

Control Number: 47664



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DOCKET NO. 47664

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APPLICATION OF CHUCK BELL WATER SYSTEMS LLC FOR A PRICE INDEX RATE ADJUSTMENT

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION ANT : 0 i PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS FILING CLERK

COMMISSION STAFF'S RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

COMES NOW the Staff of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Staff), representing the public interest, and files this Commission Staff's Response to Request for Clarification and would show the following:

I. BACKGROUND

On October 3, 2017, Chuck Bell Water Systems LLC (Applicant) filed an application for a price index rate adjustment pursuant to Tex. Water Code § 13.1872 (TWC) and 16 Tex. Admin Code § 24.36 (TAC).

On October 5, 2017, the Commission administrative law judge (ALJ) issued Order No. 1, requiring Commission Staff to file comments on the administrative completeness of the application and proposed notice by or on November 3, 2017.

On November 3, Commission Staff filed its Recommendation on Administrative Completeness and Recommendation on Final Disposition.

On November 6, 2017, the ALJ issued Order No. 2, finding application administratively complete and requiring Applicant to resend notice.

On November 7, 2017, the ALJ issued Order No. 3, requesting clarification.

On November 10, 2017, Commission Staff responded to Order No. 3.

On November 16, 2017, the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued Order No. 4, requesting further clarification and setting November 28, 2017 as the deadline for Staff to file a response to the clarification. Therefore, this pleading is timely filed.

II. REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATION

On October November 16, 2017, the ALJ requested clarification on the following four items:

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- 1. The Table of Contents lists the same section number for two service rules and policies and the Extension Policy item is listed twice.
- 2. If Stonefield Water System is inactive is it necessary to keep it listed in the tariff?
- 3. The Service Rules and Policies section stops at item 2.11- Customer Complaints and Disputes and then picks up with Section 2.20-Specific Utility Service Rules and Policies, which is blank. Explain the gap in these provisions.
- 4. Adjust the pagination throughout to match the page number in the correct Table of Contents category.

Staff made the corrected adjustments to No. 1, 2, and 4 in the tariff. Regarding No. 3, Staff uses this section as a placeholder on the tariff form in case the CCN holder wants to include specific utility rules and policies. Staff notes that the Stonefield Water System is inactive, however, the Stonefield subdivision continues to be served under PWS No. 1260012, and is reflected on the index of Subdivisions accordingly.

III. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, Staff respectfully recommends that the ALJ accept Staff's clarifications and the revised tariff as attached.

Respectfully Submitted,

PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS LEGAL DIVISION

Margaret Uhlig Pemberton Division Director

Katherine Lengieza Gross Managing Attorney

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of this document will be served on all parties of record on November 28, 2017 in accordance with 16 TAC § 22.74.

Joshua Adam Barron

PUC Interoffice Memorandum

| То: | Josh Barron, Attorney Legal Division |
|----------|--|
| Thru: | Tammy Benter, Director Lisa Fuentes, Manager Water Utility Regulation Division |
| From: | Jonathan Ramirez, Financial Analyst Water Utility Regulation Division |
| Date: | November 17, 2017 |
| Subject: | Docket No. 47664 : Application of Chuck Bell Water Systems LLC for a Price Index Rate Adjustment |

On October 3, 2017, Chuck Bell Water Systems LLC (Applicant) requested a price rate adjustment that will affect water rates in Bear Creek Estates, Bell Manor Subdivision, Buffalo Creek, Crowley II Acre Subdivision, John Dame, Martin Creek Estates, Rock Creek Estates, and Sanders View Subdivision.

In order No. 4, the Commission requested clarification on the following items:

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- 3. The Service Rules and Policies section stops at item 2.11- Customer Complaints and Disputes and then picks up with Section 2.20- Specific Utility Service Rules and Policies, which is blank. Explain the gap in these provisions.
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Chuck Bell dba Chuck Bell Water Systems, LLC (Utility Name)

Crowley, Texas 76036 (City, State, Zip Code) <u>P.O. Box 731</u> (Business Address) (817) 980-6394

(Area Code/Telephone)

This tariff is effective for utility operations under the following Certificate of Convenience and Necessity:

<u>12190</u>

This tariff is effective in the following counties:

Johnson and Tarrant

This tariff is effective in the following cities or unincorporated towns (if any):

