CASE No. 88, 627

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

IN RE: Resolution of petition(s) to establish nondiscriminatory rates, terms, and conditions for resale involving local exchange companies and alternative local exchange companies pursuant to Section 364.161, F.S.

DOCKET NO. 950984-TP

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AGENDA CONFERENCE

11

March 5, 1996

4075 Esplanade Way, Room 148 Tallahassee, Florida

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3-13-96

DOCUMENT NUMBER-DATE

03063 MAR 138

FPSC-FECOPDS/REPORTING

BEFORE:

PROCEEDING:

ITEM NUMBER:

DATE:

PLACE:

REPORTED BY:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS Issue 1: What elements should be made available by BellSouth to MCImetro and MFS on an unbundled basis (e.g. link elements, port elements, loop concentration, loop transport)? Issue 2: What are the appropriate technical arrangements for the provision of such unbundled elements? Issue 3: What are the appropriate financial arrangements for each such unbundled element? <u>Issue 4:</u> What arrangements, if any, are necessary to address other operational issues? Issue 5: Should this docket be closed?

1 PROCEEDINGS 2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Item 11. COMMISSION STAFF: Commissioners, Item Number 11 3 4 is the resolution of MFS Florida and MCImetro's 5 petition to establish nondiscriminatory rates, terms, and conditions for the unbundling and resale of 6 7 BellSouth's network. Would you prefer to have a general discussion or proceed issue-by-issue? 8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Commissioners. 9 10 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: Could I just express a 11 question. This was the hearing that I left in the 12 middle of, and I have read the transcript, but on the 13 agenda page it lists only -- I'm trying to figure out, 14 it lists that I was not present for the hearing, which 15 is in part correct, but it lists the full Commission 16 and I just wanted to be sure that --17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You were here for part of the 18 hearing. 19 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: I was here for the 20 interconnection part, the resale part only took part of 21 a day, and it was the day that I was not here, but I 22 have read the transcript. 23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: It's my view that it's assigned 24 to the -- the assignment was not changed. 25 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: Okay. I just wanted to be

clear that I was supposed to vote on this one. Thank
 you.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Questions, Commissioners? Do you 4 want to go issue-by-issue? We will go issue-by-issue. 5 Issue Number 1, are there any questions? Is there a 6 motion?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Move it.

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8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Without objection, Issue Number 1 9 is approved. Issue Number 2. I had a question with 10 regard to whether or not this is affected by the 11 federal law.

MS. CANZANO: Our position is it's premature for us to interpret the federal law because the FCC has not done so. We believe -- it is staff's opinion that what we have done is consistent with the federal law, although this hearing was prior to the issuance of the federal act.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Let me be very 19 specific. Your recommendation is that they adhere to 20 industry standards, and then MFS talks about achieved 21 through collocation arrangements. And would it be 22 whatever the industry standards are as they may be 23 affected by the federal law will be the standard? And 24 I'm getting to the issue of virtual versus physical 25 collocation. Doesn't the law -- what does the law

require now?

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MS. CANZANO: Right now the federal law states it will be physical unless under two conditions then it will be virtual. But currently the FCC's orders on virtual collocation and our orders are consistent. And until we do something different or they do something different, I assume the industry will comply.

CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay.

9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: But would you also suggest 10 that if they were to do something different and we were 11 to do something different, then that would be a 12 different industry standard. And by this order it's 13 saying whatever the industry standard is that is what 14 you have to apply, that's what we must apply, or is it 15 somehow grandfathered?

16 COMMISSION STAFF: What I was envisioning here --17 to answer your question, it would be my recommendation 18 to comply with the FCC's recommendation would probably 19 go physical and thus we would have to modify our 20 tariffs, our collocation tariffs.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Because we originally required
22 physical collocation.

23 COMMISSION STAFF: Yes, ma'am, we did.

24 MS. CANZANO: And we were also essentially
25 mirroring what the FCC had done.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay.

