

1 **STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**
2 **PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

3
4 **July 2, 2020 - 10:14 a.m.**

5 *[Remote Hearing conducted via Webex]*

6
7 **RE: DE 19-120**
8 **LIBERTY UTILITIES (GRANITE STATE**
9 **ELECTRIC) CORP. d/b/a LIBERTY**
10 **UTILITIES: 2019 Least Cost**
11 **Integrated Resource Plan.**

12
13 **PRESENT:** Chairwoman Dianne Martin, Presiding
14 Cmsr. Kathryn M. Bailey
15 Cmsr. Michael S. Giaimo

16 Jody Carmody, Clerk
17 Eric Wind, PUC Remote Hearing Host

18 **APPEARANCES:** **Reptg. Liberty Utilities (Granite**
19 **State Electric) Corp. d/b/a**
20 **Liberty Utilities:**
21 Michael J. Sheehan, Esq.

22 **Reptg. Residential Ratepayers:**
23 Christa Shute, Esq.
24 Pradip Chattopadhyay, Asst. Cons. Adv.
 Office of Consumer Advocate

Reptg. PUC Staff:
 Brian D. Buckley, Esq.
 Richard Chagnon, Asst. Dir./Electric
 Kurt Demmer, Electric Division

 Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

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WITNESS PANEL: **ROBERT JOHNSON, JR.**
 JOEL RIVERA
 ANTHONY STRABONE
 HEATHER M. TEBBETTS
 KURT DEMMER

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E X H I B I T S

EXHIBIT NO.	D E S C R I P T I O N	PAGE NO.
1	Revised Testimony of Robert Johnson, Jr., Joel Rivera, Anthony Strabone, and Heather M. Tebbetts, including attachments (12-04-19)	<i>premarked</i>
2	PUC Staff Testimony of Kurt Demmer (01-23-20)	<i>premarked</i>
3	Settlement Agreement	<i>premarked</i>

P R O C E E D I N G

CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: We are here this morning in Docket DE 19-120, for a hearing regarding the Liberty Utilities, Incorporated Petition for Approval of its Least Cost Integrated Resource Plan. A Settlement Agreement has been filed.

We need to make the necessary findings because this is a remote hearing.

As the Chairwoman of the Public Utilities Commission, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order Number 12, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this hearing, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are utilizing Webex for this electronic hearing. All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate

1 contemporaneously during this hearing through
2 this platform. And the public has access to
3 contemporaneously listen and, if necessary,
4 participate.

5 We previously gave notice to the public
6 of the necessary information for accessing the
7 hearing in the Order of Notice. If anybody has a
8 problem during the hearing, please call
9 (603)271-2431. In the event the public is unable
10 to access the hearing, the hearing will be
11 adjourned and rescheduled.

12 Okay. Let's start by taking roll call
13 attendance of the Commission. When each
14 Commissioner states their presence, please also
15 state where you're located. And, if anybody else
16 is with you, please identify them.

17 My name is Dianne Martin. I am the
18 Chairwoman of the Public Utilities Commission. I
19 am located at my home, in Deerfield, New
20 Hampshire. And no one is with me.

21 Commissioner Bailey.

22 CMSR. BAILEY: Good morning. I'm
23 Commissioner Kathryn Bailey. I'm at my home.
24 And no one is with me.

1 CMSR. GIAIMO: Good morning. Michael
2 Giaimo, Commissioner. I'm in Concord, New
3 Hampshire. And no one is with me.

4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.
5 Let's take appearances, starting with
6 Mr. Sheehan.

7 MR. SHEEHAN: Good morning. Mike
8 Sheehan, for Liberty Utilities (Granite State
9 Electric) Corp.

10 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Ms. Shute, sorry to
11 interrupt. But, Mr. Buckley, I see that Mr.
12 Below is not here. Is he on the phone?

13 MR. BUCKLEY: That is correct. He's
14 not on the phone, and may not actually be
15 attending this hearing today. He communicated
16 with me last night that is sick, and may not be
17 able to make it. And it looks like he has not
18 made it.

19 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Great.
20 Thank you. Then, we'll go to Ms. Shute.

