

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Application for original certificates for proposed water and wastewater system and request for initial rates and changes in Indian River, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties by Grove Land Utilities, LLC.

DOCKET NO. 090445-WS

In re: Application for original certificates for proposed water and wastewater system and request for initial rates and charges in Martin and St. Lucie Counties by Bluefield Utilities, LLC.

DOCKET NO. 090459-WS

ORDER NO. PSC-10-0224-PCO-WS

ISSUED: April 7, 2010

**ORDER ESTABLISHING PROCEDURE  
AND CONSOLIDATING DOCKETS FOR HEARING**

**I. Case Background & Consolidation**

**A. Docket No. 090445-WS**

On September 11, 2009, Grove Land Utilities, LLC (Grove Land) filed its Application for Original Certificates for Proposed Water and Wastewater Utility Systems and Request for Initial Rates and Charges (Grove Land Application). The applicant is a limited liability company (LLC) that is wholly owned by Evans Utilities Company, Inc. The Grove Land Application addresses Grove Land's request for original certificates to operate a water and wastewater utility in Indian River, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie Counties.

On October 7, 2009, both St. Lucie County (St. Lucie) and Indian River County (Indian River) filed their objections to the Grove Land Application. On October 9, 2010, Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA) filed its objection to the Grove Land Application. On October 13, 2009, the Commission received the Petition of Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) for Leave to Intervene and Objection to the Application.

On March 26, 2010, Indian River withdrew its objection in this docket pursuant to a settlement agreement reached between Indian River and Grove Land.

**B. Docket No. 090459-WS**

On September 25, 2009, Bluefield Utilities, LLC (Bluefield) filed its Application for Original Certificates for Proposed Water and Wastewater Utility Systems and Request for Initial Rates and Charges in Martin and St. Lucie Counties (Bluefield Application). The applicant is an LLC that is wholly owned by Evans Utilities Company, Inc. The Bluefield Application

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addresses Bluefield's request for original certificates to operate a water and wastewater utility in Martin and St. Lucie Counties.

On October 7, 2009, St. Lucie filed its objection to the Bluefield Application. In its objection, it raised the same objections and issues that it had identified in its objection to the Grove Land Application. On October 14, 2009, FPUA filed its objection to the Bluefield Application. In its objection, it raised the same objections and issues that it had identified in its objection to the Grove Land Application.

On October 22, 2009, the City of Port St. Lucie (City) filed its objection to the Bluefield Application. Finally, on October 22, 2009, the Board of County Commissioners of Martin County (Martin County) filed their Resolution No. 09-10.17 (Resolution) opposing the Bluefield Application.

C. Consolidation

Rule 28-106.108, F.A.C., states, "[i]f there are separate matters which involve similar issues of law or fact, or identical parties, the matters may be consolidated if it appears that consolidation would promote the just, speedy and inexpensive resolution of the proceedings, and would not unduly prejudice the rights of the party." Both Docket No. 090445-WS and 090459-WS have parties common to both proceedings namely, St. Lucie and FPUA. Moreover, both Grove Land and Bluefield are wholly owned subsidiaries of the same company, Evans Utilities Company, Inc. In addition, each of the dockets at issue herein contain similar issues of law or fact. Issues common to both dockets include, but are not limited to, the need for service, the application's consistency with the comprehensive plan of each affected county, financial and technical ability of the respective utility, the possible duplication of services within the proposed service territory, and the public interest implications of granting a certificate for the proposed territory.

Based on the foregoing, I believe that holding separate hearings in each of these dockets will cause unnecessary duplication of time and resources. Moreover, I find that consolidation of these dockets will promote the just, speedy and less expensive resolution of the proceedings, and will not unduly prejudice the rights of any party. Accordingly, Docket Nos. 090445-WS and 090459-WS are hereby consolidated for purposes of hearing. Both dockets shall remain open, and all filings shall be filed in their respective dockets. The consolidated cases will be governed by the procedures set forth below, and are scheduled for a formal administrative hearing on February 1-2, 2011.

This Order is issued pursuant to the authority granted by Rule 28-106.211, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), which provides that the presiding officer before whom a case is pending may issue any orders necessary to effectuate discovery, prevent delay, and promote the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of all aspects of the case.

