5,5
name (19) 4:18 10:15 12:18 45:16
46:13 48:2 50:2 53:2 54:18 60:3
61:20 62:7 66:6 79:19 90:18
111:5 112:8 124:9 127:22
name's (2) 17:3 101:13
names (1) 83:15
Nassau (18) 2:9 13:12 18:6 21:15
22:2 26:10,24 27:5 49:11 54:24
55:24 56:12 61:24 62:9,23 65:14
105:5 106:24
nation's (1) 63:15
national (2) 36:4 63:21

natural (1) 126:2
necessary (1) 64:12
necessity (3) 19:25 26:13 127:12
Neck (2) 87:23 88:6
need (41) 18:7,15 30:9 31:6,7,8
32:19,20 43:2 45:7 49:7,17,20,21
63:11 65:12 82:5,7 87:16 89:2,7
90:4 99:9,11,14,19 100:5,6,14,16
100:18,18,20 103:12 111:25
115:25 116:2 121:25 126:23
127:10 129:16
needed (3) 14:4 91:17 127:5
needs (4) 64:3 72:6 116:20 122:12
negotiation (1) 15:9
negotiations (3) 6:4,5 32:17
neighborhood (4) 56:25 88:23
91:15 92:15
neighbors (4) 8:18 25:16 53:16
99:17
nephew (1) 67:19
nervous (1) 31:5
Network (1) 81:12
never (11) 31:3 32:9 36:13 50:11
83:2 87:12 98:12 115:24 118:14
118:15 123:19
new (76) 1:2,5,10 4:8,13,14,24 5:4
5:16,16,22 7:6 11:10,15 13:17
20:18 21:2,4 23:13 24:4,5,15
27:24 28:7 30:3 31:16 41:14,20
43:3,17 44:12,17 45:5 48:11,15
49:8,9,18 54:25 55:15,17 58:11
62:20,24 64:10 68:20 74:7,20
75:13,23 76:11,25 78:2,18 83:5
84:24 85:4,19 86:9 90:21 95:21
110:6,23 112:11,15 115:14
116:25 120:8,9 125:8,20,24
126:5 128:18 132:3,7
news (1) 66:15
Newsday (1) 66:16
nice (4) 56:10 59:6 78:4 83:8
nickel (1) 123:19
Nicole (3) 1:23 132:6,18
night (1) 131:8
nightmare (2) 128:12,13
no-brainer (1) 109:19
nobody's (1) 123:24
nonsense (6) 87:15,17 88:25 89:4
89:18,19
normal (1) 38:5
north (12) 2:7 28:4,5,6,12,15 32:12
54:20 55:5 66:7 104:20 107:15
Notary (1) 132:6
noted (1) 131:9
notice (7) 8:22 42:2,3 53:10 75:13
116:4 118:23
noticed (1) 4:11
notifying (1) 100:14

November (3) 9:16 48:10 132:16
number (6) 8:7 76:23 77:4 105:2
112:12 120:13
numbers (2) 76:22 116:13
numerous (1) 10:9
nutshell (1) 14:11

O

o'clock (2) 37:8 39:16
Oak (1) 10:18
obligated (2) 119:5 123:16
obscene (1) 118:9
obtain (1) 47:3
obvious (1) 33:14
obviously (2) 28:3 46:20
Oceanside (1) 43:11
October (3) 1:6 4:12 19:19
odd-even (1) 42:6
offered (1) 119:12
offers (1) 47:10
office (4) 1:17 4:20 48:10,24
officer (1) 4:25
offices (1) 78:5
official (2) 5:12 10:21
officials (5) 32:21,22,22 99:10
128:8
offset (1) 56:13
Oh (12) 20:9 75:17 77:7 80:17
81:23 85:8 86:6,11,13,24 91:16
111:8
oil (2) 36:4 59:13
okay (14) 34:6 50:17 57:13 67:17
67:18 73:23 76:24 77:5,11 91:23
93:17 99:3 109:11 120:9
old (4) 86:9,9 106:4,8
once (4) 7:16 58:3 100:9 119:19
one's (1) 24:22
ones (2) 95:2 124:12
online (3) 45:18 130:7,14
Oooh (1) 106:6
open (4) 4:5 46:10 88:21 105:3
opened (1) 112:17
operating (1) 47:6
operations (1) 35:22
opinion (1) 97:10
opportunity (8) 7:5 9:3 10:4 41:19
43:9 44:11 47:11,16
oppose (1) 53:10
opposing (1) 130:9
opposition (1) 130:4
orally (1) 8:20
order (2) 52:8 127:10
org (1) 130:15
organization (1) 54:3
organizations (3) 10:20,22 35:18
Originally (1) 13:13
Outages (1) 14:2

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

outcome (1) 132:13
outraged (1) 116:9
outrageous (5) 17:7,17 18:8,13
112:21
outside (10) 8:3 14:25 34:4 37:9
40:2 76:4,5,6 92:14 115:20
overbill (1) 122:24
overbilling (1) 116:24
overburden (1) 33:17
overcharge (1) 91:5
overcharges (1) 119:7
overpayment (1) 119:9
overrun (1) 89:4
overtime (1) 15:7
overwhelming (1) 109:16
owe (1) 112:21
owed (2) 116:10 119:9
owned (1) 84:5
owns (1) 61:5
Oyster (3) 21:14 22:3 33:5

P

p.m (2) 1:7 131:9
packed (2) 19:24 81:17
paddle (1) 128:20
pages (2) 130:23,24
paid (11) 11:20,21 25:13 38:24
44:10 50:7,11 52:10 85:5 112:25
123:8
paneled (1) 78:5
panels (1) 58:15
paper (3) 46:12,13 68:24
papers (1) 68:25
parents (1) 127:10
park (2) 89:14 101:25
parking (5) 15:23 34:4 88:24 89:7
89:11
Parkway (2) 54:21 55:6
part (9) 5:10 7:3 8:25 13:21 29:11
31:2 51:16 64:11 78:22
part-time (2) 127:5 129:4
particles (1) 68:19
parties (7) 5:21 6:3,5,7,12,17
132:12
pass (6) 21:5 23:20,21 51:6 108:11
108:11
passed (3) 21:10 23:2 42:16
pasta (1) 92:3
patch (2) 104:9,11
patched (2) 105:13,14
Patricia (2) 37:4 38:25
Paul (4) 2:22 52:21 73:15 78:9
paved (1) 106:21
pay (52) 11:5,24 12:3,7 17:23
20:10 21:23 22:3,11 26:12 27:4
27:16 28:8,17,20 29:11,16,17
30:6 43:14 53:17 57:21 59:8,10