21 MS. SHUTE: Thank you. Christa Shute,
22 Staff Attorney for the Office of the Consumer
23 Advocate, on behalf of residential ratepayers.
24 Also in attendance is Dr. Pradip Chattopadhyay.

1 He will not be a witness today and is just in
2 attendance.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.
5 And Mr. Buckley.

6 MR. BUCKLEY: Good morning, Madam Chair
7 and Commissioners Bailey and Giaimo. Brian
8 Buckley, representing the Staff of the
9 Commission. And with me today, though not
10 physically, are Kurt Demmer and Richard Chagnon
11 of the Staff's Electric Division.

12 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right. Thank
13 you.

14 I have Exhibits 1, 2, 3 have been
15 prefiled and premarked for identification. Is
16 there anything else we need to talk about before
17 we have the witnesses sworn in?

18 MR. SHEEHAN: Just one thing. By way
19 of explanation, Exhibit 1 is called a "Revised"
20 filing. The addition from that and the original
21 filing was to remove the confidential markings.
22 The document is exactly the same, which is why we
23 didn't mark both documents.

24 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you

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1 for that clarification.

2 All right. Then, let's proceed to
3 swear in the witnesses. Mr. Patnaude.

4 (Whereupon **Robert Johnson, Jr.,**
5 **Joel Rivera, Anthony Strabone,**
6 **Heather M. Tebbetts, and Kurt Demmer**
7 were duly sworn by the Court Reporter.)

8 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Mr. Sheehan.

9 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you.

10 **ROBERT JOHNSON, JR., SWORN**

11 **JOEL RIVERA, SWORN**

12 **ANTHONY STRABONE, SWORN**

13 **HEATHER M. TEBBETTS, SWORN**

14 **KURT DEMMER, SWORN**

15 **DIRECT EXAMINATION**

16 BY MR. SHEEHAN:

17 Q I'll start with Ms. Tebbetts. Would you please
18 identify yourself, who you work for, and what
19 role you played in this docket?

20 A (Tebbetts) My name is Heather Tebbetts. And I
21 work for Liberty Utilities Service Company. And
22 I am the Manager of Rates and Regulatory Affairs,
23 in charge of strategic and policy making. And my
24 goal in this docket was to participate in writing

[WITNESS: Johnson|Rivera|Strabone|Tebbetts|Demmer]

1 testimony with regard to the order we received in
2 2019 for our updated LCIRP.

3 Q Ms. Tebbetts, your testimony is joint testimony
4 with the other three Liberty folks, and has been
5 marked as "Exhibit 1". Do you have any
6 corrections to that testimony today?

7 A (Tebbetts) I do not.

8 Q And, to the extent you are responsible for its
9 contents, do you adopt that testimony this
10 morning as your sworn testimony?

11 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

12 Q Thank you. Mr. Strabone, please introduce
13 yourself and your position with Liberty.

14 A (Strabone) Good morning. My name is Anthony
15 Strabone. I am the Manager of Electric
16 Engineering for Liberty Utilities Service Corp.
17 I am responsible for securing engineering and
18 construction resources for the capital work plan
19 for Granite State Electric.

20 Q Mr. Strabone, do you have any changes to the
21 joint testimony filed by the four Liberty
22 witnesses?

23 A (Strabone) I do not.

24 Q And do you adopt that testimony as your sworn

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1 testimony here this morning?

2 A (Strabone) I do.

3 Q Thank you. Mr. Rivera, please introduce
4 yourself.

5 A (Rivera) Hello. My name is Joel Rivera. And I'm
6 employed as the Manager of GIS and Electric
7 System Planning by Liberty Utilities Service
8 Corp. And I am responsible for managing the
9 Company's short- and long-term system electric
10 planning initiatives, as well as the Company's
11 electric and gas mapping systems.

