

Philadelphia Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Rate Board
March 13, 2024 Monthly Meeting Notes
3/13/2024, by Zoom (Online and Telephone) Only
Open for public participation via Zoom

Board Members Present

Irwin “Sonny” Popowsky, Chair
Abby Pozefsky, Secretary
Debra McCarty
Mac Williams
Tony Ewing

Others Present

Robert Ballenger
Kevin Birriel
Marcy Chestnut
Andre Dasent
Adriana Gonzalez
Daniel Gordon
Carl Shultz
Deland L. Bryant

Mr. Popowsky called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

1. Mr. Popowsky introduced Daniel Gordon, who will be assisting Daniel Cantú-Hertzler with legal matters concerning the Philadelphia Water, Sewer, and Storm Water Rate Board.
2. Mr. Popowsky introduced the draft minutes from the January 10, 2024 meeting of the Water Rate Board. There were no corrections or additions to the January 10, 2024 minutes. Mr. Williams moved to approve the minutes. Ms. McCarty seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Mr. Popowsky introduced the next matter: Mr. Popowsky asked if someone from the Water Department could give a short summary of the TAP- Rate Advance Notice which has been filed with the Water Rate Board. Mr. Shultz, on behalf of the Water Department, stated that he anticipated that the Department would file its Final Notice on April 1, 2024, due to the upcoming holidays and observances. The Department is working to accommodate everyone’s schedule going forward as much as possible.
4. With respect to the substantial increase in TAP-participation reflected in the Advance Notice filing, Mr. Shultz stated that this was largely due to the City’s IDEA (Office of Integrated Data for Evidence and Action) database that has been shared with the Water Department as a means of identifying customers who qualify for the TAP-Rate Program. That process is moving at a rapid pace. If participation continues at the current rate, all qualifying customers from the IDEA database should be enrolled in approximately 4-6 weeks.
5. Mr. Popowsky stated that Hearing Officer Ms. Chestnut and the participants will develop a schedule. Mr. Dasent noted that Ade Bakare (counsel for the Philadelphia Large Users Group (PLUG)) reached out to him via email sharing his interest in possibly participating in the proceedings. Ms. Chestnut commented that if PLUG wants to participate, they need to contact her directly.

6. Mr. Ballenger reported that he is in the process of assembling discovery requests. Ms. Chestnut urged the Water Department and the Public Advocate to work together on discovery and other procedural matters, noting that although this filing is over a month late compared to last year, the goal is to complete the process by the same date in June. Mr. Popowsky stated the proposed rates would go into effect on September 1, 2024, which would give the Water Department ample time to put the rates into effect after an Order is issued.

7. Mr. Popowsky opened the meeting to Board members' comments regarding the Rate Proceedings. Ms. McCarty inquired as to how many participants were in the TAP-R Program prior to the IDEA initiative and what the anticipated number of participants in the new filing will be. Mr. Dasent responded that the number of participants had been in the low twenty thousands and is now expected to rise to about fifty-five thousand, which is comparable to the number of customers enrolled in the Philadelphia Gas Works low-income support program.

8. Mr. Popowsky opened the meeting to members of the public for comments. There were no comments from the public.

9. Mr. Popowsky asked if there were any other matters to be brought before the Board. There were none.

10. Ms. Pozefsky moved to adjourn, and Mr. Ewing seconded the motion. The Motion was approved 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.