The scope of this proceeding shall be based upon the issues raised by the parties and Commission staff (staff) up to and during the prehearing conference, unless modified by the

Commission. The hearing will be conducted according to the provisions of Chapter 120, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and all administrative rules applicable to this Commission.

## **II. General Filing Procedures**

In accordance with Rule 25-22.028, F.A.C., parties filing documents in this proceeding shall submit the original document and the appropriate number of copies to the Office of Commission Clerk for filing in the Commission's docket file. Filings may be made by mail, hand delivery, courier service, or in some instances electronically. Please refer to the rule for the requirements of filing on diskette for certain utilities. To the extent possible, all filings made electronically or on diskette shall be provided in Microsoft Word format. Filings pertaining to these dockets should identify the assigned docket number and should be addressed to:

Office of Commission Clerk  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

## **III. Notice and Public Information**

Pursuant to Rule 25-22.0405, F.A.C., the utilities shall publish notice of the date, time, location, and purpose of the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation in the area affected. The date of publication shall be no less than fourteen and no more than thirty days prior to the first day of the hearing.

## **IV. Prefiled Testimony and Exhibits**

Each party shall file, in writing, all testimony and exhibits that it intends to sponsor, pursuant to the schedule set forth in Section IX of this Order. An original and 15 copies of all testimony and exhibits shall be filed with the Office of Commission Clerk, by 5:00 p.m. on the date due. A copy of all prefiled testimony and exhibits shall be served by regular mail, overnight mail, or hand delivery to all other parties and staff no later than the date filed with the Commission. Failure of a party to timely prefile exhibits and testimony from any witness in accordance with the foregoing requirements may bar admission of such exhibits and testimony.

Testimony shall be typed on 8 ½ inch x 11 inch transcript-quality paper, double-spaced, with 25 numbered lines, on consecutively numbered pages, with left margins sufficient to allow for binding (1.25 inches).

Each exhibit sponsored by a witness in support of his or her prefiled testimony shall be:

- (1) Attached to that witness' testimony when filed;
- (2) Sequentially numbered beginning with 1 (any exhibits attached to subsequently filed testimony of the same witness shall continue the sequential numbering system);

- (3) Identified in the upper right-hand corner of each page by the docket number, a brief title, and the witness' initials followed by the exhibit's number; and
- (4) Paginated by showing in the upper right-hand corner of each page the page number followed by the total number of pages in the exhibit.

An example of the information to appear in the upper right-hand corner of the exhibit is as follows:

Docket No. 012345-EI  
Foreign Coal Shipments to Port of Tampa  
Exhibit BLW-1, Page 1 of 2

After an opportunity for opposing parties to object to introduction of the exhibits and to cross-examine the witness sponsoring them, exhibits may be offered into evidence at the hearing.

## V. Discovery Procedures

### A. General Requirements

Discovery shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 120, F.S., and the relevant provisions of Chapter 367, F.S., Rules 25-22, 25-30, and 28-106, F.A.C., and the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure (as applicable), as modified herein or as may be subsequently modified by the Prehearing Officer.

Unless subsequently modified by the Prehearing Officer, the following shall apply:

- (1) Discovery shall be completed by January 25, 2011.
- (2) Discovery requests shall be served by e-mail, hand delivery, or overnight mail. If a request is served electronically, a hard copy of the request shall be served by hand-delivery, U.S. Mail, or overnight mail on the day that the request is served electronically.
- (3) Sets of interrogatories, requests for admissions, requests for production of documents, or other forms of discovery shall be numbered sequentially in order to facilitate their identification.
- (4) Within each set, discovery requests shall be numbered sequentially, and any discovery requests in subsequent sets shall continue the sequential numbering system.
- (5) Discovery responses shall be served within 30 days calendar days (inclusive of mailing) of receipt of the discovery request. Discovery responses for interrogatories and requests for admission shall be served by electronic mail. One hard copy of the response shall also be served by hand-delivery, U.S. Mail, or overnight mail on the day that responses are served electronically. Discovery responses to requests for production shall be served electronically when possible.
- (6) Each page of every document produced pursuant to requests for production of documents shall be identified individually through the use of a Bates Stamp or

other equivalent method of sequential identification. Parties should number their produced documents in an unbroken sequence through the final hearing.

- (7) Copies of discovery requests and responses shall be served on parties other than the party from whom discovery is sought to the extent required by the applicable provisions of the Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. In addition, copies of all responses to requests for production of documents shall be provided to the Commission staff at its Tallahassee office unless otherwise agreed.