12 Q Mr. Rivera, did you participate in the testimony
13 that's been marked as "Exhibit 1"?

14 A (Rivera) Yes.

15 Q And do you have any changes that you'd like to
16 point to this morning?

17 A (Rivera) I do not.

18 Q And do you adopt that testimony as your sworn
19 testimony here this morning?

20 A (Rivera) Yes, I do.

21 Q Thank you. Finally, Mr. Johnson, please
22 introduce yourself.

23 A (Johnson) Yes. My name is Robert Johnson. I'm
24 the Manager of Engineering Standards, Policies,

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1 and Programs. And, in that position, I am
2 responsible for overhead and underground
3 construction standards, also material -- electric
4 material requirements, also updating, and
5 responsible for Company policies and certain
6 programs.

7 Q Mr. Johnson, did you participate --

8 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Mr. Sheehan, I
9 apologize for interrupting. I just wanted to ask
10 Mr. Johnson, when he does testify, if he can stay
11 somewhat in front of his camera, I cannot
12 actually see the front of his face when he is
13 testifying.

14 BY MR. SHEEHAN:

15 Q Mr. Johnson, could you -- did you participate in
16 drafting the testimony with the others that has
17 been marked as "Exhibit 1"?

18 A (Johnson) Yes, I did.

19 Q And do you have any changes you'd like to make to
20 that testimony this morning?

21 A (Johnson) No, I don't.

22 Q And do you adopt that testimony as your sworn
23 testimony today?

24 A (Johnson) Yes, I do.

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1 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you. Madam
2 Chairwoman, the plan was for Staff to introduce
3 its witness, and then we will return to Ms.
4 Tebbetts to walk through the Settlement
5 Agreement.

6 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Sounds good.
7 Mr. Buckley. Mr. Buckley, yes, you're on mute.

8 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you.

9 BY MR. BUCKLEY:

10 Q Mr. Demmer, can you please identify yourself and
11 your position with the Commission?

12 A (Demmer) Coming in a little low, Brian. But I
13 believe you said introduce myself.

14 My name is Kurt Demmer. I am employed
15 as an Analyst with the Electric Division of the
16 New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission.

17 Q And can you please describe your involvement in
18 the instant proceeding to date?

19 A (Demmer) I've been the Staff lead in this
20 proceeding, reviewing the Petition, serving
21 discovery, developing testimony, participating in
22 technical sessions, and participating in
23 settlement conferences.

24 Q And the testimony you prepared, is that the

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1 document initially filed with the Commission in
2 the instant docket on January 23rd, and which has
3 now been premarked as "Exhibit 2"?

4 A (Demmer) Yes, it is.

5 Q And do you have any corrections or updates that
6 you would like to make to that testimony at this
7 time?

8 A (Demmer) No, I do not.

9 Q And, to the best of your knowledge and belief,
10 were the answers presented in your testimony
11 accurate at the time the testimony was filed?

12 A (Demmer) Yes, they were.

13 Q And do you adopt those answers as your sworn
14 testimony in this proceeding?

15 A (Demmer) Yes, I do.

16 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Mr. Demmer.
17 And now, I will hand it back over to the Company
18 for a brief overview of the Settlement.

19 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Mr. Sheehan.

20 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you.

21 BY MR. SHEEHAN:

22 Q Ms. Tebbetts, if you could turn to Exhibit 3, and
23 it is titled "Settlement Agreement". Did you
24 participate in the conversations that led to this

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1 document?

2 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

3 Q And, obviously, the people who have
4 participated -- also participated included Staff,
5 the OCA, and Mr. Below. Is that correct?

6 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

7 Q And the resulting Settlement Agreement,
8 obviously, is the Parties' mutual request to
9 resolve this docket under the terms in that
10 document, is that right?

11 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

12 Q If you could just walk us through the Agreement
13 Exhibit 3, and just give us a few words on each
14 of the material provisions, that would be
15 appreciated.

16 A (Tebbetts) Sure. So, we'll start with the
17 Settlement terms, in Section A, "Compliance with
18 Order Number 26,261".

19 So, the Parties agree that Liberty was
20 compliant with Order Number 26,261, which granted
21 a partial waiver of our next LCIRP. And the
22 Settling Parties recommend that the Commission
23 accept our July 15th, 2019 filing as sufficient
24 and compliant.

