



**MINUTES OF THE  
TWO HUNDRED NINETY EIGHTH MEETING  
OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL GOVERNING BOARD  
July 16, 2013**

Members Present: Gene Krebs, Chairman  
Jason Clark  
Sally Hughes  
Joe Logan, Vice Chairman  
Susheela Suguness  
Mike Watkins  
Stuart Young

Members Absent: Tony Jones  
Fred Yoder

Guests: Jeff Clark, Attorney General's Office  
Stuart Johnson, Connect Ohio  
John Schlichter, Department of Agriculture  
Gene Henning, Henning Farms  
Bill Lybrook, Lybrook Farms  
Floyd Geeding, Geeding Family LLC

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Krebs called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Mrs. Knight called the roll.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Mr. Watkins moved to approve the June 4, 2013 meeting minutes. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. Mrs. Knight called the roll. The motion passed unanimously.

**EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTHS**

The employee of the months for March and April 2013 was introduced. Mr. Weston described John Schroeder's service to consumers as a member of OCC's Operations Department in IT.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. Weston showed the Board part of a documentary film, made in 1940, that portrayed life on an Ohio dairy farm before electricity and showed how electricity was needed for the benefit of rural residents.

Local farmers, Floyd Geeding, Gene Henning and Bill Lybrook, were present at the Board meeting (which was held at the dairy farm of Board member Stuart Young). Chairman Krebs invited the farmers to address the Board. The farmers discussed concerns regarding being switched by their electric utility from residential service to a commercial service that resulted in higher electric bills.

Discussion ensued.

Chairman Krebs suggested that OCC staff prepare a resolution on the issue of farmers being changed from residential service to non-residential service with demand meters for the Board's consideration at the September board meeting.

**John Schlichter, Deputy Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture**

Mr. Weston introduced Mr. Schlichter, who is a Deputy Director of the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Mr. Schlichter spoke to the Board regarding the role of the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Discussion ensued.

The Board was in recess from 10:15 a.m. to 10:36 a.m.

**Dale Arnold, Director, Energy, Utility and Local Government Policy with the Ohio Farm Bureau**

Mr. Weston introduced Dale Arnold of the Ohio Farm Bureau. Mr. Arnold represents farm, small business and residential energy consumers. He stated that he has worked with Jim Williams on utility advisory boards; with Wilson Gonzalez focusing on demand side management/energy efficiency; and with Ray Foeller and the Low Income Dialog Group. Mr. Arnold spoke to the Board by conference call on the issues of energy markets, current energy utility trends and the impacts on farmers.

In the past, utilities offered a farm rate and tariff along with a representative from the utility to work with farmers on infrastructure.

Mr. Arnold indicated that the Ohio Farm Bureau will discuss the issue of demand meters at its August meeting.

**Connect Ohio – Stu Johnson, Executive Director**

Mr. Weston introduced Stu Johnson with Connect Ohio. As executive director of Connect Ohio, Mr. Johnson directs the community-by-community broadband planning and implementation process by supporting local and regional task forces and assists and provides consultation to the teams in implementing specific strategies and actions for reaching local goals.

Connect Ohio is a subcontractor for the State of Ohio with regard to the State Broadband Initiative.

Mr. Johnson discussed the Broadband Service Inventory map for the State of Ohio, and discussed issues related to availability of broadband internet service in rural Ohio. The map indicates that 97.62% of Ohio households have broadband available with at least 3M download and 768K upload capability. However, Mr. Johnson indicated that the coverage is not ubiquitous and is provided without regard to subjective reliability, diversity, affordability or quality of service.

#### **Ethics Training**

Ms. Yost informed the Board that the annual ethics training requirement may be met by attending a webinar presented by the Ohio Ethics Commission. Training schedules were distributed to the Board.

#### **Electric Utility Definitions for Residential Service**

Ms. Yost provided a presentation on electric companies' definitions of residential service.

At 12:10 p.m. the Board toured Young's Jersey Dairy and the meeting continued during lunch.

#### **CONSUMERS' COUNSEL'S REPORT**

Mr. Weston reported as follows. Governor Kasich signed the state's \$62 billion, two-year budget on June 30, 2013. OCC's budget remained unchanged at \$5.6 million, which was the level OCC requested.

Governor Kasich issued a veto favorable to residential utility consumers, regarding an amendment contained in the budget bill (Sub. H.B. 59) that would have weakened certain statutory standards that protect natural gas utility customers. In this situation, the standards protect customers from paying for costs of certain environmental remediations related to former manufactured gas plants that are not used to provide current utility service. Another version of the bill is expected to be submitted to the legislature later this year.


Duke's pending natural gas rate case contains a proposal (opposed by OCC) to make customers pay for remediation costs related to Duke's former manufactured gas plants. In this case, the PUCO has exceeded the 275-day timeline in the law for issuing an order. That the PUCO has not yet issued an order is of concern since the natural gas utilities are trying to weaken the law that, in the case, protects customers against paying for costs not used for current utility service (such as the remediation costs).

OCC has recommended the hiring of independent financial advisors for securitization cases, such as in FirstEnergy's case, to assist the PUCO and the Utilities in achieving measurably enhanced savings for customers.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

I verify that the above meeting minutes have been approved and ratified by the OCC Governing Board on this 17th day of September, 2013.

  
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Gene Krebs, Chairman  
Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board

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