61:2,6 65:17 71:7 72:11 78:24
79:3 92:4,5,20,22 102:3,5,14,17
102:19 104:23 106:19,23 107:5
108:5,6,15 117:8,11 121:5,12,13
paying (43) 12:5 17:10 19:5,9,24
20:20,22,25 22:17 23:8 25:4 26:2
26:11 27:2 30:4 32:4 54:11,24
55:9,10 56:14 59:11 62:12 78:5
94:3,7 98:16,25 99:3 106:7,10
108:3,4,6 109:10 110:9 111:10
111:11 120:21 128:14,15,16,17
payment (1) 42:12
payments (1) 21:24
pays (14) 17:9 20:13 22:14 26:5,7
28:15 59:7 62:15 65:19 72:10
78:23 79:3 106:18,22
Peacock (7) 3:5 101:3,6,12,13,14
103:4
penalized (2) 72:19,25
pendency (1) 9:18
people (77) 7:5 8:7 10:21 17:18
18:2,7 26:17 30:23 42:19 53:17
56:25 57:16 58:6,20,20,22 59:21
65:11 66:8 67:24 68:5,10,25
69:17 70:16 71:4,17 72:3 73:8,21
81:15 82:10,11,25 83:9,15,25
87:8 88:16 89:14,20 90:2,4 94:22
97:5 98:3,10,24 102:15,18,23,25
103:2,5,9,10 106:4,8,9 107:5,7
108:24,25 109:16,23 121:19,20
123:20 128:25 129:12,13,13
130:2,6,7,9,10
people's (2) 15:24 58:16
Pepe (4) 2:22 73:15 78:9,11
percent (28) 12:3 20:14 21:25
22:13 23:2,16,19 26:9 27:15,16
28:11,13 29:4 33:9 44:20,22,23
65:2,13,18 72:20 79:4 82:5
108:12 118:24 119:2,6 123:10
perfectly (1) 97:14
perform (2) 13:14 15:5
performance (1) 16:10
performing (1) 54:6
Perini (6) 49:25 52:24,25 53:2,22
54:9
period (4) 19:18 42:19 75:8,16
periods (1) 116:14
person (10) 8:8,9 40:24 45:24
56:18 59:25 67:8 82:21 95:9
105:24
personal (1) 82:18
persons (1) 66:11
perspective (1) 46:19
petition (1) 103:13
petitions (1) 130:2
Phil (3) 2:12 49:24 50:2
Philip (2) 90:16 97:20

phone (2) 9:13 38:3
phones (1) 84:17
phonetic (1) 33:23
piece (2) 86:5 88:14
pills (1) 35:16
pipe (15) 13:2,22 14:13,15,20
38:11,13 86:5,7,12,14 88:2,8
117:12,13
pipes (18) 31:15 51:16,17 86:2
87:2 93:24 94:4,24,25 95:6,18
104:6 105:19,25 107:4 109:4
110:13,15
pissed (1) 90:3
pitcher (1) 60:23
place (7) 24:8 59:6 72:14 79:13
81:2,17 83:11
places (2) 95:18 102:11
plan (2) 13:20 58:4
planned (5) 12:22 13:6,23 16:8
80:7
planning (1) 16:17
plans (1) 13:19
plant (2) 80:23 87:20
plastic (1) 86:5
playing (1) 27:21
please (14) 4:3 7:23 8:2,12,19 9:20
12:8 37:19 45:4 57:6 70:2 101:3
126:25 127:18
plenty (2) 86:11,13
plumber (1) 85:14
plumbing (1) 82:2
plus (2) 16:6 63:19
Poaut (9) 2:24 90:10,15,17,18
92:10 93:12 96:17 97:9
pockets (2) 36:2,6
point (15) 10:24 13:4,5 25:8 30:22
34:16 41:23 67:11 68:9 69:17,18
69:21,24 89:16 111:13
points (1) 34:18
Poland (3) 60:22 92:5,6
poles (1) 107:11
police (3) 37:13,13 105:5
policy (3) 51:19 52:10 106:13
Ponzi (1) 87:8
pool (3) 50:8 68:5 121:18
pools (1) 57:20
poor (2) 65:22 75:21
population (1) 33:10
portion (1) 12:16
portions (1) 48:14
position (1) 10:4
positions (1) 6:11
possibility (1) 95:16
possible (2) 15:25 129:10
possibly (2) 41:3 113:9
posting (1) 53:14
pounds (1) 114:19

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

power (2) 15:20 114:5
practices (1) 4:16
pre-notifications (1) 14:3
precious (1) 38:6
predictable (1) 13:22
prefer (1) 9:5
prepared (2) 7:17 63:23
preplanning (1) 14:11
preposterous (1) 92:20
present (2) 8:10 75:12
president (3) 46:16 61:21 96:19
presiding (2) 4:21,25
pressure (10) 14:8 25:10,15,18
31:9 39:14,17,21 85:23,25
pretty (4) 83:7 104:15 105:13
114:6
previous (1) 130:24
price (7) 23:8 28:15 55:13,19
59:10 107:17 110:12
prices (1) 25:23
primary (1) 125:20
print (1) 69:5
prior (1) 114:14
Prisco (5) 3:10 124:7,22,23 125:14
prison (2) 83:2,5
private (5) 13:17 21:10 44:18
55:14 78:14
privately (1) 80:6
privately-owned (1) 17:22
privatization (2) 58:5 79:6
privatized (1) 128:10,12
prize (2) 60:16,22
proactive (1) 14:19
probably (6) 40:18 52:14 59:10
86:4 114:13 129:16
problem (13) 15:16 23:8 41:12,13
42:23 76:9,10 85:24 88:19 94:13
103:15 105:17 117:5
problems (4) 58:21 82:6 111:16
126:16
procedure (1) 71:3
proceeding (11) 1:3 4:6 5:3,13,21
5:24 6:8 7:2 9:19 12:17 70:9
process (2) 7:20 26:23
processed (1) 118:8
product (4) 47:8 72:17,18 126:6
production (1) 15:25
profession (1) 113:2
professional (1) 124:2
professionals (1) 63:23
profit (5) 23:20,22 44:19 79:2 80:2
profits (3) 23:14,15 65:2
program (4) 23:5 31:6 117:15
120:21
programing (1) 76:11
project (8) 13:21 16:8 31:11,20,21
32:2,5,10

