

OLD BRIDGE MUNICIPAL BUILDING
1 OLD BRIDGE PLAZA
OLD BRIDGE, NEW JERSEY 08857
Monday, August 27, 2018
Commencing at 6:30 P.M.

- - - - -)
RE:) TRANSCRIPT
) OF
) PROCEEDINGS
OLD BRIDGE MUNICIPAL)
UTILITIES AUTHORITY RATE)
HEARING)
- - - - -)

B E F O R E:

FRANK WEBER, Vice Chairman
RICHARD GREENE, Commissioner
DR. ANITA GREENBERG-BELLI, Commissioner
ARTHUR CARULLO, Commissioner
JOHN E. MURPHY, III, Alternate #1
PAUL CARLOCK, Alternate #2

MITCHELL B. JACOBS, ESQ., Board Attorney
VERONICA MORRIS, Board Secretary

A P P E A R A N C E S:

GUY DONATELLI, Executive Director
MICHELLE SMITH, Comptroller
MICHAEL ROY, P.E.
DANA MONTANELLI, Auditor

MICHELLE D. WILCOX, C.C.R.
LICENSE NO. XI01745

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: I'd like to
 2 call the meeting to order.
 3 This meeting is being held in
 4 conformance with the Open Public Meetings
 5 Act.
 6 Notice of this has been given to the
 7 newspapers and notice of the meeting has
 8 been posted in public places.
 9 Pledge of Allegiance.
 10 (Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance
 11 was recited.)
 12 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Please remain
 13 standing for a moment. I'd like to
 14 acknowledge the passing of Art Haney with a
 15 moment of silence.
 16 Thank you. Roll call, please?
 17 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Carullo?
 18 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: Here.
 19 MS. MORRIS: Dr. Greenberg?
 20 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: Here.
 21 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Greene?
 22 COMMISSIONER GREENE: Here.
 23 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Weber?
 24 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Here.
 25 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Murphy?

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1 (Whereupon, Old Bridge Municipal
 2 Utilities Authority Legal Notice was marked
 3 as Exhibit A for Identification.)
 4 (Whereupon, Affidavit of
 5 Publication, Asbury Park Press was marked as
 6 Exhibit B for Identification.)
 7 (Whereupon, Old Bridge Municipal
 8 Utilities Authority Legal Notice was marked
 9 as Exhibit C for Identification.)
 10 (Whereupon, Affidavit of
 11 Publication, Home News Tribune was marked as
 12 Exhibit D for Identification.)
 13 (Whereupon, Order Adopting Initial
 14 Decision/Settlement was marked as Exhibit E
 15 for Identification.)
 16 (Whereupon, Old Bridge Municipal
 17 Utilities Authority Resolution No. M-09-18,
 18 Water Division was marked as Exhibit F for
 19 Identification.)
 20 (Whereupon, letter dated August 22,
 21 2018 was marked as Exhibit G for
 22 Identification.)
 23 (Whereupon, Old Bridge Municipal
 24 Utilities Authority Resolution was marked as
 25 Exhibit H for Identification.)

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1 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Here.
 2 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Carlock?
 3 COMMISSIONER CARLOCK: Here.
 4 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: All right. At
 5 this time I'm going to turn the meeting over
 6 to Mitch. He will proceed.
 7 MR. JACOBS: Okay. Thank you, Mr.
 8 Chairman.
 9 This public rate hearing is being
 10 held in accordance and conducted with
 11 N.J.S.A. 40:14B-21.
 12 This rate hearing pertains to rate
 13 changes, and more specifically a rate
 14 increase for the water division of the Old
 15 Bridge Municipal Utilities Authority.
 16 This hearing is for the purpose of a
 17 pass-through water rate increase that's from
 18 Middlesex Water Company, and any other rate
 19 change deemed necessary.
 20 At this time I'd like to have the
 21 authority's comptroller, Michelle Smith,
 22 sworn in to testify.
 23
 24 MICHELLE SMITH, sworn.
 25