2 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Are we on Issue 2?

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER DEASON: I move staff.

5 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Without objection, Issue 2 is 7 approved. Issue 3.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Are they going to walk 9 through the issues or are we just going to ask 10 questions?

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: They can. Would you like for
12 them to walk through this issue?

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Uh-huh.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Why don't you walk through Issue
15 Number 3 for us.

COMMISSION STAFF: Issue Number 3 asked what the 16 appropriate financial arrangements for each unbundled 17 element identified in Issue 1 were. And of the ten or 18 so elements identified in Issue 1, cost studies were 19 filed for only two of them, and the cost studies were 20 filed just a few days before the hearing, so no real 21 analysis of those cost studies could be done. 22 Therefore, staff is only recommending interim rates for 23 those two elements and asking that the cost studies for 24 those two elements be refiled along with cost studies 25

1 for all the elements that no cost studies were filed on
2 so that they can be analyzed in detail to find out
3 exactly what components are in there, what are not, the
4 parties can cross examine the cost studies to find out
5 the veracity of it.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: In the staff analysis, the 6 second paragraph, one of the issues was whether 7 unbundled rate elements should be set at long-run 8 incremental cost or whether contribution to common 9 costs should be allowed. I think you addressed that 10 somewhere in here. And is it the policy or is it 11 staff's opinion that we should not look at the common 12 costs and just look at the long-run incremental costs? 13

COMMISSION STAFF: Well, it is staff's position 14 that some contribution towards joint and common costs 15 is appropriate, the level of such contribution has not 16 That for cost purposes, been determined at this time. 17 long-run incremental costs should be the basis by which 18 you find out how much the element costs. The rate set 19 to the end user or the rate set to the ALEC buying it 20 wholesale should include some contribution, but the 21 level of contribution, we have not determined what an 22 appropriate legal of contribution is. The interim 23 rates recommended by staff for the two elements that 24 have cost studies provide little contribution. 25

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: A little or little.

2 COMMISSION STAFF: Little. Like less than 10 3 percent.

Okay. And I was just --COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: 4 there was some strong language in here about agreeing 5 with the ALEC. On Page 24, "Staff is further compelled 6 by the Commission's obligation to promote competition 7 and sides more with the ALECs on this point. Although 8 it is true that BellSouth must recover its shared and 9 common costs somewhere, staff is not sure what level of 10 contribution is necessary at this time." And I just 11 wanted for the record to be clear that you weren't 12 saving no contribution, but that the level of 13 contribution would be at issue. 14

15 COMMISSION STAFF: Right.

16 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And with respect to siding 17 with the ALEC at this point, what does that mean, just 18 directionally less contribution?

19 COMMISSION STAFF: That means closer to long-run
 20 incremental cost. I guess to agree with them totally
 21 it would be priced at long run incremental costs.

22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That's right, and that's23 where I was getting confused there.

24 COMMISSION STAFF: And we don't necessarily agree
25 that you go that far, but the price near that is

probably appropriate. 1

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COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. 2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Any other questions. 3 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Yes, I have a question? You 4 classified this rate as interim. What do you mean by 5 that? б COMMISSION STAFF: Well, because --7 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Commissioner Deason, could 8 you repeat the question, I didn't hear it. 9 COMMISSIONER DEASON: I said the staff is 10 classifying this rate as interim, and I was seeking 11 clarification as to what they mean by interim. 12 COMMISSION STAFF: Because the cost studies that 13 those rate recommendations were based on were not 14 scrutinized and were not cross examined by the parties 15 because they came in so late, there really hasn't been 16 an opportunity to find out whether those costs --17 whether the final costs for those elements will be the 18 same as in the cost study file. As they are refiled 19 with the other elements, those costs --20 COMMISSIONER DEASON: And this is 60 days from the 21 date of the order? 22 Correct. If those costs come COMMISSION STAFF: 23 down through cross examination, or discovery, or 24 whatever, then the price may come down, as well. So, I

do not want to make a recommendation that this price should be set in stone when no one has even agreed whether the supporting cost study is appropriate or not.