Unless subsequently modified by the Prehearing Officer, the following shall apply:

- (1) Interrogatories, including all subparts, shall be limited to 150.
- (2) Requests for production of documents, including all subparts, shall be limited to 150.
- (3) Requests for admissions, including all subparts, shall be limited to 150.

When a discovery request is served and the respondent intends to seek clarification of any portion of the discovery request, the respondent shall request such clarification within 10 days of service of the discovery request. Further, any specific objections to a discovery request shall be made within 20 days of service of the discovery request. When a discovery request is served related to matters raised in the utility's rebuttal testimony and exhibits, and the respondent intends to seek clarification of any portion of the discovery request, the respondent shall request such clarification within 5 days of service of the discovery request. Further, any specific objections to a discovery request related to matters raised in the utility's rebuttal testimony and exhibits shall be made within 5 days of service of the discovery request. These procedures are intended to reduce delay in resolving discovery disputes.

#### B. Confidential Information Provided Pursuant to Discovery

Any information provided to the Commission staff pursuant to a discovery request by the staff or any other person and for which proprietary confidential business information status is requested pursuant to Section 367.156, F.S., and Rule 25-22.006, F.A.C., shall be treated by the Commission as confidential. The information shall be exempt from Section 119.07(1), F.S., pending a formal ruling on such request by the Commission or pending return of the information to the person providing the information. If no determination of confidentiality has been made and the information has not been made a part of the evidentiary record in this proceeding, it shall be returned to the person providing the information. If a determination of confidentiality has been made and the information was not entered into the record of this proceeding, it shall be returned to the person providing the information within the time period set forth in Section 367.156, F.S. The Commission may determine that continued possession of the information is necessary for the Commission to conduct its business.

When a person provides information that it maintains as proprietary confidential business information to the Office of Public Counsel pursuant to a discovery request by the Office of Public Counsel or any other party, that party may request a temporary protective order pursuant to Rule 25-22.006(6)(c), F.A.C., exempting the information from Section 119.07(1), F.S.

When a party other than the Commission staff or the Office of Public Counsel requests information through discovery that the respondent maintains as proprietary confidential business information, or when such a party would otherwise be entitled to copies of such information requested by other parties through discovery (e.g., interrogatory responses), that party and respondent shall endeavor in good faith to reach agreement that will allow for the exchange of such information on reasonable terms, as set forth in Rule 25-22.006(7)(b), F.A.C.

**VI. Prehearing Procedures**

**A. Prehearing Statements**

All parties in this docket and the Commission staff shall file a prehearing statement pursuant to the schedule set forth in Section IX of this Order. The original and seven copies of each prehearing statement shall be filed with the Office of Commission Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on the date due. A copy of the prehearing statement shall be served on all other parties and staff no later than the date it is filed with the Commission.

Each party's prehearing statement shall set forth the following information in the sequence listed below:

- (1) The name of all known witnesses whose testimony has been prefiled or who may be called by the party, along with subject matter of each such witness' testimony;
- (2) A description of all prefiled exhibits and other exhibits that may be used by the party in presenting its direct case (including individual components of a composite exhibit) and the witness sponsoring each;
- (3) A statement of the party's basic position in the proceeding;
- (4) A statement of each question of fact, question of law, and policy question that the party considers at issue, along with the party's position on each issue, and, where applicable, the names of the party's witness(es) who will address each issue. Parties who wish to maintain "no position at this time" on any particular issue or issues should refer to the requirements of subsection C, below;
- (5) A statement of issues to which the parties have stipulated;
- (6) A statement of all pending motions or other matters the party seeks action upon;
- (7) A statement identifying the party's pending requests or claims for confidentiality;
- (8) Any objections to a witness' qualifications as an expert. Failure to identify such objection will result in restriction of a party's ability to conduct voir dire absent a showing of good cause at the time the witness is offered for cross-examination at hearing; and
- (9) A statement as to any requirement set forth in this order that cannot be complied with, and the reasons therefore.

Failure of a party to timely file a prehearing statement shall be a waiver of any issue not raised by other parties or by the Commission. In addition, such failure shall preclude the party from presenting testimony in support of its position on each such issue.

