



**MINUTES OF THE  
THREE HUNDRED AND FIRST MEETING  
OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL GOVERNING BOARD  
January 21, 2014**

Members Present: Gene Krebs, Chairman  
Jason Clark  
Sally Hughes  
Susheela Suguness  
Roland Taylor  
Mike Watkins  
Fred Yoder  
Stuart Young

Members Absent: Frederick Cooke

Guests: Jeff Clark, Attorney General's Office  
Andrew Gutteridge, Rave Mobile Safety

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Krebs called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Mrs. Knight called the roll.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Clark moved to approve the November 19, 2013 meeting minutes. Mr. Young seconded the motion. Mrs. Knight called the roll. The minutes are approved.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Mr. Taylor nominated Mr. Krebs for Chair of the Governing Board. Ms. Hughes seconded the nomination. Mrs. Knight called the roll. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hughes nominated Ms. Suguness as Vice Chair of the Governing Board. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. Mrs. Knight called the roll. The motion passed unanimously.

Today's lunch will take place at the statehouse.

Consumers' Counsel Weston welcomed the members and congratulated Chair Krebs and Vice Chair Suguness on their election by the Board.

**EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER**

Greg Slone is the employee of the quarter for July-September 2013. Mr. Weston complimented Mr. Slone's service to consumers as a member of OCC's Analytical Department.

**NEW EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTION**

Deputy Consumers' Counsel Yost introduced Natalia Messenger, Legal Intern.

Mr. Weston informed the Board that Kathy Hagans has resigned her position. Ms. Hagans has 30 years of state service. Mr. Weston remarked about Ms. Hagans' accomplishments at OCC and thanked her for dedicated service.

Mr. Young asked how many 30-year employees has the office had. Mr. Weston responded we have a few people in the vicinity of 30 years. Mr. Weston remarked that it is very important to have experienced people. It has become challenging to find knowledgeable expert personnel in this field.

Chairman Krebs sits on the nominating council for appointments to the PUCO. He remarked to the Board that there is a shortage of people who understand the issues.

**RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC FARM SERVICE**

Mr. Young reported that at the Board's July meeting the Board was approached by farmers regarding their electric rates. Since that meeting, the Ohio Farm Bureau is now involved. It was decided that OCC is not taking the lead on this issue. We reviewed the Farm Bureau state policy on electric service rates, and the policy was voted on by the Farm Bureau delegates. The policy has been thoroughly discussed and debated, and was accepted by a unanimous vote at the Farm Bureau annual meeting. The Farm Bureau has the policy in place, and OCC will offer support. Mr. Young emphasized that the Farm Bureau policy does not argue with the utilities' rate; the policy asks for utilities to educate farmers when assisting them with questions.

Mr. Watkins arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Chairman Krebs commended Messrs. Young and Yoder for their work on this issue involving farmers. He then designated Messrs. Yoder, Young and Cooke as Board spokes people to the media on this issue. Mr. Yoder indicated that he has been approached by farmers who are happy that OCC is involved with this issue.

Chairman Krebs thanked Ms. Yost for her expert work on interpreting the language.

Staff was encouraged to take all measured means to ensure that the policy succeeds.

Mr. Weston thanked members for their help.

**SMART911**

Ms. Yost introduced Andrew Gutteridge, Rave Mobile Safety. Mr. Gutteridge presented to the Board on Smart911 which is a service provided by Rave Mobile Safety. Smart911 provides additional information that is not available to 911 operators.

Smart911 fills in the gaps for consumers, such as for those who may be deaf or hard of hearing, non-English speaking and etc. Important information is provided to the emergency service in advance. Information is stored securely; it is not a searchable database and users can opt-in and later opt-out at their choosing. Information is updated every 6 months. Over 70% of calls to 911 come from mobile telephone numbers. Smart911 can provide an address associated with the mobile phone, which assists first responders. Smart911 was introduced in Grove City in late 2013, as the first location in Ohio.

Mr. Weston asked what the 911 operator sees on their screen. If the call is placed on a land-line phone, operators see the address of caller made on a landline. Calls made from a mobile line are indicated by a dot on a map. Smart911 would allow the 911 operator to have important information that a user can provide in his or her safety profile, such as one's home and work address and any medications.

Anyone can register free of charge, on the Smart911 website. Should a registered user have an emergency in an area that has Smart911, the user's profile will be available to those first responders.

Mr. Weston asked how this program is funded. This program is paid for by municipalities in the form of a 911 surcharge tax on landline and cell phones.

Mr. Taylor asked for additional packets to take back to his local commissioners.

Mr. Watkins stated that he will take the information to the State FOP meeting. He believes that his members will benefit from this service.

Mobile phones with GPS can provide an enhanced location. This service will work with any cell phone and cell phone provider. Rave Mobile Safety holds a patent on this service and has no competition.

Chairman Krebs asked what if any action should be taken. Board members said they will take this information to their respective organizations. The consensus is that this is a worthwhile service that will be of benefit.

Ms. Yost introduced Ms. Ramos-Fields, co-founder of Living Beyond Autism. She addressed the Board on Smart911. Smart911 has enabled dispatchers to help citizens with special needs.

The Board recessed at 10:27 a.m.

The Board reconvened at 10:40 a.m.