projects (3) 13:5 64:9,12
promised (1) 32:10
prone (1) 106:10
proof (1) 45:6
proper (1) 14:11
properly (1) 13:6
properties (1) 58:22
property (14) 11:3,7 14:18 21:5,10
21:24 22:4 23:21 26:3,12 27:3,4
33:12 121:17
proposal (10) 6:9,13,15,23 7:7
31:3,5,13,15 55:23
proposed (1) 64:11
proposing (2) 31:12 53:7
protect (1) 113:13
protected (2) 27:12 126:20
protecting (1) 126:2
protection (1) 51:16
protections (1) 126:19
prototype (1) 23:4
proud (2) 19:14 103:6
provide (6) 7:5 9:15 43:17 75:22
116:12 126:10
provided (1) 44:12
provides (2) 47:2,13
providing (3) 43:4 73:3 98:20
Ps (1) 51:13
PSC (3) 78:16 112:13,15
public's (1) 7:18
pull (2) 39:11 87:13
pulled (1) 46:11
pump (2) 87:22 88:11
pumper (1) 39:12
pumping (1) 43:6
pumps (1) 31:2
pun (1) 55:22
punished (1) 82:15
purchases (1) 15:7
purpose (2) 7:4 70:10
purposely (1) 35:5
put (32) 18:2 30:20,25 31:14 35:2
36:2 45:5 50:8 58:10 61:13 67:21
68:24 69:5 70:21 81:14 84:15,20
85:4,20 91:13 93:5 94:15 102:4,6
105:5 111:15,19,22,25 114:18
115:20 120:11
puts (1) 63:14
putting (4) 45:9 58:16 91:6 115:6
PVC (1) 86:5

Q

Qs (1) 51:13
quality (5) 25:2,6,9,20 64:13
QUEENS (1) 132:4
question (4) 18:11 47:18 50:19
84:15
question-and-answer (1) 7:9

questions (6) 9:19 36:19,22 37:19
66:22 69:11
quick (2) 20:3 63:5
quiet (1) 101:10
quite (1) 48:8

R

R (1) 132:1
rafters (1) 81:17
raise (3) 59:3,20 69:19
raises (1) 72:5
raising (1) 49:4
ran (5) 66:25 74:20 84:7,24 109:8
rate (40) 24:24 25:9 26:11 29:19
29:19,20,21 31:2 42:24 47:4
49:14 53:6,11 64:11,25 66:19
70:9,19 74:12,13,16 75:17 92:19
95:23,25 96:11,13 108:5,6,12,13
109:22 110:5 111:14 114:22
120:16 121:13 122:8,10 130:11
ratepayers (3) 45:8 70:7 111:22
rates (30) 1:4 4:7,16 12:9 17:6,21
18:13 43:13,14 49:6 57:18 59:3
59:21 64:6 73:2 92:4 98:9,20,25
99:4 102:18 111:9 113:5 117:9
121:6,9,18 126:14 128:15,16
rating (1) 78:14
Ratinoff (1) 33:23
reach (1) 6:12
reached (2) 6:6,17
read (2) 51:21 125:8
reading (2) 46:22 123:5
readings (1) 116:22
ready (4) 8:10 14:9 51:4 98:13
real (5) 22:22 25:6,6 41:12 95:17
realize (3) 42:17 59:2 94:23
realized (1) 63:11
really (31) 16:6 21:15 30:9 33:16
36:21 56:9 65:20,22 66:24 78:4
81:20 83:7,8 85:15 89:21 92:20
96:4,22,23 97:3 100:3 101:20
102:22 105:16 106:11,15 111:13
111:14,15 120:25 128:19
rear (1) 104:16
reason (9) 9:4 17:20 40:3 50:23
73:22 79:24 112:25 118:9 119:13
reasonable (5) 47:4,6 70:8 118:10
126:13
reasons (1) 116:11
receive (1) 43:22
received (2) 11:6 63:19
receiving (3) 42:18 44:21,25
recognized (1) 119:8
recommend (1) 73:6
recommendations (1) 5:4
reconstituted (1) 21:17
record (20) 4:5 5:3,10,12 6:25 7:15

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

13

8:14 9:2,7 16:23 23:14,15 61:23
83:11 112:13 118:17 127:24
130:21,22 132:10
recovery (1) 47:5
reduce (1) 14:17
reduced (1) 15:19
reduction (1) 12:3
reference (1) 112:16
reflect (2) 10:22 130:22
refrigerator (1) 106:14
registration (3) 7:24 9:10,21
regular (3) 9:13 93:16 119:20
regulating (1) 4:23
regulations (3) 1:4 4:8 113:12
regulatory (1) 47:12
rehabilitate (1) 63:6
rehabilitation (1) 14:20
Reid (6) 2:11 47:24 48:2,3 49:16
52:14
reimburse (1) 31:24
reiterate (2) 69:23 98:4
reject (2) 6:22 27:3
rejected (1) 119:13
related (2) 103:22 132:11
reliable (2) 125:22 126:11
reliably (2) 47:9 114:6
relying (1) 113:21
remember (5) 57:19 75:2 94:17
98:16 99:5
remembers (1) 30:20
remind (2) 71:17 72:9
removed (1) 79:11
reopen (1) 49:17
repair (4) 12:24 15:3,8,12
repairs (2) 15:5 51:23
repeat (1) 11:13
replace (6) 63:5 64:13 82:2 85:7
93:15 115:15
replaced (5) 55:16 85:11 95:19
104:5 119:21
replacement (7) 12:24 13:11,20
14:20 16:13,14 63:12
replacing (2) 94:4 111:15
report (4) 63:14,23 64:2 105:4
reported (3) 1:22 24:17 132:8
Reporter (4) 5:11 7:13 8:13 57:2
represent (3) 14:23 66:8 113:5
representative (3) 32:25 33:4,16
representatives (4) 9:21 81:20
99:20 129:15
representing (3) 17:4,5 60:4
represents (3) 6:10 16:12 48:13
request (4) 4:14 5:23 6:14 117:24
required (3) 10:7 68:14 122:11
research (8) 23:3,10 32:5 46:8
61:3,7 67:25 69:2
resell (1) 51:19