5 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Well, does staff believe 6 that an \$18 rate plus a \$2 rate is going to promote 7 competition?

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COMMISSION STAFF: For residential telephone service, I would venture a guess, no. For business telephone service, possibly. But then, again maybe no.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: So definitely not for 11 residential, perhaps for business. We have testimony 12 13 that the initial phase of the competition is probably going to be in the business market as opposed to 14 residential. So obviously we want to encourage 15 competition in all markets. I'm just concerned about 16 the rate level, too, and I'm also concerned about the 17 fact that cost studies have not been able to be 18 scrutinized to the extent that we would like due to the 19 20 timing. I guess I'm torn in the fact that I know that 21 60 days from the date of the order apparently we are 22 going to require information and we will be 23 scrutinizing it. My concern is what we do in the 24 interim period. And it seems to me that by statute we may be obligated to have rates of this general 25

magnitude, but I'm not so sure these rates, at least 1 for the residential markets, are not going to be 2 encouraging competition, which is a goal of the 3 legislation, which puts us in a difficult position. 4 The requirement in the statute that the rates not be 5 below cost, who has the burden to prove what their 6 costs are? Is that burden on the Commission, or is 7 that upon the LEC? 8

MS. CANZANO: That's a very good question. In 9 this case, the Commission really acts as an arbitrator, 10 The LECs would put on unlike other cases perhaps. 11 their case and say that, you know, my cost is X, and 12 then it's a shifting burden. But ultimately if no 13 information was brought out we still would have to make 14 a decision based on the statute that the rate is not 15 below cost. I don't know if that helps direct you any. 16

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Well, I guess my concern is 17 that trying to make a reasoned decision based upon the 18 best information we have, it looks to me like that this 19 is probably what we have to do. But I'm not 20 comfortable that this decision is going to accomplish 21 22 -- it just doesn't appear to me that this is going to promote competition even if it is just for an interim 23 period of time, and that's what is troubling to me. 24 COMMISSION STAFF: And I think we are troubled in 25

1 exactly the same way.

COMMISSION JOHNSON: Let me make sure I understood 2 that legal analysis with respect to the question of who 3 has the burden of determining whether or not numbers 4 are below cost. Is it Legal's position that we have to 5 take whatever information they give us and then -- then 6 Is that just the number that we must use, or if what? 7 the record isn't complete, what do we do in that 8 instance? 9

10 MS. CANZANO: I think that's what prompted this 11 recommendation. The statute says we must decide 12 something, but, you know, I can't imagine that there 13 would be a court that says you must decide something 14 even if you don't have an adequate record. So I think 15 that's what prompted us to take an interim approach.

And two other things I guess I COMMISSION STAFF: 16 The company has stated that they wanted to mention. 17 probably will not be, you know, actively seeking 18 customers in a large sense until the fourth quarter of 19 this year, so I don't think it is something that 20 perhaps if an interim rate is set that any of them will 21 even buy. Second, that the latitude in setting the \$18 22 rate, the cost figures were -- there were several cost 23 figures cited. The cost study figure was near \$18. 24 There were other cost studies that were brought out by 25

other parties that had the loop cost as low as around 1 15.90 or something. So really the only sort of 2 latitude in that rate was \$16 to \$18, and we didn't 3 figure we had much latitude there. I believe the 4 Commission could set it as low as \$16 in the interim 5 without it being -- at least not disputed to be below 6 their cost, because there were cost studies that were 7 as low as 15.90 something. 8

9 COMMISSIONER DEASON: And this would be to set the
10 loop cost at 16. There is evidence that would support
11 that finding, as well, is that --

12 COMMISSION STAFF: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: What about the port14 charges?

15 COMMISSION STAFF: \$2 is the lowest I think it 16 could go.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Given the fact that there 18 is evidence in the record to support a lower loop 19 charge, or rate, or whatever you want to call it, why 20 did staff go with the higher number?