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1 MR. JACOBS: Okay. Ms. Smith, can
 2 you describe your position with the
 3 authority?
 4 MS. SMITH: Well, I maintain all the
 5 financial records, including the preparation
 6 of the budget and the annual financial
 7 report and prepare all the vouchers for
 8 payment and implement all legislation and
 9 regulations pertaining to the financial
 10 operations of the authority.
 11 MR. JACOBS: And your position is
 12 currently comptroller?
 13 MS. SMITH: That's correct.
 14 MR. JACOBS: And as comptroller are
 15 you responsible for having public notices of
 16 any authority rate hearing published in the
 17 local newspapers?
 18 MS. SMITH: Yes.
 19 MR. JACOBS: I'm going to point your
 20 attention to what we've marked as Exhibit A.
 21 Is that a copy of the public notice
 22 that was published in connection with this
 23 rate hearing?
 24 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 25 MR. JACOBS: And was this published

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1 in the Asbury Park Press?
 2 MS. SMITH: Yes.
 3 MR. JACOBS: And I'm going to point
 4 your attention to what we've already marked
 5 as Exhibit B, which is an Affidavit of
 6 Publication.
 7 Is this an affidavit from the Asbury
 8 Park Press confirming that notice of this
 9 public meeting was published in the Asbury
 10 Park Press?
 11 MS. SMITH: Yes.
 12 MR. JACOBS: Okay. I'm also going
 13 to draw your attention to what we've marked
 14 as Exhibit C.
 15 Is Exhibit C a copy of the public
 16 notice that was published in the Home News
 17 Tribune?
 18 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 19 MR. JACOBS: And Exhibit D, was that
 20 the Affidavit of Publication showing that
 21 the Home News Tribune did, in fact, print
 22 the public notice in their newspaper?
 23 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 24 MR. JACOBS: Okay. Are you familiar
 25 with the rate increase that was proposed by

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1 Middlesex Water Company in proceedings
 2 brought before the New Jersey Board of
 3 Public Utilities?
 4 MS. SMITH: Yes. The proposed total
 5 increase was 19.76 percent, in which the
 6 authority's proposed share was
 7 20.55 percent.
 8 MR. JACOBS: Okay. Do you know
 9 whether the authority contested that
 10 proposed increase?
 11 MS. SMITH: Yes, we did. We entered
 12 into a shared service agreement with
 13 Marlboro Township and jointly retained legal
 14 counsel and expert to contest Middlesex
 15 Water's proposed rate increase.
 16 MR. JACOBS: And do you know what
 17 the result of that rate contest was?
 18 MS. SMITH: Yes, it was settled.
 19 And under the settlement, OBMUA's rate
 20 increase was reduced to 8.37 percent.
 21 MR. JACOBS: Okay. I point your
 22 attention to what we've already been
 23 marked -- what has already been marked as
 24 Exhibit E, and it is an Order Adopting
 25 Initial Decision/Settlement under BPU and

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1 OAL docket numbers.
 2 Is this the document that you recall
 3 reviewing which shows the settlement that
 4 the authority entered into with respect to
 5 Middlesex Water's proposed rate increase?
 6 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 7 MR. JACOBS: And can you just tell
 8 me under that agreement what the agreed upon
 9 rate increase to Middlesex Water was going
 10 to be?
 11 MS. SMITH: 8.37 percent.
 12 MR. JACOBS: Okay. Do you recall or
 13 do you know whether the authority formally
 14 adopted the settlement of 8.37 percent?
 15 MS. SMITH: Yes, we did. We adopted
 16 a resolution March 14, 2018 approving the
 17 settlement agreement.
 18 MR. JACOBS: And I point your
 19 attention to what we have marked as Exhibit
 20 F.
 21 Can you just review that and tell me
 22 if that is the resolution that you recall
 23 being passed by the authority?
 24 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 25 MR. JACOBS: And in that resolution