resident (8) 10:16 45:18 66:7
79:20 90:18,20,24 112:9
residential (2) 113:14 125:25
residents (11) 12:6 15:13 17:5
22:2 26:10 53:13,22 54:10 60:14
60:17 70:6
respect (8) 19:11 36:19 39:19
40:14 81:18 89:20 96:2 128:23
respectful (2) 9:23 10:10
respond (1) 37:18
responding (1) 9:25
response (7) 15:2 46:23 52:23
90:12 115:8 116:2 120:15
responsibilities (1) 125:4
responsibility (5) 82:13,14,20,23
114:11
responsible (3) 4:25 79:10 86:22
restaurants (1) 57:23
restitution (2) 100:16,18
restoration (1) 15:9
restore (1) 64:4
result (2) 12:25 45:2
resulting (1) 16:2
results (1) 70:13
retired (9) 54:25 71:5,6 74:5 97:23
98:4 103:24 121:11 129:4
return (4) 47:4,17 64:25 123:16
revenue (1) 65:7
revenues (1) 65:5
reverse (2) 118:2 121:8
Review (1) 5:18
reviewed (2) 5:22 64:9
reviewing (3) 118:13,15 120:2
revise (1) 118:2
reward (2) 97:14,17
rhetoric (1) 99:23
Rhoads (7) 2:9 41:7,9,16 44:8 54:3
54:6
rid (1) 83:19
ride (1) 58:2
rider (1) 52:5
ridiculous (11) 22:18,24 26:21
52:17 60:24 68:7 98:9 106:11
128:14,15,16
right (34) 20:23 24:10,17,24 27:11
28:13 30:17 34:7,22 35:19 36:19
41:3 50:15 57:9 59:5 61:19 69:21
77:16 84:6,12 88:16 96:9 107:13
109:6,16,19 110:10,13,24 114:7
115:9 124:17,18 125:6
rights (2) 123:20 126:19
ripe (1) 122:16
risk (3) 95:8,20,21
river (1) 37:9
road (4) 15:9 31:16,16 89:12
roads (2) 32:9 63:16
roadways (1) 14:17

Robert (3) 2:14 54:15,18
role (1) 107:20
Ron (3) 3:6 101:11 108:20
room (6) 19:23 26:5,6 52:10 72:4
95:9
round (1) 18:25
routine (1) 16:14
Rules (2) 1:4 4:8
run (4) 26:18 32:19 110:7 115:12
running (7) 48:11 88:15 94:24 95:3
107:4,7 108:10
runs (2) 76:6 116:15
rushed (1) 38:12
Rust (2) 93:23,23

S

sack (1) 114:20
safe (2) 125:22 126:11
salaries (3) 36:14 45:19 111:24
salary (2) 45:23 82:6
sample (1) 40:17
Sandy (1) 75:2
sat (2) 68:16 83:24
satisfaction (1) 123:24
save (3) 21:20 26:25 79:7
saw (3) 20:5 23:14 81:12
saying (6) 30:23 68:23 77:2 82:20
96:12 116:2
says (7) 76:21 77:7 82:21 91:13
108:11 114:22 125:19
scared (1) 46:9
Scarsdale (3) 111:8,9,11
scary (1) 106:5
scenario (1) 14:24
schedule (1) 42:6
scheduled (2) 5:25 35:21
scheme (1) 87:8
schmuck (1) 40:15
school (19) 1:9 19:22 21:7,8 23:6
24:17 27:12,12,14,23 31:22 32:3
80:17 85:15 94:14 95:13 125:2
127:4 129:3
schools (1) 24:19
scrapped (1) 31:17
screw (1) 83:9
screwed (1) 60:11
screwing (1) 61:8
Seaford (6) 2:13 48:14 53:4,23
54:10 124:24
seats (1) 4:4
secret (1) 24:23
secretary (1) 53:3
Section (1) 124:10
secure (1) 125:22
Security (2) 34:23 124:13
Sediment (1) 93:23
see (25) 9:20 15:14 30:2 35:4,6

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

39:24 48:16 49:10,19 56:9 58:5
70:13 80:4,9 90:2 102:8,12 103:5
104:17 106:4,7 118:7,18 130:16
130:18
seeing (1) 19:23
seeking (1) 12:2
seeks (1) 126:3
seen (5) 23:15 29:20 101:15
108:25 117:2
segment (1) 46:22
sell (2) 52:4 80:5
selling (1) 120:4
send (5) 37:13 69:6 92:13 94:13
114:21
sending (1) 53:14
senior (4) 36:9 59:14 72:4 129:2
seniors (1) 65:23
sense (1) 70:22
sent (2) 50:20 118:12
separate (1) 29:7
September (1) 20:8
Seriously (1) 19:2
serve (3) 16:19 47:14 100:4
served (4) 28:6,7 44:2,4
service (79) 1:2,17 4:9,15,16,20,22
5:5,6,17,20 9:20 14:17 17:13
18:9 21:3 23:18 25:22 29:8 32:16
38:21 41:2,18 42:21 43:2,22 44:4
44:25 48:6 50:15 53:9 71:19 73:3
73:19,20,25 74:11,21,24 75:21
76:20 77:6,22 80:12 81:6,19 82:4
89:21 92:21 94:8 96:2 97:10,13
98:20 99:25 100:4,5 107:23
108:13 110:17 113:6,11,15,20
116:5,6,20 118:5 120:12 122:7,8
124:24 125:3,9,21 126:7,12,16
131:3
services (7) 1:5 14:25 22:22,23
117:20 125:24 126:10
servicing (3) 71:23,24 100:3
session (1) 7:10
set (3) 100:10 126:13 132:15
settlement (4) 6:4,6,16 32:17
seven (3) 44:20,21,23
sewage (2) 80:20 128:17
sewer (3) 38:6 58:4 93:21
sewerage (4) 80:22 87:20 88:4,12
shake (2) 37:16,22
shaking (1) 38:4
shareholders (2) 23:12,14
sheet (3) 8:23 9:9 30:3
Sheldon (3) 2:10 45:14,17
Sheri (1) 45:15
Sherry (1) 46:5
shirts (2) 92:11,16
shocked (2) 55:8,20
shopping (1) 38:9