21 COMMISSION STAFF: I think partly because the 22 BellSouth cost study was not -- the BellSouth cost 23 study presented as the loop cost in this case was 24 closer to \$18. There were BellSouth cost studies and 25 cost numbers that were proposed by other parties that were extracted from other dockets that went as low as
 15.90 something. So it's more of a conservative kind
 of recommendation as an interim to base it on
 BellSouth's cost study and perhaps provide a little bit
 of contribution in the interim.

6 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Are those other cost 7 studies, even though they may not have been designed 8 specifically for this docket, were they entered into 9 the record as evidence?

10 COMMISSION STAFF: They were. The cost numbers, 11 the supporting documentation may not have been, but the 12 cost numbers as proposed by BellSouth in the various 13 other dockets were presented in the record.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: Commissioners, I think that 14 the -- I tend to agree with staff. The reality of it 15 is that for the interim period it's probably not going 16 to have that big of an impact. But then on the other 17 hand, I don't want to be sending the wrong signals at 18 this early stage either which may have some longer term 19 effect. Obviously we are trying to struggle with a 20 statute and the goals of that statute and then overlaid 21 on this at some point is going to be the federal 22 23 statute, and I don't know exactly when we are going to 24 reach that point. Because as we heard yesterday in 25 Internal Affairs, there are positions that cost is

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irrelevant when you start determining these rates.

Since it perhaps is not going to really make that 2 3 much difference anyway, I would maybe prefer -- if our Legal staff thinks we can do it, I would prefer using 4 5 the \$16 number just because it gives a better signal as to that we are serious about trying to promote 6 7 competition whenever we can. But here again, realizing those were cost studies that were perhaps not entire 8 9 studies that were entered into the record but just 10 results, if the Legal staff is not comfortable basing a 11 finding on that type of evidence, I think that we are probably in a position where we have to go with the 12 13 best evidence that we have to the contrary, and that 14 would be the 18.

15 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I would suggest that staff 16 -- and I like the fact that staff was honest with it, 17 that the 18 figure I think they were just trying to be 18 conservative. This is a first salvo, and that's how I 19 see it. I don't think the difference is that great, 20 but I would tend to be conservative at this stage, 21 because we are so early in the process and there are 22 going to be changes later on. That's just my opinion. 23 So I would like to hear what staff -- Legal thinks, but 24 I'm going to go ahead and move staff on this. 25 COMMISSION JOHNSON: I would like to hear some

more discussion on the \$16 loop cost with respect to 1 whether or not that is something that Legal believes 2 that the record could support. I agree with the 3 analysis and statements made by Commissioner Deason, 4 and to the extent that we can send the right signals to 5 those that want to enter our market as to what we are 6 attempting to do, I think we should do that. But I 7 think we do have to be accurate with respect to having 8 some basis for our decision, and if there is indeed a 9 legal basis in the record for supporting the \$16 10 11 amount.

MS. CANZANO: On the fourth paragraph down on Page 25, it states two of the three cost numbers, and they come from Exhibits 11 and 12, and they are just cost figures. I want you to know that the cost studies of those figures were not entered into the record. COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: So tell me what that means. Does that mean we can or can't rely on it?

MS. CANZANO: I think you could rely on the costfigures.

21 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Well, I'm kind of torn on 22 it. I can see merits with just going with the 18 as a 23 conservative approach and then trying to also -- since 24 this is our very first stab at trying to set rates 25 trying to be conservative on the other end and that

would be pro-competitive, if that's the appropriate 1 term, it's a difficult situation. And I think it all 2 boils down to -- and this leads me to my earlier 3 question -- who has the burden to prove this? It's not 4 the burden on the Commission to prove what the costs 5 I think it's the burden on the LEC to demonstrate are. 6 what their costs are. And if we don't have what we 7 consider to be sufficient evidence, and we do have to 8 9 determine a rate, we are just going to have to use our best judgment and our best expertise, call on our 10 professional staff, realizing the goals of competition 11 12 and having that kind of filter into the mixture, as well, and come up with a rate. But just because 13 somebody files a cost study at the last minute and says 14 here is the rate, we are not obligated to stick to that 15 rate, I don't think. 16

MS. CANZANO: You're absolutely correct. You have
to weigh the evidence.