B. Attendance at Prehearing Conference

Pursuant to Rule 28-106.209, F.A.C., a Prehearing Conference will be held on January 19, 2011, at the Betty Easley Conference Center, 4075 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, Florida. Unless excused by the Prehearing Officer for good cause shown, each party (or designated representative) shall personally appear at the Prehearing Conference. Failure of a party (or that party's representative) to appear shall constitute waiver of that party's issues and positions, and that party may be dismissed from the proceeding.

C. Waiver of Issues

Any issue not raised by a party either before or during the Prehearing Conference shall be waived by that party, except for good cause shown. A party seeking to raise a new issue after the Prehearing Conference shall demonstrate each of the following:

- (1) The party was unable to identify the issue because of the complexity of the matter.
- (2) Discovery or other prehearing procedures were not adequate to fully develop the issue.
- (3) Due diligence was exercised to obtain facts touching on the issue.
- (4) Information obtained subsequent to the Prehearing Conference was not previously available to enable the party to identify the issue.
- (5) Introduction of the issue would not be to the prejudice or surprise of any party.

Specific reference shall be made to the information received and how it enabled the party to identify the issue.

Unless a matter is not at issue for that party, each party shall take a position on each issue by the time of the Prehearing Conference or by such later time as may be permitted by the Prehearing Officer. If a party is unable through diligence and good faith efforts to take a position on a matter at issue for that party, it shall explicitly state in its Prehearing Statement why it cannot take a position. If the Prehearing Officer finds that the party has acted diligently and in good faith to take a position, and further finds that the party's failure to take a position will not prejudice other parties or confuse the proceeding, the party may maintain "no position at this time" prior to hearing and thereafter identify its position in a post-hearing statement of issues. In the absence of such a finding by the Prehearing Officer, the party shall have waived the entire issue, and the party's position shall be shown as "no position" in the Prehearing Order. When an issue and position have been properly identified, any party may adopt that issue and position in its post-hearing statement. Commission staff may take "no position at this time" or a similar position on any issue without having to make the showing described above.

D. Motions to Strike Prefiled Testimony and Exhibits

Motions to strike any portion of the prefiled testimony and related portions of exhibits of any witness shall be made in writing no later than the Prehearing Conference. Motions to strike any portion of prefiled testimony and related portions of exhibits at hearing shall be considered untimely, absent good cause shown.

E. Demonstrative Exhibits

If a party wishes to use a demonstrative exhibit or other demonstrative tools at hearing, such materials must be identified by the time of the Prehearing Conference.

F. Official Recognition

Parties seeking official recognition of materials pursuant to Section 120.569(2)(i), F.S., shall notify all other parties and staff in writing no later than two business days prior to the first scheduled hearing date. Such notification shall identify all materials for which the party seeks official recognition, and to the extent such materials may not be readily available to all parties, such materials shall be provided along with the notification.

**VII. Hearing Procedures**

A. Attendance at Hearing

Unless excused by the Presiding Officer for good cause shown, each party (or designated representative) shall personally appear at the hearing. Failure of a party, or that party's representative, to appear shall constitute waiver of that party's issues, and that party may be dismissed from the proceeding.

Likewise, all witnesses are expected to be present at the hearing unless excused by the Presiding Officer upon the staff attorney's confirmation prior to the hearing date of the following:

- (1) All parties agree that the witness will not be needed for cross examination.
- (2) All Commissioners assigned to the panel do not have questions for the witness.

In the event a witness is excused in this manner, his or her testimony may be entered into the record as though read following the Commission's approval of the proposed stipulation of that witness' testimony.

B. Cross-Examination

The parties shall avoid duplicative or repetitious cross-examination. Further, friendly cross-examination will not be allowed. Cross-examination shall be limited to witnesses whose



testimony is adverse to the party desiring to cross-examine. Any party conducting what appears to be a friendly cross-examination of a witness should be prepared to indicate why that witness's direct testimony is adverse to its interests.

C. Use of Confidential Information at Hearing

It is the policy of this Commission that all Commission hearings be open to the public at all times. The Commission also recognizes its obligation pursuant to Section 367.156, F.S., to protect proprietary confidential business information from disclosure outside the proceeding. Therefore, any party wishing to use any proprietary confidential business information, as that term is defined in Section 367.156, F.S., at the hearing shall adhere to the following:

- (1) When confidential information is used in the hearing, parties must have copies for the Commissioners, necessary staff, and the court reporter, in red envelopes clearly marked with the nature of the contents. Any party wishing to examine the confidential material that is not subject to an order granting confidentiality shall be provided a copy in the same fashion as provided to the Commissioners, subject to execution of any appropriate protective agreement with the owner of the material.
- (2) Counsel and witnesses are cautioned to avoid verbalizing confidential information in such a way that would compromise confidentiality. Therefore, confidential information should be presented by written exhibit when reasonably possible.