short-term (1) 15:15
shots (1) 107:21
showed (1) 19:16
shower (1) 43:22
showing (1) 21:13
shows (1) 122:19
shut (2) 50:22 75:14
sick (2) 81:11 82:19
side (3) 81:4,5 123:12
sides (1) 84:20
sight (1) 63:8
signals (1) 15:22
signatures (1) 130:23
significant (1) 43:13
signs (1) 89:15
silence (1) 10:2
simple (1) 107:18
simply (1) 43:18
Sims (10) 2:19 66:4,6,6 67:5,16
68:16 69:9,21 70:12
single (7) 42:22 46:8 83:5,6 92:23
94:19 95:9
sink (1) 88:2
sir (4) 28:6 37:18 50:14 70:5
sister-in-law (1) 72:10
sit (3) 73:7 96:9 107:21
sitting (2) 94:5 95:9
situation (3) 14:9 116:17 128:4
six (12) 55:17 78:24 85:4,11 91:10
91:13,18,19,19,19 107:6 116:15
size (2) 14:23 25:12
sky (1) 110:3
slow (1) 115:12
slowly (1) 8:12
smack (1) 34:22
small (2) 58:21 121:10
smiled (1) 66:22
Smith (11) 2:23 79:17,18,19,20
80:9 83:4,21 86:8,13 87:11
snapping (1) 112:23
snowball (2) 57:24 58:25
Social (2) 34:23 124:13
societal (2) 13:4 16:7
Society (1) 63:13
software (1) 121:25
Soil (4) 2:6 18:23 19:15 32:14
solar (2) 23:5 58:15
sold (4) 29:17 79:24,25 83:15
solution (1) 107:18
solve (2) 42:22 76:8
solved (2) 76:9,12
somebody (15) 36:21 42:9,10 58:9
77:18 79:9 81:13 82:19 86:20
87:24 90:4 104:16 105:3,8 115:5
someplace (2) 83:12 86:23
son (4) 66:17 78:21 98:6,7
sorry (3) 74:2 96:24 130:15

soup (1) 55:3
south (10) 11:3,13,21 12:6 50:3
54:21 61:25 62:4,11 128:2
Southeast (2) 21:15 26:24
Southern (2) 54:21 55:6
spaces (2) 89:7,11
speak (19) 8:2,12,15,19 10:5,7,11
12:16 43:10 56:18 57:6 59:25
60:7 62:18,22 97:24 103:11
114:25 127:18
speaker (11) 8:9 10:13,13 78:9
90:9 97:20 101:2 108:19 124:6
127:20 130:24
speakers (6) 2:2 3:2 8:5 9:24 10:9
127:17
speaking (2) 10:19 103:6
special (1) 104:21
specialized (1) 113:17
spend (1) 82:24
spending (2) 59:15,16
spent (3) 21:13 38:8 80:24
spirit (1) 48:9
spoke (9) 20:24 24:10 50:11 51:25
101:18 109:8 115:5 128:5 129:24
spring (5) 60:23 65:16 92:6,7
93:18
sprinkler (1) 102:4
sprinklers (1) 39:15
sprinkling (1) 50:8
squeezed (4) 18:3,4,5,7
squeezing (2) 126:25 127:12
ss (1) 132:3
stable (1) 47:11
staff (2) 5:20 89:8
staffing (1) 13:25
stalling (1) 35:23
stand (7) 17:18 45:7 67:2 97:12
99:20 113:25 123:21
standard (2) 72:23,24
standing (1) 34:25
stands (2) 74:25 112:17
start (5) 8:10 58:3,16,17 83:17
started (3) 112:18 115:5 127:4
state (19) 1:2 4:14,24 5:4 18:5 21:3
29:3 32:22,25 48:11 54:21 55:6
83:5 125:9,20,24 126:10 132:3,7
State's (1) 29:2
stated (1) 71:16
statement (12) 1:12 4:11,12 7:23
8:11,13 9:5 37:20 51:9 125:10,19
130:4
statements (4) 5:8 7:22 8:20,21
States (1) 102:13
stating (2) 50:21 51:15
statute (1) 116:14
stay (3) 127:7 129:7,7
stayed (1) 119:25

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

Steinman (13) 2:8 30:14 33:22
34:2,6,11,15 36:24 37:21,25
38:18 39:10 40:23
step (3) 8:3 77:24 130:12
stepped (1) 74:12
Steve (1) 54:2
Steven (2) 2:9 41:7
sticking (1) 36:6
stimulate (2) 49:2 126:4
stinks (2) 39:21,21
stint (1) 90:21
stock (1) 52:11
stomach (1) 69:22
stood (2) 83:23 84:8
stop (10) 17:19 18:10,12,14 32:24
32:24 38:22 89:3 99:16 106:15
stopping (1) 38:9
story (1) 20:3
stove (1) 75:6
strategic (1) 126:6
Stream (3) 31:22,23 32:3
street (16) 15:20 23:25 25:11
37:15 39:2 51:8 58:4 84:25 86:3
95:3 104:6,15 106:2,20,21 107:7
streets (6) 22:23 93:24 94:25 95:7
106:25 107:3
strong (1) 48:17
strongly (1) 64:20
structure (5) 16:19 47:12 121:3,3
121:8
stuck (1) 21:9
studied (1) 26:25
studies (1) 26:23
study (2) 21:18,22
stuff (5) 58:3 86:9,9,9 92:14
subject (1) 55:7
submit (2) 8:20 130:5
submitted (2) 9:17 130:23
subsidizing (1) 121:20
sue (1) 113:16
sufficient (1) 10:8
Suffolk (6) 13:12 61:25 62:9,24
65:15 90:23
sugar (1) 114:19
suing (1) 104:22
summarily (1) 119:13
summarize (1) 8:19
summer (1) 115:18
summertime (1) 39:16
sunk (1) 104:11
Sunrise (3) 54:20 88:9 89:12
supervisor (3) 77:11,12 114:25
suppliers (5) 61:24 62:19,23 63:22
64:7
supply (1) 73:11
support (4) 56:22 57:15 126:21,24
supposed (10) 31:14 40:11 42:6,7

42:11 67:14 78:16 102:13 113:13
122:13
supposedly (2) 25:13 120:2
surcharge (1) 92:23
sure (8) 17:24 35:9 62:6 66:24
97:4 107:19,20 125:7
surprised (1) 55:20
surrounding (2) 65:14 126:22
survive (3) 34:20 66:9 127:11
swimming (1) 57:20
system (8) 43:18,19 67:8 93:2,4
102:5 117:10 125:15
systemic (1) 116:24
systems (5) 50:9 63:17 64:5 94:2,3