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1 Part B is the "Resolution of the
2 Planning Criteria Disagreement". So, the
3 planning criteria changes were actually approved
4 in Order Number 26,376 this past week. And in
5 there, we acknowledge -- the Parties acknowledge
6 that any disagreements between the Parties
7 relating to the Company's planning criteria are
8 resolved by that Settlement Agreement that was
9 approved in the order number I mentioned.

10 Section C is "Access to Company's
11 Manuals Site". And here, the Company is
12 committing to work with Staff to provide access
13 to the distribution electric operating procedures
14 through our Manuals site. And, as an update, by
15 September, we believe we should actually be able
16 to provide access to Staff for that.

17 Moving on to Part D, it is the "2021
18 LCIRP Filing Requirements". And, as part of this
19 Agreement, we are agreeing to meet certain
20 specifications for our next LCIRP submission that
21 relates to the non-wire solutions that I'll
22 discuss further.

23 Prior to filing the IRP, the Company is
24 going to develop a list of planned projects to be

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1 potential candidates for avoidance and/or
2 deferral through the deployment of the non-wire
3 solutions. Once those candidates are identified
4 by Liberty, the Company is going to meet with
5 Parties to identify one of those candidates that
6 should be the focus of a more detailed analysis
7 that will be provided within that 2021 LCIRP.

8 The analysis of the non-wire solution
9 should consider utility system benefits, such as
10 avoided distribution capacity costs, avoided
11 energy costs, and avoided transmission costs.

12 Also, we'll include an evaluation of
13 the demand reduction potential associated with
14 energy efficiency and load growth curtailment, as
15 well as anything else we find that would be
16 necessary to include in a non-wire solution.

17 If for some reason the Company cannot
18 complete this detailed analysis prior to our
19 filing in 2021, that filing is due, I believe,
20 June -- no, I'm sorry, not "June", January 15th,
21 2021, which is about six months from now. The
22 Company will be permitted the opportunity to
23 supplement its LCIRP filing with the detailed
24 analysis when it's completed, but no longer than

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1 six months after our initial filing.

2 The LCIRP will also include a document
3 which provides a description of the planning
4 process used to assess our non-wire solution as
5 part of the Company's broader planning processes,
6 and the steps taken to incorporate the non-wire
7 solution into its planning decision to reduce or
8 defer traditional infrastructure investment.

9 The Company will work with the Settling
10 Parties to determine how the following issues
11 will be addressed in our next LCIRP due in 2021.
12 The first issue is how the risk profile
13 evaluation for the non-wire solution was
14 conducted; options to mitigate the identified
15 risks; how that risk is incorporated into the
16 planning process, which will include how the
17 risks and costs are weighted to identify when a
18 reduction in cost justifies the additional risk;
19 a potential for hybrid projects; ways in which
20 the company might attain a more detailed analysis
21 of the benefits and costs; and, finally, how
22 potential non-wire solutions are identified for
23 that detailed analysis.

24 That is the provisions within the

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1 Settlement Agreement that the Parties have agreed
2 to.

3 Q Ms. Tebbetts, going back to the Manuals site, is
4 it correct that this site is something the
5 Company already uses to provide Staff with access
6 to gas documents?

7 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

8 Q And, so, this Agreement is to basically
9 supplement that site with the documents described
10 in the Settlement Agreement related to the
11 electric side of the Company?

12 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

13 Q And also, regarding the timing of the NWS
14 project, you describe that we hope to have it in
15 the January filing, but this allows us some more
16 time. In fact, the Parties are meeting after
17 this hearing to start that process of discussion
18 to identify the NWS projects so we get going on
19 them. Is that fair?

20 A (Tebbetts) Yes.

21 Q And one question for you, Mr. Rivera. Looking at
22 the list that Ms. Tebbetts discussed at the end
23 there, on Page 5, Items (1) through (6), as we
24 understand, you're the person most hands-on with

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1 the NWS analysis. Can you give us just a brief
2 explanation why you think it's a good idea and
3 worthwhile for us to address these questions?