None

This tariff is effective in the following subdivisions and public water systems:

See attached list.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The above utility lists the following sections of its tariff (if additional pages are needed for a section, all pages should be numbered consecutively):

| SECTION 1.0 RATE SCHEDULE | 2 |
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| SECTION 2.0 SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES | |
| SECTION 2.20 - SPECIFIC SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES | |
| SECTION 3.0 EXTENSION POLICY | |
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APPENDIX A - DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN APPENDIX B - SAMPLE SERVICE AGREEMENT APPENDIX C - APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

Docket No. 47664

| This tariff is | effective i | in the | following | Subdivisions | or Systems: |
|----------------|-------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| | | | | | 01 0 00000000 |

| SUBDIVISION | PWS ID NUMBER | COUNTY | |
|--|---------------|---------|---|
| Bear Creek Estates | 2200336 | Tarrant | |
| Bell Manor Subdivision | 1260080 | Johnson | |
| Buffalo Creek | 1260084 | Johnson | |
| Crowley II Acre Subdivision, Stonefield Subdivision | 1260012 | Johnson | |
| John Dame | 1260090 | Johnson | |
| Martin Creek Estates | 1260122 | Johnson | |
| Rock Creek Estates | 1260082 | Johnson | |
| Sanders View Subdivision | 1260086 | Johnson | , |

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SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE

| Section 1.01 - Rates | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| <u>Meter Size</u> 5/8" x ³ /4" 3/4" 1" 1 ¹ / ₂ " 2" | <u>Monthly Minimum Charge</u> (including 0 gallons) <u>\$41.27</u> <u>\$61.90</u> <u>\$103.16</u> <u>\$206.33</u> <u>\$330.12</u> | <u>Gallonage Charge</u> <u>\$3.60</u> per 1,000 gallons, over the minimum | | | |
| Additional Gallonage Purchased Water Fee (Bell Manor Subdivision | es for Johnson County Special Utility D | istrict <u>\$2.51/1000 gallons</u> | | | |
| | e for Prairielands Groundwater Conservent ept Bear Creek Estates in Tarrant County) | vation District <u>\$0.24/1,000 gallons</u> | | | |
| Capital Improvemen | t Surcharge for 72 months, Effective M | arch 5, 2012 <u>\$5.65 per connection</u> | | | |
| FORM OF PAYMENT: The utility will accept the following forms of payment: Cash X, Check X, Money Order X, Credit Card , Other (specify) THE UTILITY MAY REQUIRE EXACT CHANGE FOR PAYMENTS AND MAY REFUSE TO ACCEPT PAYMENTS MADE USING MORE THAN \$1.00 IN SMALL COINS. A WRITTEN RECEIPT WILL BE GIVEN FOR CASH PAYMENTS. | | | | | |
| REGULATORY ASSESSMENT | | | | | |
| Section 1.02 - Misce | llaneous Fees | | | | |
| TAP FEE COVE | ERS THE UTILITY'S COSTS FOR MATERIALS 5/8" or 3/4" METER. AN ADDITIONAL FEE TO S TARIFF. | AND LABOR TO INSTALL A STANDARD | | | |
| TAP FEE (Unique c FOR EXAMPLE | osts) , A ROAD BORE FOR CUSTOMERS OUTSIDE C | Actual Cost of subdivisions or residential areas. | | | |
| TAP FEE (Large me TAP FEE IS THI | eter) E UTILITY'S ACTUAL COST FOR MATERIALS . | AND LABOR FOR METER SIZE INSTALLED. | | | |

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE (Continued)

RECONNECTION FEE

RECONNECT FEE. The Utility shall charge a reconnect fee of \$25.00 for reconnecting service during normal weekday business hours. A surcharge of \$35.00 may be charged when the customer requests service to be reconnected after 5:00pm on business days, weekends and holidays, subject to 16 TAC 24.88(h). The customer must be advised that this additional fee will be charged and given an opportunity to decline the service at the time the "after hours" reconnect request is originally made.

| TRANSFER FEE\$65.0 | 00 |
|---|-----------|
| THE TRANSFER FEE WILL BE CHARGED FOR CHANGING AN ACCOUNT NAME AT THE SAME SERVICE LOCATION WHEN THE SERVICE IS NOT DISCONNECTED | |
| CUSTOMER DEPOSIT RESIDENTIAL (Maximum \$50) | <u>)0</u> |
| COMMERCIAL & NON-RESIDENTIAL DEPOSIT 1/6TH OF ESTIMATED ANNUAL BID | <u>LL</u> |