COMMISSIONER DEASON: I would like some feedback
 from some other Commissioners. I'm kind of in-between
 really.

22 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: Well, I lean more toward 23 going with the \$16 rate, because I think that that 24 sends the message that I want to send, and it provides 25 an impetus for the company to come up with some -- with

clear cost studies that we can analyze. And if at the 1 end of that 60 days, or if in 60 days they file them 2 and it shows that the \$16 is too low, then we will 3 raise it. But I want to give them an impetus to get 4 the cost studies done and in to us so that we can look 5 And I'm confused about procedurally where we at them. 6 are, because I thought you made a motion. Did you make 7 a motion on 16? 8

9 COMMISSIONER DEASON: No, I never did make a 10 motion.

COMMISSIONER GARCIA: I thought he was making a
 suggestion.

13 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: You did.

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14 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Yes, I made a motion for15 staff.

COMMISSIONER KIESLING: Okay.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: In hearing the dialogue 17 between the Commissioners, and I know Mark has stated 18 that they picked the 18 to be more conservative, I 19 think that we do, when we are in a situation like this 20 21 where we don't have complete information or we don't have the opportunity to analyze and critique the 22 23 information the way that we might, that we do have to 24 use our best professional judgment in order to come up with a decision and with a number. 25

Now, what I haven't really heard from staff is in your analyzing all of the numbers, whether it's the cost figures or whether it was the information provided by Bell, are you suggesting that you were just being conservative, or in your professional judgment the 18 is closer to what it will be than the 16?

COMMISSION STAFF: Just being conservative. 7 Just being conservative. 8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: COMMISSIONER GARCIA: To make me feel more 9 So I shouldn't even comfortable, if you don't mind. 10 feel safe with the staff recommendation on this? 11 Ι mean, I would assume as I read through this that I 12 thought, you know, I got a feeling of conservative. Ι 13 didn't get a feeling as I think you're giving 14 Commissioner Johnson, that this was a conservative 15 guess as opposed to your reasoned approach as a 16 professional looking at this. 17

COMMISSION STAFF: Since we got four or five 18 different costs for a local loop, I couldn't tell you 19 20 what a local loop costs right now. All I know is the lowest loop cost we got was \$15.53. We got another one 21 22 for \$15.97, and then I believe one in the 16s and one in the 17s. The one that BellSouth presented as a loop 23 24 cost study for this case based on their most recent 25 cost studies was \$17-and-something. So you had to

1 weigh the \$15.53, which was for a different service a couple of years ago, and then \$15.97, which was 2 provided, I believe, in the universal service docket in 3 August of last year, with the most recent number. And 4 since I don't know what any of them are, BellSouth 5 maintained that the most recent number of 6 \$17-and-something is based on their most recent cost 7 That the cost study they performed was a year 8 studies. 9 newer than the cost study they performed for the 10 \$15.97. Now I have questions about that. In a declining cost industry, why is your loop cost going up 11 instead of going down? I don't know the answer to 12 13 that, but I certainly have a question and aim to get an answer to that question at some point in the near 14 future. So, picking the \$18 was nothing more than to 15 me than a conservative action in the interim. If I 16 were going to be pro-competitive, making a statement 17 that competition is my ultimate goal, I would probably 18 19 have picked \$16.

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Does the statute require we cover 21 costs?

COMMISSION STAFF: Yes, it does.