4 A (Rivera) Yes. I do agree that it is a good idea
5 and suggestion to include in our future LCIRP
6 filing, as I think it's important to document
7 these risks and challenges that it takes to do a
8 successful evaluation and implementation of a
9 non-wire solution, you know, and how to go about
10 analyzing these different risks.

11 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you, Mr. Rivera. I
12 have no further questions for the panel.

13 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right
14 Mr. Buckley. You're on mute.

15 BY MR. BUCKLEY:

16 Q Mr. Demmer, what was the purpose of your
17 testimony in this docket?

18 A (Demmer) I reviewed the Company's filing for
19 consistency with the Commission's direction in
20 Order Number 26,261, which granted a waiver of
21 the Company's requirement to file a full LCIRP in
22 2019, and instead required a more limited filing.
23 That order directed Liberty to confirm it's
24 currently following the least cost planning

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1 process outlined in its 2016 LCIRP and to provide
2 copies of the adopted standard operating
3 procedures for employees and managers integrating
4 day-to-day and long-term planning consistent with
5 the Company's objectives of least cost planning.

6 Q And what did the Company provide pursuant to
7 Order Number 26,261?

8 A (Demmer) The Company provided a number of
9 documents consistent in satisfaction of Order
10 26,261. Those documents are identified as
11 appendices in Exhibit 1. My review of these
12 documents, and subsequent discovery, found that
13 those documents were generally in compliance with
14 the Commission's direction in Order 26,261.

15 Q Now, moving to the Settlement, are there any
16 provisions that you think may be particularly
17 worthwhile to highlight for the Commission?

18 A (Demmer) Yes. And I believe Mr. Sheehan had
19 touched upon that.

20 At the bottom of Page 3 of the
21 Settlement, the Company commits to working with
22 Staff to provide access to the distribution
23 electric operating procedures through Liberty
24 Utilities' Manuals site. I just want to take a

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1 moment to highlight the importance of this
2 provision.

3 Having up-to-date Company policies,
4 procedures, and standards greatly improves the
5 efficiency of Staff's review of Company filings.
6 Although Staff always has the ability to request
7 this data per Puc Rule 306.07 at any time, Staff
8 is not aware of when companies add, remove, or
9 modify an operating standard or policy.

10 Requesting such information in a docket adds to
11 the length of time Staff needs to perform a
12 prudence review. In addition, Staff is unaware
13 of standards that may be relevant, unknown to
14 Staff in order to request them.

15 Intranet or real-time current access to
16 the Company's distribution standards, policies,
17 and procedures, as the Company commits to
18 providing in this Settlement, informs Staff of
19 the Company's current operating criteria and
20 decision making principles without having to
21 conjecture if there is a procedure available or
22 if it's up to date.

23 Q Thank you, Mr. Demmer. Now, finally, do you view
24 the provisions of the Settlement you just

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1 described, as well as a whole, as in the public
2 interest and expect that they would result in
3 just and reasonable rates, if approved?

4 A (Demmer) Yes.

5 MR. BUCKLEY: Staff has no further
6 questions for the panel.

7 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.
8 I understand from the Settlement Agreement that
9 the Parties have agreed to forgo
10 cross-examination. Is that right?

11 MR. SHEEHAN: That's correct.

12 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. So, there
13 are no questions from other parties at this time,
14 we can go to the Commissioners?

15 *[No verbal response.]*

16 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Commissioner
17 Bailey.

18 CMSR. BAILEY: Thank you. I don't have
19 very many questions.

20 BY CMSR. BAILEY:

21 Q But I understand that the original planning
22 criteria, there was a dispute over, and you
23 settled that in the rate case to use the criteria
24 that most other IOUs, independently owned

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1 utilities, in New Hampshire use. And I guess my
2 question is, are you using those in the Salem
3 area or are you using the standards that you had
4 in place prior to agreeing to adopt the new
5 standards?

6 A (Rivera) We are currently using the updated
7 distribution planning criteria for the Salem area
8 study.

9 CMSR. BAILEY: Okay. I think that's
10 all I have. Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Commissioner
12 Giaimo.