SECTION 1.0 -- RATE SCHEDULE (Continued)

GOVERNMENTAL TESTING, INSPECTION AND COSTS SURCHARGE: WHEN AUTHORIZED IN WRITING BY TCEQ AND AFTER NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS, THE UTILITY MAY INCREASE RATES TO RECOVER INCREASED COSTS FOR INSPECTION FEES AND WATER TESTING. [16 TAC 24.21(b)(2)(F)]

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES: REFER TO SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY FOR TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND CHARGES WHEN NEW CONSTRUCTION IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE SERVICE.

PURCHASED WATER AND/OR DISTRICT FEE PASS THROUGH CLAUSE

Changes in fees imposed by any non-affiliated third party water supplier or underground water district having jurisdiction over the Utility shall be passed through as an adjustment to the water gallonage charge according to the following formula:

AG=G + B/(1-L), where: AG= adjusted gallonage charge, rounded to the nearest one cent: G= approved gallonage charge (per 1,000 gallons); B=change in purchased water/district gallonage charge (per 1,000 gallons); L=system average line loss for preceding 12 months not to exceed 0.15

FRANCHISE FEE ASSESSMENT. Franchise fees levied by a municipality may be passed through to those customers inside the city generating the revenues upon which the franchise fee is calculated. Implementation of this pass through clause shall be subject to the notice and approval process of the city having original jurisdiction over these fees. Franchise fees may not be passed through or allocated to utility customers outside the municipality.

EASEMENTS. Pursuant to 16 TAC. 24.85(d), easements from customers may be required as a precondition of service when:

- (1) Where recorded public utility easements on the service applicant's property do not exist or public road right-of-way easements are not available to access the property of a service applicant, the public utility may require the service applicant or land owner to grant a permanent recorded public easement dedicated to the public utility to construct, install, maintain, inspect and test water and/or sewer facilities necessary to serve the applicant.
- (2) As a condition of service to a new subdivision, public utilities may require developers to provide permanent recorded public utility easements to and throughout the subdivision sufficient to construct, install, maintain, inspect, and test water and/or sewer facilities necessary to serve the subdivision's anticipated service demands upon full occupancy.

Chuck Bell dba Chuck Bell Water Systems, LLC (Utility Name)

SECTION 2.0 -- SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES

Section 2.01 – Public Utility Commission of Texas Rules

The utility will have the most current Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC or Commission) Rules, Chapter 24, available at its office for reference purposes. The Rules and this tariff shall be available for public inspection and reproduction at a reasonable cost. The latest Rules or commission approved changes to the Rules supersede any rules or requirements in this tariff.

Section 2.02 - Application for and Provision of Water Service

All applications for service will be made on the utility's standard application or contract form (attached in the Appendix to this tariff), will be signed by the applicant before water service is provided by the utility. A separate application or contract will be made for each service location.

After the applicant has met all the requirements, conditions and regulations for service, the utility will install tap, meter and utility cut-off valve and/or take all necessary actions to initiate service. The utility will serve each qualified applicant for service within 5 working days unless line extensions or new facilities are required. If construction is required to fill the order and if it cannot be completed within 30 days, the utility will provide the applicant with a written explanation of the construction required and an expected date of service.

Where service has previously been provided, service will be reconnected within one working day after the applicant has met the requirements for reconnection.

The customer will be responsible for furnishing and laying the necessary customer service pipe from the meter location to the place of consumption. Customers may be required to install a customer owned cut-off valve on the customer's side of the meter or connection.

Section 2.03 - Refusal of Service

The utility may decline to serve an applicant until the applicant has complied with the regulations of the regulatory agencies (state and municipal regulations) and for the reasons outlined in the PUC Rules. In the event that the utility refuses to serve an applicant, the utility will inform the applicant in writing of the basis of its refusal. The utility is also required to inform the applicant that a complaint may be filed with the Commission.

Section 2.04 – Customer Deposits

If a residential applicant cannot establish credit to the satisfaction of the utility, the applicant may be required to pay a deposit as provided for in Section 1.02 - Miscellaneous Fees of this tariff. The utility will keep records of the deposit and credit interest in accordance with PUC Rules.