T

T (2) 132:1,1
table (2) 9:10,21
Taj (1) 29:12
take (35) 4:3 5:18 11:17 12:21
21:17 23:24 24:7 30:6 32:6,7,8
33:6 35:7,7,21,25 38:21 40:17
53:5 58:4 63:9 69:25 70:2,21
82:12,13,22 86:2 99:7,21 107:21
112:24 114:10 116:21 121:4
takeover (3) 25:25 29:4,25
takes (3) 32:25 33:3 38:15
talk (7) 34:17 36:13 37:22 57:3
69:15 95:22 96:25
talked (2) 24:14 60:8
talking (10) 24:25 27:11 32:15
35:13 55:5 81:23 83:22 85:13
102:9 109:23
talks (1) 25:9
tap (3) 43:7,21 70:21
tariffs (1) 5:17
tax (13) 19:21 21:5,6,11 22:5 27:14
27:24,25 28:23 56:3,11 62:13,13
taxed (1) 22:19
taxes (21) 17:23,25 20:25 21:24,25
22:4 23:21 26:3,12 27:3,4,23
48:18 49:5 57:22 79:3,4 80:17
82:8 127:7 128:14
taxing (1) 32:23
taxpayer (1) 49:13
teach (1) 124:25
teacher (5) 95:12 96:25 97:22,23
127:5
teeth (2) 92:2,6
telecommunications (1) 125:23
telephone (1) 38:2
tell (24) 7:5 26:3,7 30:6 36:25
40:12,20 50:12 51:14 54:4 62:7
66:18 67:21 73:4,9 80:12 83:21
91:9 96:22 99:16,19 115:19,21
125:2
telling (7) 26:9 40:9 65:12 69:11,16

81:16 85:6
tells (1) 41:10
ten (10) 15:4 23:16 26:18 40:7
82:24 87:19,22 88:4,11 118:7
termination (5) 41:25 42:3 98:11
98:14 118:23
territory (1) 4:17
test (1) 40:6
testimony (1) 5:23
testing (2) 24:22 115:21
texted (1) 66:17
thank (80) 12:10,12,15 16:23,24
18:16,18 27:8,8 30:10,12 33:19
33:21,25 34:8,12 41:6,9 44:3
45:10,13 46:2 47:21,23 49:21
52:20,25 54:2,5,12,14 56:4,14,17
59:5,22,24 61:13,15 64:14,16
65:25 66:3 71:11 73:13 77:21
78:6,8 79:13,15 90:6,8 96:24
97:3,6,19 100:22,24 101:17
103:7,17,19 108:16,18 109:22,24
110:24 111:2 112:4 124:3,5,20
128:21 129:9,11,21 130:7,19,25
131:7
thanks (1) 100:13
thing (18) 27:10 34:3 35:11 36:11
36:12 39:22 51:5,20 62:5 73:6
101:24 105:16 106:17 115:23
120:25 124:17,18 128:6
things (15) 29:10 72:7 83:10 92:17
94:21 101:19 103:8 104:3 106:10
114:2 115:6,7,22 120:22,24
think (38) 10:6,8 17:16,17 18:8,9
24:4 26:22 28:10 30:15 32:10
34:15 45:2,2 48:4 51:19 57:11
65:25 71:15 72:19,24 73:17,21
75:9 76:2,21 79:4 83:10 85:10
87:7 89:21 98:15 105:21 106:16
106:17 109:15,18 127:23
thinks (3) 19:5,8 25:2
third (2) 25:8 93:8
Thomas (4) 2:15 54:15 56:18,20
thought (5) 80:21 83:25 100:3
104:21 113:10
thoughts (1) 7:6
threaten (1) 98:14
threatening (1) 98:17
three (16) 15:3 17:9 20:13,21
22:11 29:24 35:24 60:22 75:3,4
75:19 104:10,13 123:5 127:25
128:2
threw (1) 104:8
throw (1) 58:6
throwing (2) 95:24 106:12
thrown (1) 96:15
tier (4) 121:2,3,8,15
Tim (3) 3:4 103:20,22

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

time (22) 10:7,8 15:24 17:17 26:23
36:3 42:19 61:9 73:5 74:10 75:8
80:16 83:17 87:11 91:9 102:24
105:14 110:22 115:14 120:15
130:18 131:9
times (11) 16:9 20:21 22:11,12
78:24 87:6 101:16 107:6 110:9
110:17 111:10
tired (2) 32:23 82:19
title (1) 71:18
today (7) 4:10 7:13 16:15 17:7
19:19 69:12 79:6
toilet (1) 83:16
toilets (1) 120:22
told (7) 40:6 52:2 70:25 77:19
114:13 115:8,25
tolerance (1) 122:3
Tom (7) 2:16 56:19 57:10 59:25
60:3 101:7 103:22
tomorrow (1) 62:7
tonight (18) 7:3,21,23 8:7,25 9:15
34:4 48:16 51:3 60:4 62:18,18
69:24 70:11 97:7 128:22 129:10
131:6
tonight's (1) 4:21
toothed (1) 122:13
top (6) 42:12 45:22 75:21 84:17
92:4,22
total (3) 16:7,8 89:18
touch (2) 116:9 118:21
tours (1) 81:4
Tova (5) 2:24 90:10,15,18 98:21
tower (4) 30:19,24 83:22 84:14
towers (2) 58:14 84:16
town (15) 28:16 29:6 32:21 33:4,11
49:11 55:24 56:2,12 57:21 62:14
73:8 80:3 87:9 99:7
towns (6) 21:7,14 22:2 33:4 91:16
92:18
track (1) 6:18
Tracy (4) 2:4 10:14 12:13,18
traditional (1) 47:12
traffic (4) 15:18,21,22,24
transcribed (1) 5:11
transcript (3) 7:14,16 132:9
TRANSCRIPTION (1) 1:13
translate (1) 71:23
transparency (2) 80:4,10
transpire (1) 118:7
transportation (1) 15:23
travesty (1) 65:25
treated (1) 101:21
treatment (1) 43:19
tremendous (1) 117:9
tremendously (2) 114:8,9
tried (5) 99:5,6,8 104:25 105:3
trillion (1) 64:3

trouble (2) 25:17 57:5
truck (2) 38:22 39:12
true (3) 79:23 89:25 132:9
truly (1) 33:15
trust (3) 31:10 80:5,21
try (2) 27:22 118:10
trying (6) 22:25 34:20 52:4 56:5
66:9 89:17
tube (1) 85:2
tune (1) 21:11
turf (1) 27:18
turn (3) 39:15 43:21,21
turnout (2) 18:24 19:2
twelve (1) 35:16
twice (1) 74:23
two (20) 15:3 17:10 35:21,23 37:13
37:14 38:15 42:19 66:13 68:5
74:2,2 75:18 83:24 104:12,19
108:25 114:23 116:3 119:14
typical (3) 62:15 85:22 104:20
typically (2) 51:23 120:17

