

State of Florida



Public Service Commission

CAPITAL CIRCLE OFFICE CENTER • 2540 SHUMARD OAK BOULEVARD
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-

DATE: October 18, 2016
TO: Carlotta S. Stauffer, Commission Clerk, Office of Commission Clerk
FROM: Kelley F. Corbari, Senior Attorney, Office of the General Counsel *KFC*
RE: **Docket No. 140219-WU** – Application for staff-assisted rate case in Polk County by Alturas Utilities, LLC.
Docket No. 140220-WU – Application for staff-assisted rate case in Polk County by Sunrise Utilities, LLC.

Attached please find a copy correspondence from the former billing manager for Alturas Utilities, LLC and Sunrise Utilities, LLC, forwarding billing correspondence from the owner of the Utilities.

Please file the attached in the documents tabs of above-referenced docket files.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

KFC

RECEIVED-FPSC
2016 OCT 18 AM 11:51
COMMISSION
CLERK

Kelley Corbari

From: Debbie Valle <mmvalle58@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, October 17, 2016 7:10 PM
To: Kelley Corbari; roth.danielle@leg.state.fl.us
Subject: Fwd: This is the shortest version I decided on
Attachments: FINAL message to customers.docx

Hi Kelley, Danielle:

I thought the two of you might appreciate this. This is the letter that I was told to send to all of the residents of Sunrise back in July when the water was down for 3-5 days. Of course, he blames the entire problem on you, the PSC. Interesting reading to say the least - enjoy!

Debbie Valle

-----Original Message-----

From: L SZABO <l.szabo@rogers.com>
To: Debbie Valle <mmvalle58@aol.com>; L. SZABO <l.szabo@rogers.com>
Sent: Thu, Jul 28, 2016 12:16 pm
Subject: This is the shortest version I decided on

Hello Debbie,

I am enclosing as attachment the finalized version of the 4 pages letter to be included with the customers' bills.

250 x 4 pages = 1,000 pages .

My advice, it is much quicker and more economical, ink is expensive to have printed double sided (it will be only 2 pages and saving on postages) at Kinko or Office Max or any printer of your choice and pay for it.

My estimation is around 0.8 cents per page print will be \$ 80..and all is left to do to fold and stuff and send.

I am sending this \$ 80.00 in addition to your check.

Every word in the letter was carefully thought over, so let it go as it is

.Of course if there is a major error make the correction and let me know.

The customers at Sunrise will not understand the half it, - so what's the difference.

Most of them are fair to us and the few trouble maker who has originated all the bad publicity will not repent whatever we do.

I already spent enough time on them and getting sick of it.

Leslie

July 29, 2016

MESSAGE TO OUR CUSTOMERS,

We have realized from the reactions of a few our customers at Sunrise that the time has come to bring all our customers up to date of the reality we are both facing.

We are always aware of all the activities on a daily base of the Utilities.

If a breakdown occurs we are alerted immediately and looking for the solution at once to solve the problem as quickly as possible.

It is for our best interest to restore services because you only pay for the usages and with an interruption you will use less water.

Many times we do not have ourselves the answer how long will it take to restore the services but we always share the information available to us of the progress of the repair on our outgoing messages on the emergency phone line.

Our customer respond is very much various for the situation

We are thankful for those who could accept such situation as part of life without taking out their frustration on the Company or their representatives.

Those who feel themselves in a hostile situation during such problems, create the poisonous environment only out of their bitterness.

Not having any knowledge of the facts you can create further difficulties just being impatient. The virtue in such situation would be patience. The calmer we stay during a storm the better we come out.

Gossiping, spreading rumors and using inappropriate language only to get some attention isn't helping anybody. We never respond to such provocative act or words because it is a waste of time.

We do share your frustration for the interruption of the water services you are experiencing and are enraged of the circumstances are forced upon us.

Your continuous water supply was jeopardized and your rights has been denied by the Florida Public Service Commission to life on of most important essentials, - water.

Having an in depth knowledge of Sunrise and Alturas operating system and to maintain its capability to provide the proper services, we have turned to Florida Public Service Commission in good faith and made a Staff Assisted Rate Case Application asking for their help in the mid of 2014

Our decision was based on common sense as our previous 2009 rate case history recognized our needs and helped us to insure a trouble free operation.

Our latest rate case applications were stretched without any valid reason for 22 months. It was handled very contrary to the previous one we had, as the entire process took 11 months only, and being fair to our customers or to the Utilities.