Residential applicants 65 years of age or older may not be required to pay deposits unless the applicant has an outstanding account balance with the utility or another water or sewer utility which accrued within the last two years.

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SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Nonresidential applicants who cannot establish credit to the satisfaction of the utility may be required to make a deposit that does not exceed an amount equivalent to one-sixth of the estimated annual billings.

<u>Refund of deposit</u>. - If service is not connected, or after disconnection of service, the utility will promptly refund the customer's deposit plus accrued interest or the balance, if any, in excess of the unpaid bills for service furnished. The utility may refund the deposit at any time prior to termination of utility service but must refund the deposit plus interest for any residential customer who has paid 18 consecutive billings without being delinquent.

Section 2.05 - Meter Requirements, Readings, and Testing

All water sold by the utility will be billed based on meter measurements. The utility will provide, install, own and maintain meters to measure amounts of water consumed by its customers. One meter is required for each residential, commercial, or industrial connection.

Service meters will be read at monthly intervals and as nearly as possible on the corresponding day of each monthly meter reading period unless otherwise authorized by the Commission.

<u>Meter tests</u>. - The utility will, upon the request of a customer, and, if the customer so desires, in his or her presence or in that of his or her authorized representative, make without charge a test of the accuracy of the customer's meter. If the customer asks to observe the test, the test will be made during the utility's normal working hours at a time convenient to the customer. Whenever possible, the test will be made on the customer's premises, but may, at the utility's discretion, be made at the utility's testing facility. If within a period of two years the customer requests a new test, the utility will make the test, but if the meter is found to be within the accuracy standards established by the American Water Works Association, the utility will charge the customer. Following the completion of any requested test, the utility will promptly advise the customer of the date of removal of the meter, the date of the test, the result of the test, and who made the test.

Section 2.06 - Billing

Bills from the utility will be mailed monthly unless otherwise authorized by the Commission. The due date of bills for utility service will be at least sixteen (16) days from the date of issuance. The postmark on the bill or, if there is no postmark on the bill, the recorded date of mailing by the utility will constitute proof of the date of issuance. Payment for utility service is delinquent if full payment, including late fees and the regulatory assessment, is not received at the utility or the utility's authorized payment agency by 5:00 p.m. on the due date. If the due date falls on a holiday or weekend, the due date for payment purposes will be the next workday after the due date.

A late penalty of either \$5.00 or 10.0% will be charged on bills received after the due date. The penalty on delinquent bills will not be applied to any balance to which the penalty was applied in a previous billing. The utility must maintain a record of the date of mailing to charge the late penalty.

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Chuck Bell dba Chuck Bell Water Systems, LLC (Utility Name)

SECTION 2.0 – SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

Each bill will provide all information required by the PUC Rules. For each of the systems it operates, the utility will maintain and note on the monthly bill a local or toll-free telephone number (or numbers) to which customers can direct questions about their utility service.

In the event of a dispute between a customer and a utility regarding any bill for utility service, the utility will conduct an investigation and report the results to the customer. If the dispute is not resolved, the utility will inform the customer that a complaint may be filed with the commission.

Section 2.07 - Service Disconnection

Utility service may be disconnected if the bill has not been paid in full by the date listed on the termination notice. The termination date must be at least 10 days after the notice is mailed or hand delivered.

The utility is encouraged to offer a deferred payment plan to a customer who cannot pay an outstanding bill in full and is willing to pay the balance in reasonable installments. However, a customer's utility service may be disconnected if a bill has not been paid or a deferred payment agreement entered into within 26 days from the date of issuance of a bill and if proper notice of termination has been given.

Notice of termination must be a separate mailing or hand delivery in accordance with the PUC Rules.

Utility service may also be disconnected without notice for reasons as described in the PUC Rules.

Utility personnel must be available to collect payments and to reconnect service on the day of and the day after any disconnection of service unless service was disconnected at the customer's request or due to a hazardous condition.

Section 2.08 - Reconnection of Service

Service will be reconnected within 24 hours after the past due bill and any other outstanding charges are paid or correction of the conditions which caused service to be disconnected.

Section 2.09 - Service Interruptions

The utility will make all reasonable efforts to prevent interruptions of service. If interruptions occur, the utility will re-establish service within the shortest possible time. Except for momentary interruptions due to automatic equipment operations, the utility will keep a complete record of all interruptions, both emergency and scheduled and will notify the commission in writing of any service interruptions affecting the entire system or any major division of the system lasting more than four hours. The notice will explain the cause of the interruptions.