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1 there was an agreement to a rate increase of
 2 8.37 percent; is that correct?
 3 MS. SMITH: That's correct.
 4 MR. JACOBS: Did you, in fact,
 5 recommend to the executive director, Guy
 6 Donatelli, that the water rate should be
 7 increased?
 8 MS. SMITH: Yes, I did.
 9 MR. JACOBS: Can you take a look at
 10 what we've already marked as Exhibit G?
 11 Can you explain what is contained in
 12 Exhibit G which, for the record, is a letter
 13 from you to Guy Donatelli, executive
 14 director, and it's referring to pass-through
 15 rate hearing?
 16 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is. Basically
 17 I'm saying that the last three increases
 18 have been absorbed by the authority so they
 19 did not result in an increase.
 20 However, this increase is
 21 substantial and our retained earnings is no
 22 longer sufficient to cover this amount of
 23 the increase. So I recommended a rate
 24 increase.
 25 MR. JACOBS: Is 8.37 percent, in

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1 your professional opinion, a substantial
 2 increase?
 3 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 4 MR. JACOBS: And today as the
 5 comptroller of the authority, you're asking
 6 the commissioners to approve a rate increase
 7 to absorb the pass-through which is
 8 8.37 percent increase to Middlesex Water; is
 9 that correct?
 10 MS. SMITH: Yes. And the proposed
 11 increase to the MUA customer would be
 12 3.22 percent.
 13 MR. JACOBS: Okay. And can you take
 14 a look at the document which we've already
 15 marked as Exhibit H?
 16 And, again, for the record, this is
 17 a proposed resolution, Old Bridge Municipal
 18 Utility Authority rate structure, water
 19 division.
 20 Is this the resolution that you have
 21 recommended or are recommending to the
 22 commissioners which reflect the rates which
 23 include the proposed rate increase?
 24 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 25 MR. JACOBS: And in your

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1 professional opinion, is the proposed rate
 2 increase a fiscally sound decision and in
 3 the best interest for the financial well
 4 being of the authority?
 5 MS. SMITH: Yes, it is.
 6 MR. JACOBS: Okay. I don't have any
 7 other questions for Ms. Smith.
 8 So the next witness that I'd like to
 9 call is Dana Montanelli who works for Holman
 10 Frenia who is the authority's auditor.
 11
 12 DANA MONTANELLI, sworn.
 13
 14 MR. JACOBS: Ms. Montanelli, you are
 15 an account manager with Holman, Frenia &
 16 Allison?
 17 MS. MONTANELLI: Yes, an audit
 18 manager.
 19 MR. JACOBS: Okay. And how does
 20 Holman, Frenia & Allison serve the Old
 21 Bridge MUA?
 22 MS. MONTANELLI: We are the auditor.
 23 MR. JACOBS: Okay. And as auditors,
 24 just can you please give the commissioners
 25 just a broad -- brief idea of exactly what

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1 type of duties you perform?
 2 MS. MONTANELLI: Sure.
 3 Every year on an annual basis we
 4 come in and audit the authority's financial
 5 statements and provide an audit opinion on
 6 them.
 7 MR. JACOBS: Okay. And Holman,
 8 Frenia & Allison, they service other
 9 municipalities and governmental entities, as
 10 well as the Old Bridge Municipal Utilities
 11 Authority?
 12 MS. MONTANELLI: Yes.
 13 MR. JACOBS: And did you have the
 14 opportunity to review any documents related
 15 to this rate hearing prior to the meeting?
 16 MS. MONTANELLI: Yes, I did.
 17 MR. JACOBS: Can you tell the
 18 commissioners what you had the opportunity
 19 to review?
 20 MS. MONTANELLI: Sure.
 21 I reviewed all the exhibits that we
 22 just went over and I reviewed all of
 23 Michelle's calculations.
 24 MR. JACOBS: And have you had the
 25 opportunity to speak with Michelle Smith