U

ultimate (1) 5:7
ultimately (2) 6:6 70:8
ultrasonic (1) 115:20
un-American (1) 78:18
unacceptable (2) 71:3 127:11
unconstitutional (1) 26:8
underground (1) 15:21
underneath (1) 88:9
underservice (1) 91:5
understand (9) 44:17 65:9 67:7,8
67:11 68:8 95:13 98:2 101:22
understood (1) 91:17
underway (1) 5:19
unelected (1) 78:17
unforeseen (1) 15:12
unit (3) 117:22,23,25
united (2) 48:17 102:13
units (2) 123:2,6
unplanned (3) 12:24 16:5,9
unpredictable (2) 14:16 15:13
upgrading (1) 24:25
upset (3) 14:6 50:25 69:22
upsetting (1) 102:23
Upstate (1) 20:18
urging (2) 49:12 53:15
usage (5) 20:19 115:18,18 117:2
119:22
use (25) 11:11 26:13,16,17,20
44:11 57:12 70:18 74:5,6,9 77:20
88:8 95:18 110:20 115:17,18
117:13 121:8,12 122:18 123:2,3
123:6,9
useable (1) 75:8
users (1) 113:14

Usually (1) 38:14
usury (1) 98:19
utilities (9) 4:24 14:18 15:20 43:14
47:13 57:25 112:2 117:14 127:8
utility (17) 43:15 49:5,19 51:12
56:6 57:20 113:3,4,16 114:3,4,6
120:17 126:11,13,15,19

V

VA (1) 35:15
Valley (3) 31:22,23 32:3
valuable (2) 70:10 131:5
value (1) 15:24
vantage (1) 34:18
variety (1) 9:7
various (1) 13:16
verbatim (1) 7:14
Verizon (3) 89:6 107:9,13
Veronica (5) 3:11 127:15,16,19,22
versus (2) 12:23 16:9
veteran (3) 34:19 35:14 103:23
veterans (3) 34:24 35:9,10
vets (2) 35:18 65:23
vice (1) 46:15
vicinity (1) 128:2
view (4) 7:18 8:6 13:4,5
viewpoint (1) 10:23
views (3) 9:6 69:25 131:2
violates (1) 26:22
violation (1) 52:15
visit (1) 96:20
visited (1) 20:4
voice (2) 96:25 97:24
voicing (1) 97:9
volume (1) 114:17
volunteer (3) 48:3 55:2 103:14
volunteering (1) 55:3
vote (1) 79:6

W

wait (1) 52:7
waiting (3) 77:14,15,17
walk (1) 104:4
walking (3) 104:11,13,16
Wall (1) 51:8
want (39) 17:12 22:7,7,13 27:10,17
27:20 29:23,23 30:5,24 31:24
33:6,6,13,14 35:25 36:13 39:4
40:19 45:7 49:10 51:18 54:2 67:3
67:5 70:17 73:17,18 78:11 91:16
97:6 101:17 103:7 108:5 129:6,7
129:7 130:4
Wantagh (33) 1:9,10 2:13 27:23
28:10 30:20,25 44:5,9 45:17 46:5
48:13 53:3,23 54:10 55:25 56:21
56:23 57:15,16 59:9 79:20 82:2
84:9 88:21 101:14 124:10,25

**Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016**

127:4,23 128:3 129:3,8
wanted (2) 30:19 62:16
wash (1) 92:12
washes (2) 57:24 58:9
wasn't (4) 34:2 35:8,17 66:24
waste (1) 117:10
watch (3) 43:3 51:13 78:17
Water's (8) 4:13 5:23 7:7 23:14
 24:16 64:22 78:2,2
way (23) 24:6,14 30:8 33:8 36:20
 37:10 39:2 54:11 55:19 60:12
 71:22 73:16 75:7 79:9 80:10
 84:25 85:23 96:5 101:21 106:21
 122:25 125:11 132:13
ways (7) 9:8,11 14:10 35:20 65:21
 117:12,15
we'll (14) 7:21 8:25 10:6 30:8
 47:24 61:16 66:4 71:12 73:14
 74:16 77:12 79:16 111:3 120:5
we're (65) 4:10 18:5,6,12 19:5,8,24
 20:20 22:19 25:4 26:9 27:2,11,22
 29:7 30:4 32:4,23 35:13 42:6,7
 54:11 55:10,21 56:13 57:4 60:11
 60:25 61:22,23 63:4 68:6 69:11
 70:11 74:4 76:14,24,25 78:5
 84:17,21,21 85:6 86:25 87:2,17
 87:19 88:8 89:4 90:5 94:2 96:12
 101:21 102:12 108:3 109:12
 115:15,15 126:20,25 128:14,14
 128:16,16,19
we've (5) 41:22 60:9 95:20 99:18
 130:16
website (2) 7:19 9:12
websites (1) 53:15
week (3) 38:8 66:13 115:21
weekends (1) 105:10
weeks (5) 91:19,19,20,21 104:10
well-planned (1) 14:21
well-run (1) 47:3
wells (1) 58:16
went (11) 20:12 25:14 65:4,5,7,8
 75:6 81:7 89:5 91:14 119:22
weren't (3) 100:3 105:3 119:18
WHEREOF (1) 132:15
white (4) 46:12,13 92:11,15
Whitman (2) 90:16 97:21
wife (9) 35:5 41:10 42:4,8 74:4,20
 104:4 112:19 121:11
wife's (1) 39:23
willing (1) 97:14
Willow (1) 89:11
winner (1) 60:18
winter (1) 115:18
wintertime (1) 74:6
wish (4) 9:15 10:11 36:21 122:21
wishes (2) 7:25 127:17
wishing (1) 8:19

within-entitled (1) 132:8
WITNESS (1) 132:15
woman (3) 46:12 68:18 83:22
wonder (3) 22:19 81:16 82:17
wonderful (1) 29:13
word (1) 92:24
work (20) 13:14 15:25 16:10 34:19
 34:20 36:10 42:8 55:2 85:14 88:7
 88:17 92:16 102:10 112:19 114:2
 118:10 124:11 127:6,10 129:4
worked (2) 46:18 129:2
workers (1) 88:17
working (7) 37:7 40:5,24 56:5
 57:11 96:17 127:3
works (2) 63:21 71:19
world (2) 93:8 102:11
worse (1) 24:20
worst (1) 14:23
worth (1) 119:14
wouldn't (6) 21:20 34:24 59:2 84:4
 96:20 99:9
wow (1) 20:10
write (2) 73:7 129:14
writing (1) 115:6
written (2) 8:19,21
wrong (9) 21:22 46:2 51:24,25
 64:24 92:25 106:16 114:8 115:9
wrote (1) 46:12