13 CMSR. GIAIMO: I just have a few quick
14 ones as well.

15 BY CMSR. GIAIMO:

16 Q So, Mr. Demmer talked about the bottom of Page 3,
17 of Exhibit 3, with respect to Settlement terms.
18 And that's "The Company commits to working with
19 Staff to provide access to the distribution
20 electric operating procedures through the Liberty
21 Utilities - Manuals site."

22 Do we know what that means? Does that
23 mean that -- does that mean, as policies change,
24 the Commission will actually see those, will have

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1 access and can see them changing in real-time?
2 Will there be notices sent that things have
3 changed? Will there be passwords to access the
4 site? I'm just wondering what -- has any more
5 detail gone into what that means?

6 A (Tebbetts) Yes. So, right now, what we're going
7 to do is model it after how we operate on the gas
8 side. As far as password protected and all of
9 that, I don't have the answer to that. I do
10 believe it is within our intranet that we get
11 access. So, there will be a level of access
12 granted to allow Staff to be able to go into
13 those documents.

14 I don't believe there's any
15 notification of new information. But,
16 considering that Staff will have access 24/7,
17 they most certainly can go in and look for
18 updated documents.

19 Again, on the gas side, I don't know if
20 we provided notification on there. So, what
21 we're looking to do is mimic there, whatever we
22 do on our gas company to do for the electric
23 company.

24 Q But it just seems like, given the many tasks that

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1 the Commission Staff has, monitoring it to see if
2 something has changed would be kind of onerous.
3 So, maybe in the discussions you can just kind of
4 think about what there may be, a triggering
5 device or, I don't know, weekly or monthly
6 updates or whatever. I just -- I just throw that
7 out there.

8 A (Tebbetts) I'd be happy to take that back to our
9 policies group.

10 Q Okay. With respect to the non-wire solution
11 analysis, is there going to be a hierarchy on
12 what benefits are most important? Is it energy
13 costs? Is it avoided transmission costs? Is it
14 just total cost? I was wondering if any thought
15 has gone into that?

16 A (Tebbetts) With regards to hierarchy, I think
17 what we need to do is look at the analysis, and
18 determine what costs and benefits we have for
19 those projects. There very well could be that
20 we're looking at an area where reliability is
21 worse than other areas. And, so, for example,
22 maybe reliability will be at the top of the list,
23 where maybe we wouldn't be able to provide much
24 energy efficiency programs to those customers.

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1 Right? So, maybe there's a capacity issue, and
2 that's number two. Or, maybe there's a big
3 capacity issue, and that will be number one, but
4 we can provide a lot of energy efficiency so
5 those businesses will stay in the area. So,
6 let's try to work on capacity through energy
7 efficiency, so now that kind of goes lower on the
8 list, and reliability goes higher on the list.

9 So, I think it's going to depend on
10 what we're looking at for opportunities for the
11 customers in the area, and also what we're
12 looking for the major issues driving the non-wire
13 solutions. I don't think there is a structure
14 that we could implement for every single one that
15 would be same. It's going to be case-by-case.

16 Q And how many candidates would be on an ideal
17 list? Two? Three? Four? And I'm guessing, in
18 most cases, probably the most logical one would
19 jump off the page. Does that sound fair?

20 A (Tebbetts) That sounds fair, yes. I don't
21 know -- it's going to depend on the location
22 again. We do have a location that we'd look at,
23 a few locations. So, there could be two, there
24 could be three. We don't have a very large

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1 service territory. But we do believe that we do
2 have candidates already that we're going to be
3 looking at, and also discussing, as Mr. Sheehan
4 noted, in our technical session after this
5 hearing.

6 Q And would you imagine that you'd probably try to
7 stagger locations, and go from the Upper Valley
8 to Rockingham?

9 A (Tebbetts) Yes. That is our plan, to look at the
10 different service areas, to determine if there
11 are availability of a non-wire solution, and not
12 just look at one service area with multiple
13 solutions.

14 Q Oh, no, I understand that. I guess my thinking
15 was, could you see a situation where, in four
16 straight years, you've done something in Salem,
17 and not anything in the Upper Valley?