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1 regarding the documents you reviewed, as
 2 well as any other matters and questions that
 3 you had concerning the proposed rate
 4 increase?
 5 MS. MONTANELLI: Yes.
 6 MR. JACOBS: And you were satisfied
 7 after talking to Michelle that all of your
 8 concerns were addressed?
 9 MS. MONTANELLI: Yes.
 10 MR. JACOBS: Okay. And based on
 11 your review of the documents and your
 12 communications with Ms. Smith, is it your
 13 professional opinion that the authority
 14 should approve the proposed rate structure
 15 as set forth in Exhibit H, which is the
 16 proposed resolution?
 17 MS. MONTANELLI: Yes.
 18 MR. JACOBS: Okay. That's all of
 19 the testimony that we're going to have on
 20 this.
 21 First I want to open the hearing to
 22 the public.
 23 Does anybody from the public have
 24 any questions or comments regarding the
 25 testimony that's been given or the proposed

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1 rate increase?
 2 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Yes, ma'am?
 3 MS. BONADIES: My name is Caren with
 4 a C, and my last name is Bonadies, B-O-N-A,
 5 D as in David, I-E, S as in Sam. My address
 6 is 19 Lindsey Circle, Old Bridge, New
 7 Jersey.
 8 So my question is: This rate
 9 increase, how long is this good for now?
 10 I mean there are senior citizens on
 11 fixed income, such as myself. This is
 12 really going to hurt us. Taxes went up.
 13 Water bills are going up. We know about the
 14 school taxes coming for next year. I mean
 15 you're forcing us out of Old Bridge, this is
 16 what's happening here, and we need some kind
 17 of guarantees or some kind of assistance
 18 from Old Bridge, especially for senior
 19 citizens and people on fixed incomes. You
 20 know, it's getting harder and harder to live
 21 here.
 22 MR. JACOBS: I think it might be
 23 helpful if Michelle explains what the real
 24 effect of this increase is.
 25 MS. SMITH: Yeah. I didn't get a

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1 chance to explain it.
 2 I'll tell you, the minimum bill
 3 currently is \$70.20 and it will go up, if
 4 this is approved, to 72.46 per quarter which
 5 comes out to \$0.75 per month. So that's all
 6 that increase will be.
 7 And for those qualified for the
 8 senior/disabled discount, it's \$0.61 per
 9 month.
 10 And we haven't had a rate increase
 11 in four years. So it's only going to be
 12 \$0.75, you know, on the average, the minimum
 13 bill.
 14 COMMISSIONER GREENE: The increase
 15 is forever, that's how long it is.
 16 MS. SMITH: Yeah, and it will be --
 17 MS. BONADIES: I'm sorry, for how
 18 long?
 19 COMMISSIONER GREENE: Forever.
 20 MS. SMITH: Yeah, unless Middlesex
 21 Water reduces their rates.
 22 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: That's based
 23 on the minimum lowest bill that anyone pays?
 24 MS. SMITH: The minimum.
 25 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: I think she

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1 wants to know how long.
 2 MS. SMITH: The average is
 3 3.22 percent is what the average is and it
 4 comes out to \$0.75.
 5 MS. BONADIES: Can I just ask one
 6 other question?
 7 MR. JACOBS: Yes, just come up.
 8 MS. BONADIES: Okay. I overheard in
 9 a conversation that Old Bridge sold its
 10 water rights to Middlesex.
 11 Can we like take them back, buy them
 12 back?
 13 MR. ROY: We never did that.
 14 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: We never sold
 15 them.
 16 Middlesex Water came in as a
 17 supplier of water to us when the amount of
 18 water that we can take out of the Old Bridge
 19 aquifer, which was up until thirty-five,
 20 forty years ago --
 21 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: 1983.
 22 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: 1983. At that
 23 point when Old Bridge had somewhere between
 24 48 and 50,000 people, and it's closer to 70
 25 today, they stopped us and every town that

