

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

**CERTIFIED
ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT**

July 24, 2018 - 9:07 a.m.
Concord, New Hampshire

**RE: DG 18-103 NORTHERN
UTILITIES, INC. PETITION FOR
AUTHORITY TO OPERATE AS A PUBLIC
UTILITY IN THE TOWNS OF KINGSTON
AND ATKINSON
(Prehearing Conference)**

PRESENT: Chairman Martin P. Honigberg, Presiding
Commissioner Kathryn M. Bailey
Commissioner Michael S. Giaimo

Sandy Deno, Clerk

APPEARANCES:

Reptg. Northern Utilities, Inc.:
Patrick H. Taylor, Esq.

Reptg. Office of the Consumer Advocate:
D. Maurice Kreis, Esq.

Reptg. Commission Staff:
F. Anne Ross, Esq.
Alexander Speidel, Esq.
Stephen P. Frink - Dir. Gas & Water Div.

COURT REPORTER: SUSAN J. ROBIDAS, N.H. LCR NO. 44

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: We are here
3 this morning in Docket DG 18-103, which is a
4 petition for Northern Utilities to expand its
5 franchise to the towns of Kingston and
6 Atkinson, for a prehearing conference. And
7 following that you have a technical session.

8 Before we do anything else, let's
9 take appearances.

10 MR. TAYLOR: Good morning,
11 Commissioners. Patrick Taylor on behalf of
12 Northern Utilities, Inc.

13 MR. KREIS: Good morning, Chairman
14 Honigberg and Commissioners. I am D. Maurice
15 Kreis, the Consumer Advocate, here on behalf
16 of residential utility customers.

17 MS. ROSS: Good morning,
18 Commissioners. Anne Ross, on behalf of
19 Commission Staff. And with me today is Steve
20 Frink, director of the Gas and Water
21 Division, and Alex Speidel, a Staff attorney.

22 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: The
23 short-timer's table.

24 MS. ROSS: I hope not.

1 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Any
2 preliminary matters before we hear the
3 preliminary positions of the parties? I know
4 we have a red folder, which indicates there's
5 confidential information. Is there anything
6 we need to know about that right now?
7 Anyone?

8 [No verbal response]

9 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right.
10 Mr. Taylor, why don't you start us off.

11 MR. TAYLOR: Good morning. The
12 Company has submitted what it believes to be
13 a very straightforward petition to expand its
14 franchise territory into the towns of
15 Kingston and Atkinson. In both instances the
16 Company's expansion effort is motivated by a
17 significant customer that's contracted for
18 natural gas service from the Company. That
19 being said, the Company believes that there's
20 ample opportunity to serve official
21 residential and commercial customers in
22 Kingston and Atkinson and looks forward to
23 providing its services to homeowners and
24 businesses in those towns.

1 In many respects, the Company's
2 request to expand its franchise territory in
3 Atkinson is a housekeeping measure. The
4 Company, under prior ownership, requested a
5 limited service territory in Atkinson in
6 1988. In most of the towns where we provide
7 service, the Company has a franchise to
8 operate as a public utility throughout the
9 town. The Company is already providing
10 service in Atkinson, and this petition would
11 merely remove what are now unnecessary
12 borders to enable the Company to provide
13 service to significant projects, like the one
14 being built near the Atkinson Country Club.
15 The Company believes that its petition is
16 very much in the public interest.

17 The Kingston Board of Selectmen has
18 submitted a letter in support of the project.
19 And we've also learned that last night the
20 Atkinson Board of Selectmen voted to support
21 the project, and so we expect to see a letter
22 in support from them as well. Both of these
23 projects meet the Company's discounted cash
24 flow analysis and are economical. Expansion

1 of natural gas service into these towns will
2 provide economic benefits to residents and
3 businesses.

4 We look forward to working with the
5 Staff and the OPA in this docket, and we
6 appreciate your time this morning. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr.
9 Taylor. Mr. Kreis.

10 MR. KREIS: Thank you, Mr.
11 Chairman. The OPA works in Maine, and so I'm
12 hoping that they're not planning on
13 intervening. But the OCA is here, and we are
14 here to say that we are always interested in
15 making sure that expansion requests of these
16 sorts do not come at the expense of the
17 utility's existing customer base. I think
18 that I agree with almost everything that Mr.
19 Taylor said, and I think that this particular
20 request will be relatively uncontroversial.
21 And we look forward to working with the
22 Company and with the Commission Staff on
23 bringing this docket to a successful and
24 happy conclusion.

1 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Thank you, Mr.
2 Kreis.

3 Ms. Ross.

4 MS. ROSS: Yes, Staff has already
5 issued one round of discovery requests and
6 has received responses to most of them and is
7 examining with care the DCF analysis of the
8 profitability of the projects going forward
9 to ensure that Mr. Kreis's concerns about
10 burdening other customers are addressed.
11 This is an analysis that Staff has analyzed
12 in the past, and we intend to do it quickly
13 and would hope to have a favorable
14 resolution. We will certainly work with the
15 parties to get a schedule put together
16 following this hearing.

17 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: Any thoughts
18 as to how long that schedule will be? Is
19 this the kind of thing you think will be
20 three months, five months, ten months? What
21 is the thinking? Mr. Taylor?

22 MS. ROSS: About two months I think
23 from the Staff, at the most. We're going to
24 do our best. We're in a construction season

1 right now. Both of these projects need to be
2 completed for in-service dates either late
3 this year or early next year, and there's
4 also road work being done this summer. So it
5 makes a lot of sense to get this proposal
6 approved quickly.

7 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: I assume that
8 makes Mr. Taylor happy then.

9 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah. We have asked
10 for an expedited process in this case,
11 largely to meet construction time lines and
12 to get ahead of a Department of
13 Transportation project that will result in
14 some paving. So we do appreciate it.

15 CHAIRMAN HONIGBERG: All right. I
16 don't think we have anything else. So if
17 there's nothing else the parties need from
18 us, we will adjourn the prehearing conference
19 and leave you to your technical session.
20 Thank you all.

21 (Hearing concluded at 9:09 a.m.)
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23
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Susan J. Robidas, a Licensed
Shorthand Court Reporter and Notary Public
of the State of New Hampshire, do hereby
certify that the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my stenographic
notes of these proceedings taken at the
place and on the date hereinbefore set
forth, to the best of my skill and ability
under the conditions present at the time.

I further certify that I am neither
attorney or counsel for, nor related to or
employed by any of the parties to the
action; and further, that I am not a
relative or employee of any attorney or
counsel employed in this case, nor am I
financially interested in this action.

Susan J. Robidas, LCR/RPR
Licensed Shorthand Court Reporter
Registered Professional Reporter
N.H. LCR No. 44 (RSA 310-A:173)

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