Chairman Krebs asked Mr. Young and Mr. Yoder to provide Marty Berkowitz with the name of the various farm magazines.

Mr. Watkins said that the best way to ensure that Ohioans know what OCC has to offer would be to attend the county fair in all 88 counties to provide educational information.

Chairman Krebs asked that the Staff give Mr. Watkins' idea consideration.

### **AEP STORM COST CASE**

Mr. Etter reported on the AEP storm cost case. At issue here is AEP's application to collect from customers \$61 million in storm-related expenses for the three storms in 2012.

Even though this is an AEP storm case it affects other electric utilities as well. We are looking at the reasonable and prudent costs that AEP would be allowed to collect. That standard would affect other utilities.

There was a considerable amount of inconvenience to customers who were without power for as much as three weeks. Customers were left without air conditioning and lost food due to spoilage.

An interesting aspect of this case is an issue related to \$20 million that the PUCO expected AEP to invest in the Turning Point solar project. This was part of AEP's long-term forecast case in 2010. Since AEP did not spend the \$20 million to benefit customers in that case, the PUCO suggested as one alternative that the \$20 million be used to benefit AEP's customers as an offset to the cost of the storm damage.

OCC has proposed that the amount Ohio Power is proposing to collect from customers through the storm rider be reduced by \$20 million.

The hearing on the AEP storm case begins tomorrow. OCC recommends that the PUCO disallow \$17 million of AEP's costs as not reasonable or prudent, thus reducing AEP's request to \$44 million. OCC's proposal is to take the additional \$20 million off that amount and reduce AEP's request to \$24 million for customers to pay.

### **CONSUMER-FRIENDLY BILL FORMAT**

Mr. Williams presented to the Board on the format for utility bills that customers receive.

OCC's mission is to educate customers and give them the information needed to make informed choices.

OCC is advocating for at-a-glance understandability, full disclosure, accuracy (customers should have the ability to recalculate bills), and informed customer choice.

The price to compare is important and should be clearly displayed on customers' bills. It is a critical piece of information necessary to make an informed choice when considering a switch to an alternative supplier.

On our mock-up version of the utility bill, the account number is clearly displayed with supply and delivery charges separated.

Chairman Krebs asked the will of the Board. Should this issue be brought to the General Assembly?

Each industry has requirements that bills be clear and understandable. Through rules cases we advocate for improvements to customer bills. OCC presented this new bill format to the PUCO in December.

OCC staff should continue to work with the PUCO on this issue and report to the Board on the progress.

### **REPORT OF THE CONSUMERS' COUNSEL**

#### **Senate Bill 58/House Bill 302**

Mr. Weston thanked the Board members for their work and guidance on issues.

This legislation would selectively revisit SB 221. The vote on SB 58 has not occurred. We have a proposal with the Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) and others that would amend the current bill and remove from the bill the increases in the cost of energy efficiency.

Chairman Krebs emphasized that OCC continue dialog with Sen. Seitz.

#### **Manufactured Gas Pollution Clean-up Charges Update**

The Board discussed this issue in June 2013. OCC filed a Motion to Stay asking the PUCO to prevent Duke from collecting these costs from consumers while this issue is being considered. Kroger, OMA, and Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy signed with us on this motion.

OCC applied for rehearing in the Duke case. The PUCO denied OCC's rehearing request, by a 3-2 decision in this case.

#### **PUCO Investigation of Ohio's Retail Electric Service Market – Staff Report Highlights**

One of the most important issues is in regard to the standard offer. One year ago, the Board signed a resolution supporting the retention of the standard offer as an option for consumers.

Last week the PUCO Staff recommended that the standard offer remain as the default service.

#### **Vectren Auction**

Vectren is a major gas utility that serves the Dayton area. Vectren recently held an auction for setting its standard offer price. The result of the auction was good for customers.

**Ohio Electric Rates**

According to federal data, 33 states have residential electricity prices that on average are lower than electricity prices for consumers in Ohio.

Chairman Krebs suggested a future presentation on price breakdown by utility company.

For the March meeting, Chairman Krebs asked that Mrs. Knight email the evaluation form to the Board for the next meeting.

Mr. Slone reported prices as of July 2013. Washington State has an electric rate of 8.6 cents/kwh. The highest rates are Hawaii 37.1 cents/kwh and New York at 18.78 cents/kwh. Ohio's rate is 11.86 cents/kwh.

Within the state, AEP has the highest rate at \$117.00. Duke has the lowest rate at \$93.00.

Battelle has offered to have the Board tour Battelle. Ms. Yost will confirm the Battelle Tour for May. Ms. Yost asked for guidance from the Board on what they are interested in seeing. Additionally, Ms. Yost will inquire whether the Board meeting may be held at Battelle's facility.

Battery storage of electricity would greater enable renewable energy. This can be a future presentation per the OCC staff's convenience.


Chairman Krebs wants the OCC staff to prepare a presentation on the future of the electric distribution system.

Chairman Krebs suggested the Board tour a fracking site in September. He asked that we look into the cost of a tour bus. Mr. Taylor will look into that tour.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

I verify that the above meeting minutes have been approved and ratified by the OCC Governing Board on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2014.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gene Krebs, Chairman  
Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Laurie C. Knight, Secretary  
Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board