18 A (Tebbetts) Oh. I guess that's possible. If a
19 candidate ranks highest, then, yes, that's
20 possible.

21 CMSR. GIAIMO: All right. Thank you.
22 I appreciate it. That's all the questions I
23 have.

24 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay.

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1 BY CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN:

2 Q I just have a question about the timeline for the
3 NWS process and analysis. It says that, "In the
4 event the Company cannot complete this detailed
5 analysis prior to the filing in 2021." Can you
6 just tell me more about the process and whether
7 you think you realistically will have this done
8 by the time of that filing, and this is more of a
9 caveat in case something comes up, or do you
10 think it's unlikely we'll have it done?

11 A (Tebbetts) So, I think what we're looking at
12 is -- well, the Settlement Agreement, certainly,
13 we just filed it, and so there was some time that
14 we looked at. We have about six months before
15 our filing is due, and a lot of work. We have
16 already started looking at the pieces through the
17 legislative side of it, because certainly that is
18 set in stone in what we need to provide.

19 But the issue becomes the working with
20 parties. So, we need to identify our locations.
21 We need to work with those Parties in the
22 Settlement here, to show them why we want -- why
23 we believe, you know, these are the projects that
24 rank to be part of the solutions, and then

[WITNESS: Johnson|Rivera|Strabone|Tebbetts|Demmer]

1 determine which ones is the most feasible. And
2 that's just going to take some time.

3 So, the idea behind this was, rather
4 than rush an analysis, to allow us time to work
5 with the Parties, to allow us time to really have
6 a robust analysis to file. And it really helps
7 us on the back end, when we go to file all of
8 this, to, you know, avoid lengthy data requests
9 and things like that. We want to provide
10 everything up front, if we can.

11 So, the idea behind having an extra six
12 months really was to allow for the fact that we
13 only have six months until it's due right now,
14 and work to do with the Parties.

15 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.
16 That's my only question.

17 Mr. Buckley, do you have any
18 redirect?

19 MR. BUCKLEY: No redirect from Staff.

20 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Mr. Sheehan.

21 MR. SHEEHAN: I have none either.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. All right.
24 So, consistent with the Parties' agreement, and

1 without objection, we'll strike ID on Exhibits 1,
2 2, 3, and admit them as full exhibits.

3 Would the parties like to have closing
4 arguments? Starting with Ms. Shute.

5 MS. SHUTE: Thank you, Chairwoman
6 Martin.

7 The OCA supports the Settlement
8 Agreement. I will -- and we look forward to
9 working with the Company to enhance its next
10 LCIRP filing.

11 I will note, to Commissioner Giaimo's
12 question, part of the inclusion of the issues to
13 discuss over the next area of time is in part to
14 address how to -- the process of how projects are
15 selected and how things are weighed, and to
16 really try to take a look at how that's done,
17 compared to typical solutions, including the
18 ability to create hybrids, and the ability to
19 look at different risk profiles and assess those
20 types of issues.

21 So, we look forward to working with the
22 Company and support the Settlement Agreement.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right. Thank

1 you. Mr. Buckley.

2 MR. BUCKLEY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 Staff is confident that the Settlement
4 of the Parties appropriately resolves all of the
5 issues in this case. That the approval of that
6 Settlement would be in the public interest,
7 expects that said approval would lead to just and
8 reasonable rates, and recommends its approval by
9 the Commission.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.
12 And Mr. Sheehan.

13 MR. SHEEHAN: Thank you.

14 I echo what counsel have already said.
15 And underscore that this Settlement does two
16 things: It acknowledges compliance with the
17 order requiring this interim filing, and it also
18 has set the stage for the next filing. There are
19 several steps, as we discussed this morning, that
20 will help us better focus what's going to be
21 filed in January. And, as we said, we're
22 starting this afternoon.

23 So, it does accomplish two things,
24 which all Parties have agreed is the right way to

1 go here. So, we appreciate their cooperation,
2 and ask the Commission to approve the Settlement.

3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you,
5 everyone. We'll take the matter under
6 advisement. And we are adjourned. Have a great
7 day.

8 ***(Whereupon the hearing was adjourned***
9 ***at 10:51 a.m.)***