We have never objected or complained to be questioned relentlessly of all phases of the operation and our books to be examined.

It shows that our revenue only covers the operational expenses cut to the bare minimum without any reasonable compensation to management and without any safety net for repairs or improvements of these aging systems.

The PSC focused mainly on the administrative issues. The PSC had all the opportunity to help you and our Company but they have ignored our urgent needs from the underground piping to the generator and the condition of the water tanks and to the many other important parts that we must look after.

We have complied with their regulatory rules and provided the documentations in great details item by item to establish the absolutely necessary founding to have to maintain a trouble free operation.

Hearing our repeated requests to receive a timely answer, many promises were made from their part our case will be judged fairly and help is on the way, gave us false hope.

We have also been cautioned, if we are not willing to sell to one of the Mega Corporation as being suggested, the possibilities if no adequate help will come from their end, - our customer's continuous water supply might be in jeopardy.

We have found this very uncharacteristic to their mission statement

The Mega Corporation swallowing up the privately owned small Utility Companies in Florida being pressured and are forced to sell. They already have a near monopolistic market of the electricity, gas and water services under their jurisdiction.

If we allowed this to happen, our customer will be faced with a 2 or 3 times higher monthly bill than their current rates are.

Sunrise customers will have no other choice than to allow them to recover their investment with interest and also to pay for their much higher administrative expenses that we are having.

Their legal team will be able to rush through in a short time their rate case application for your new rate.

We were, and still we are the voice to be heard in your behalf to maintain your lowest rate privileges and to protect our investments.

Since we have purchased the water system in the year of 2004 and compared to the national inflation rate established by the Government, our revenue is less today.

We are allowed to apply for a rate increase every 2 years but we have only exercised this option within the last 12 years 2 times only.

Our expenses grow just like anybody else's but Sunrise Utilities customers are still in a very enviable position to have the lowest rate in the entire Polk County.

The currently approved minimal rate increase was mainly for administrative issues only and not one dollar was approved for improvement or for additional maintenance and none of our repetitious written request was acknowledged or answered related to this subject.

Hoping to be heard at the final meeting at our case approval, - I was silenced and humiliated and not able to say one word, just allowed to listen in to their conversation.

It made me realize that all our 22 months hard work and efforts and hopes are buried.

As our current situation stand no supplier will come forward with help without any re-assurance to get paid for their services or supply.

We are expected to do the impossible to provide our customers with a trouble free operation but without any help from the PSC part to help us to have additional founding

The situation we are forced into, is the direct result of their action will be never admit.

All information revealed to you in this letter are public records, and verifiable in the Florida Public Service Commission website.

Their organization finances is based mainly on the variable regulatory contribution and licensing fees from the Utility Companies, which is a very important part of our budget.

If they do not get paid timely we are facing huge penalties and if the funds has to be taken away from our operating budget ,,it is not their concern.

Regarding the reality of the process of your complains sent to the PSC : we will receive their request to have our answer citing all their rules, and explicate your rights

We will be forced to spend more time and money - as nobody works for us free, and keep reminding them we also do have our rights and boundaries we can work within.

Our advices to you please examine the source of the problem first, and involving the PSC, your service will not be back any sooner.

Any unnecessary telephone call or written complaint to the offices of the authorities regulating water services will push your wagon to the Mega Corporation direction.

Calling the Health Department for not receiving the boiled water notice you are admitting to be aware of the situation and is nothing else than a spitefully act.

No regulatory ruling will ever protect you if we are not following consciously our commitment to never expose our customers to health hazard.

Please give us the same courtesy as we extend toward you to while looking for the solution to your complain.

It is easy to draw early assumptions without knowing the facts but it takes responsibility to admit a mistake

We always know if the complain is a real or fabricated to somebody's own benefit...

Beside the 20 complaints through PSC we had several emails and some of them were very insufficient to deserve an answer. Let us do our job without interruption.

We do understand your frustration of the service interruption, can you and imagine ours?

In short, - think first before you shoot.. It is our mutual interest to work together instead against each other.

We sincerely hope that we came together in this letter, and it is a nice beginning.

Keeping together will bring progress. Working together will be success.

Feel free to send us an e-mail about your concerns, or ask your questions with confidence.

Sunrise Utilities LLC

PS During the process writing this letter we have received calls from the PSC to have our reply before August 4 to the complaints received from some of you

They are time consuming and will create additional and costly administrative work

I hope you will extend toward us the courtesy to withdraw them; - we took the time to inform you off all the pre-existing facts