At the conclusion of that portion of the hearing that involves confidential information, all copies of confidential exhibits shall be returned to the proffering party. If a confidential exhibit has been admitted into evidence, the copy provided to the court reporter shall be retained in the Office of Commission Clerk's confidential files. If such information is admitted into the evidentiary record at hearing and is not otherwise subject to a request for confidentiality filed with the Commission, the source of the information must file a request for confidential classification of the information within 21 days of the conclusion of the hearing, as set forth in Rule 25-22.006(8)(b), F.A.C., if continued confidentiality of the information is to be maintained.

**VIII. Post-Hearing Procedures**

If the Commission (or assigned panel) does not render a bench decision at the hearing, it may allow each party to file a post-hearing statement of issues and positions pursuant to the schedule set forth in Section IX of this Order. In such event, a summary of each position of no more than 50 words, set off with asterisks, shall be included in that statement. If a party's position has not changed since the issuance of the prehearing order, the post-hearing statement may simply restate the prehearing position. However, the position must be reduced to no more than 50 words. If a post-hearing statement is required and a party fails to file in conformance with the rule, that party shall have waived all issues and may be dismissed from the proceeding.

Pursuant to Rule 28-106.215, F.A.C., a party's proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law, if any, statement of issues and positions, and brief, shall together total no more than 40 pages and shall be filed at the same time, unless modified by the Presiding Officer.

**IX. Controlling Dates**

The following dates have been established to govern the key activities of this case:

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| (1) Utilities' Testimony and Exhibits      | August 30, 2010    |
| (2) Intervenors' Testimony and Exhibits    | October 18, 2010   |
| (3) Staff's Testimony and Exhibits, if any | November 18, 2010  |
| (4) Rebuttal Testimony and Exhibits        | December 13, 2010  |
| (5) Prehearing Statements                  | January 4, 2011    |
| (6) Prehearing Conference                  | January 19, 2011   |
| (7) Discovery Deadline                     | January 25, 2011   |
| (8) Hearing                                | February 1-2, 2011 |
| (9) Post-hearing Briefs                    | February 25, 2011  |

In addition, all parties should be on notice that the Prehearing Officer may exercise the discretion to schedule additional prehearing conferences or meetings of the parties as deemed appropriate. Such meetings will be properly noticed to afford the parties an opportunity to attend.

Based upon the foregoing, it is

ORDERED by Commissioner Nathan A. Skop, as Prehearing Officer, that the provisions of this Order shall govern this proceeding unless modified by the Commission.

By ORDER of Commissioner Nathan A. Skop, as Prehearing Officer, this 7th day of April, 2010.



NATHAN A. SKOP  
Commissioner and Prehearing Officer

( S E A L )  
RRJ/CMK

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS OR JUDICIAL REVIEW

The Florida Public Service Commission is required by Section 120.569(1), Florida Statutes, to notify parties of any administrative hearing or judicial review of Commission orders that is available under Sections 120.57 or 120.68, Florida Statutes, as well as the procedures and time limits that apply. This notice should not be construed to mean all requests for an administrative hearing or judicial review will be granted or result in the relief sought.

Mediation may be available on a case-by-case basis. If mediation is conducted, it does not affect a substantially interested person's right to a hearing.

Any party adversely affected by this order, which is preliminary, procedural or intermediate in nature, may request: (1) reconsideration within 10 days pursuant to Rule 25-22.0376, Florida Administrative Code; or (2) judicial review by the Florida Supreme Court, in the case of an electric, gas or telephone utility, or the First District Court of Appeal, in the case of a water or wastewater utility. A motion for reconsideration shall be filed with the Office of Commission Clerk, in the form prescribed by Rule 25-22.0376, Florida Administrative Code. Judicial review of a preliminary, procedural or intermediate ruling or order is available if review of the final action will not provide an adequate remedy. Such review may be requested from the appropriate court, as described above, pursuant to Rule 9.100, Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.