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CHAIRMAN CLARK: So there is a balancing there
that needs to take place. Let me sort of inquire of
the staff. I view this as a matter of judgment in the

sense that you have competing information as to what 1 exactly the cost is. And I think we do have competing 2 information in the sense that we had a cost study filed 3 late in the proceeding which indicates a certain level, 4 vet we have other information that undermines the 5 validity of those costs. I agree that they were 6 earlier analysis of what it may have been, but I view 7 it as sort of to some extent impeaching the information 8 that was given in this proceeding. And I think there 9 10 is going to be -- it is a mistake, I think, to suggest that everybody is going to agree on what the cost 11 actually is, because it depends on what you think is 12 appropriate to allocate for that particular cost and 13 there will always be a debate with respect to the 14 particular items as to whether they should be 15 allocated, and if so, how much. So nobody is ever 16 going to agree on exactly what the cost is. 17

And I think it's not unlike a Gulf Power case 18 where we had some people saying you needed enough coal 19 inventory for a 90-day burn at full nameplate capacity, 20 and somebody else was saying, you know, you really only 21 22 need a month at half of what the capacity was, neither 23 one of which was acceptable. And it seems to me that I would have concerns about relying exclusively on a cost 24 figure that was developed in a different docket, but 25

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the figures themselves were presented as evidence.

By the same token, I think we have some concerns about relying on late information provided that we didn't have the opportunity to test fully and explore the basis for that information. And I don't think it's unreasonable to suggest the answer lies somewhere in between or it's fair and reasonable to set it somewhere in between. And that would be my suggestion.

9 I have concerns about setting it at 16, because 10 that's right at what they have suggested previously. I 11 have concerns, too. It's supposed to be a declining 12 cost industry. But if we are going to have something 13 in 60 days, that the extent to which this is damaging 14 one way or the other is somewhat mitigated.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: It's a difficult question 15 because you do have to do the balance. The statute 16 does require us to ensure that the costs or the 17 services are priced above costs, and we have a cost 18 study that says the cost is 18. I agree with the 19 Chairman that we also have rebuttal evidence. But, as 20 you said, the rebuttal evidence came from a different 21 case, and it might have been kind of pieced together by 22 different parties. And in my mind we do want to send 23 the right messages. We don't want the message to be we 24 want to make sure that Bell's services are being 25

offered below cost, but also we don't want the message 1 to be that this serves as a barrier of competition and 2 whatever information we get, that's the right stuff, 3 that's what we will go with. We want to have the 4 ability to analyze. And I like the approach that staff 5 took to say we do need more information, we do need to 6 work through this. And I'm somewhat comforted by the 7 fact that it's a tight time line, and most of the 8 parties indicate that they won't be ready to actually 9 engage in this market for several months. Your 10 suggestion that perhaps we find it somewhere in the 11 middle I think is a good suggestion, and for that 12 reason I would modify at least with respect to the loop 13 cost that we set it at \$17. That's between the 16 and 14 between the 18, and that's a starting point. That we 15 are serious about competition and we are also serious 16 about getting these numbers as accurate as we can for 17 the benefit of all parties. 18

19CHAIRMAN CLARK: There has been a motion, is there20a second?

21 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Oh, I'm sorry, he had a
22 motion.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Well, I didn't hear a second to24 his earlier motion.

25 COMMISSIONER DEASON: If there is not a second, I

will second Commissioner Johnson's motion. 1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: There has been a motion and a 2 second on Issue Number 3. All those in favor say aye. 3 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Aye. 4 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: Aye. 5 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Aye. 6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Aye. Opposed, nay. 7 COMMISSIONER GARCIA: Nay. 8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Issue Number 4. 9 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: I'm prepared to move 10 staff. 11 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I don't have any questions. 12 Second. 13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Without objection, Issue Number 4 14 is approved. Issue Number 5. 15 COMMISSIONER KIESLING: Move it. 16 COMMISSIONER DEASON: Second. 17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Without objection, Issue Number 5 18 is approved. 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

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