SECTION 2.0 - SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES (Continued)

<u>Prorated Bills</u> - If service is interrupted or seriously impaired for 24 consecutive hours or more, the utility will prorate the monthly base bill in proportion to the time service was not available to reflect this loss of service.

Section 2.10 - Quality of Service

The utility will plan, furnish, and maintain production, treatment, storage, transmission, and distribution facilities of sufficient size and capacity to provide a continuous and adequate supply of water for all reasonable consumer uses. Unless otherwise authorized by the TCEQ, the utility will maintain facilities as described in the TCEQ Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

Section 2.11 - Customer Complaints and Disputes

If a customer or applicant for service lodges a complaint, the utility will promptly make a suitable investigation and advise the complainant of the results. Service will not be disconnected pending completion of the investigation. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the utility's response, the utility must advise the complainant that he has recourse through the PUC complaint process. Pending resolution of a complaint, the Commission may require continuation or restoration of service.

The utility will maintain a record of all complaints which shows the name and address of the complainant, the date and nature of the complaint and the adjustment or disposition thereof, for a period of two years after the final settlement of the complaint.

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SECTION 2.20 – SPECIFIC UTILITY SERVICE RULES AND POLICIES

This section contains specific utility service rules in addition to the rules previously listed under Section 2.0. It must be reviewed and approved by the Commission and in compliance with PUC rules to be effective.

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SECTION 3.0--EXTENSION POLICY

Section 3.01 - Standard Extension Requirements

LINE EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION CHARGES: No contribution in aid of construction may be required of any customer except as provided for in this approved extension policy.

The customer will be given an itemized statement of the costs, options such as rebates to the customer, sharing of construction costs between the utility and the customer, or sharing of costs between the customer and other applicants prior to beginning construction.

The utility will bear the full cost of any over-sizing of water mains necessary to serve other customers in the immediate area. The individual residential customer shall not be charged for any additional production, storage, or treatment facilities. Contributions in aid of construction may not be required of individual residential customers for production, storage, treatment or transmission facilities unless otherwise approved by the Commission under this specific extension policy.

COSTS THE UTILITIES SHALL BEAR: Within its certified area, the utility will pay the cost of the first 200 feet of any water main or distribution line necessary to extend service to an individual residential customer within a platted subdivision. However, if the residential customer requesting service purchased the property after the developer was notified in writing of the need to provide facilities to the utility, the utility may charge for the first 200 feet. The utility must also be able to document that the developer of the subdivision refused to provide facilities compatible with the utility's facilities in accordance with the utility's approved extension policy after receiving a written request from the utility.

Developers may be required to provide contributions in aid of construction in amounts to furnish the system with all facilities necessary to comply with TCEQ's Rules and Regulations for Public Water Systems.

SECTION 3.20—SPECIFIC UTILITY EXTENSION POLICY

This section contains the utility's specific extension policy which complies with the requirements already stated under Section 3.01. It must be reviewed and approved by the Commission and in compliance with PUC rules to be effective.

Residential customers not covered under Section 3.01 will be charged the equivalent of the costs of extending service to their property from the nearest transmission or distribution line even if that line does not have adequate capacity to serve the customer. However, if the customer places unique, non-standard service demands upon the system, the customer may be charged the additional cost of extending service to and throughout their property, including the cost of all necessary transmission and storage facilities necessary to meet the service demands anticipated to be created by that property.

Developers may be required to provide contributions in aid of construction in amounts sufficient to furnish the development with all facilities necessary to provide for reasonable local demand requirements and to comply with TCEQ minimum design criteria for facilities used in the production, transmission, pumping, or treatment of water or TCEQ minimum requirements. For purposes of this subsection, a developer is one who subdivides or requests more than two meters on a piece of property. Commercial, industrial, and wholesale customers will be treated as developers.

APPENDIX A – DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN

(This page incorporates by reference the utility's Drought Contingency Plan, as approved and periodically amended by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.)

APPENDIX B – SAMPLE SERVICE AGREEMENT (Utility Must Attach Blank Copy)

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APPENDIX C - APPLICATION FOR SERVICE (Utility Must Attach Blank Copy)