X

X (5) 1:3,6 121:4,5 122:19

Y

yard (1) 76:4
yeah (6) 60:21 76:22 84:21 87:3
 110:22 111:9
year (26) 11:19,23 20:20 21:12
 22:14,17 23:13 28:21 37:2 44:9
 45:23 51:20 62:16 63:13,18
 64:24 68:4 72:11 76:15,16 78:24
 105:18 109:13 110:20 115:16
 119:25
yearly (1) 36:16
years (45) 13:11 21:13 23:16 29:24
 30:18 35:24 38:15 39:8 40:3 44:3
 44:5 48:5 55:12,17 56:7,21 57:15
 64:4 70:24 74:18 75:22 78:3
 79:21 80:13,14 81:25 82:24
 87:15,21 90:19,25 92:7 93:5
 95:19 96:18 101:15 105:23 111:6
 111:11 112:12 116:15 118:7
 120:9 127:3 129:3
years' (1) 119:14
York (63) 1:2,5,10 4:8,13,14,24 5:4
 5:16,22 7:6 11:10,15 13:17 20:18
 21:2,4 23:13 24:4,5,15 27:24
 28:7 30:3 41:14,21 43:3,17 44:12

44:17 45:5 48:11,15 49:18 54:25
 55:16,17 58:11 62:20,24 64:10
 68:20 74:7,20 75:13,23 76:25
 78:2,18 83:5 112:11,15 115:14
 116:25 120:8,10 125:9,20,24
 126:5 128:18 132:3,7
young (2) 56:25 84:18
younger (1) 103:25

Z

Zero (1) 124:11

0

09 (1) 35:3

1

1 (5) 11:8,14 27:15 34:18 64:3
1,000 (6) 11:8,14,16 112:22 119:19
 130:8
1.51 (1) 64:24
10 (9) 20:14 22:13 23:2 26:7 27:16
 28:11,13 65:13 82:5
100 (7) 13:11 20:16,20 26:5 58:22
 89:9 123:10
100-year (1) 16:13
11 (3) 25:14 112:16 116:14
110 (1) 65:8
1100 (1) 60:6
112866 (1) 112:16
11793 (1) 1:10
12 (6) 11:19 33:8 66:15 118:7
 123:2,3
12,000 (1) 70:18
120 (1) 22:14
13 (1) 130:24
13,900 (3) 73:24 75:18 77:19
13th (1) 43:10
14 (1) 127:3
14,900 (1) 11:12
14th (1) 48:12
15 (2) 16:11 82:24
150 (2) 62:16 78:23
16 (3) 123:2,3,8
16-W-0259 (2) 1:3 4:6
1600 (1) 121:14
17 (1) 74:18
176 (1) 89:7
18 (2) 39:8 44:3
18-year-resident (1) 124:23
1954 (1) 127:24
1956 (2) 103:25 105:16
1969 (1) 50:4
19th (1) 2:9

2

2 (1) 84:13
2,000 (2) 89:13 114:21

Public Service Commission -16-W-0259 - Wantagh
October 26, 2016

20 (14) 20:13 24:12 26:5,9 52:4
65:5 69:4 72:20 84:10 90:19,25
92:7 93:5 96:18

2001 (1) 124:10

2003 (1) 119:17

2008 (1) 119:10

2009 (3) 31:2 112:18 119:16

2010 (1) 115:7

2011 (4) 65:2 112:17 117:18
119:10

2012 (2) 65:3 75:3

2013 (2) 65:3,6

2014 (1) 65:6

2015 (1) 65:3

2016 (6) 1:6 4:12 5:17 16:15
117:19 132:16

2017 (1) 5:18

21,000 (2) 113:9 119:22

2116 (1) 16:16

230 (1) 119:23

231 (1) 74:3

24 (1) 44:5

25 (1) 64:4

26 (1) 1:6

263 (1) 17:10

26th (1) 19:19

275 (1) 20:7

28 (3) 38:5,21,24

284 (1) 89:8

285 (3) 42:4,7,20

29 (1) 5:17

2nd (1) 132:16

3

3 (3) 45:23 109:12 110:20

3,000 (2) 94:25 95:6

30 (6) 17:9 21:12 61:24 65:2,18
72:20

30-year-old (1) 98:6

32 (2) 13:14 40:3

325 (1) 104:19

3297 (1) 1:9

33 (1) 129:3

35 (4) 42:18 79:21 80:14 81:25

3500 (1) 116:8

37 (2) 111:6,11

385 (3) 104:20 106:19,23

39 (1) 101:14

4

4,900 (1) 74:8

4.5 (2) 31:23 32:8

40 (5) 48:5 55:12 65:4,7 123:6

400 (1) 20:8

49 (2) 56:21 57:15

4th (1) 9:16

5

5 (3) 11:12,16 108:12

5.41 (2) 92:22 93:2

5.5 (1) 61:2

50 (2) 23:16 119:20

500 (2) 75:24 76:2

528,000 (1) 44:10

550 (1) 60:20

5500 (1) 119:11

6

6 (1) 4:12

60 (5) 12:3 22:18 51:19 58:22
105:23

600 (4) 22:17 44:13 68:4 79:4

6285 (1) 70:19

65 (3) 52:4,10 70:20

7

7.5 (1) 23:19

7:00 (1) 1:7

700 (2) 130:6,6

75 (4) 28:14,17 106:18,23

750 (2) 28:9,12

8

8 (2) 44:20,22

8,000 (1) 88:22

8,400 (2) 89:5,10

8.45 (1) 32:7

80 (3) 21:25 29:4 33:9

800 (2) 28:10 44:23

810 (3) 107:14,14,15

9

9 (1) 62:12

9,000 (2) 11:7 74:6

9:17 (1) 131:9

90 (1) 22:15

900 (2) 11:22 22:15

95 (1) 11:5