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1 were pulling from most of the aquifers in
 2 central New Jersey from taking anymore
 3 water.
 4 Any new demand now that has to come
 5 in has to be bought at a much higher premium
 6 from Middlesex. We didn't make that
 7 decision. We were subject to it.
 8 So if the population explodes over
 9 the next five, ten, fifteen years, all new
 10 water will come from Middlesex Water. It
 11 won't get better but it has nothing to do
 12 with the OBMUA. We don't control it. It's
 13 mandated by the state.
 14 The last three years the OBMUA has
 15 not passed on any of those increases to you,
 16 to anyone. So we try and avoid it as much
 17 as possible.
 18 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: I think I've
 19 heard this from some other people.
 20 What did happen in 1902, Perth Amboy
 21 bought a lot of land in Old Bridge up by the
 22 Runyon Watershed, in Old Bridge. That's why
 23 they -- they are sitting on it. That
 24 happened in 1902. I don't know which party
 25 sold it or anything, but that's from 1902.

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1 Now, the other question you asked,
 2 are you asking how often are we going to
 3 have rate increases; is that the first part?
 4 MS. BONADIES: Yes.
 5 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: They didn't
 6 answer that.
 7 She wants to know are we going to
 8 have an increase every year? That was her
 9 question.
 10 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: The answer is
 11 no, it's not foreseen at this point.
 12 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: That's what
 13 I'm saying.
 14 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Usually you
 15 can expect that other parts of the budget
 16 could always change, health cost and all
 17 that could impact rates.
 18 The biggest and most recent
 19 succession of impacts is strictly based on
 20 water being purchased from Middlesex Water.
 21 We haven't been able to find an alternative,
 22 unfortunately.
 23 And I think John is right about
 24 Perth Amboy. I think it was 1898 when there
 25 were 700 people living in this town and that

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1 was the source of revenue for them at the
 2 time.
 3 Are there any further questions?
 4 All right. I'm going to close the public
 5 portion and open it for discussion by the
 6 commissioners.
 7 John?
 8 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: I have a
 9 couple questions. I guess I'm going to
 10 direct them to both Michelle and Mike Roy.
 11 I've been going over some of these
 12 notes and stuff that I have here. I'm going
 13 to read them, just tell me if they are
 14 correct. Okay?
 15 In 2012 we had a rate increase. It
 16 was a Middlesex Water pass-through. It was
 17 like 3.5 percent.
 18 Then in 2013 we had no increase at
 19 all; is that true?
 20 MS. SMITH: That's correct, yeah.
 21 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Okay. 2014 we
 22 had a 1.2 percent --
 23 MS. SMITH: That's right.
 24 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: -- increase
 25 because of the Middlesex pass-through?

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1 MS. SMITH: That is correct.
 2 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Okay. 2015,
 3 2016 and 2017 there was no increase, but it
 4 says absorbed 53,000 from Middlesex Water,
 5 3,000 from Middlesex Water, 71.
 6 What does that mean?
 7 MS. SMITH: Middlesex Water
 8 increased their rates but we absorbed it.
 9 We did not pass that along.
 10 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Okay. So
 11 those three years we didn't do any increase.
 12 Like you said, the last time we had a rate
 13 increase was 2014?
 14 MS. SMITH: Right. It's been four
 15 years since we had an increase.
 16 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: And you're
 17 looking at \$9 a year approximately right now
 18 for this one?
 19 MS. SMITH: Yes.
 20 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Okay. That's
 21 all I have.
 22 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: And the
 23 difference between those years and now, I
 24 think the increase is projected to be
 25 269,000 or somewhere thereabouts in terms of

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1 dollars from Middlesex which is beyond our
 2 ability to absorb it.
 3 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: How much is
 4 it?
 5 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: 269,000.
 6 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: What's our
 7 surplus right now?
 8 MS. SMITH: For water we don't have
 9 any left because we used what we had to
 10 balance the current budget that we are in.
 11 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: And what do
 12 we have in sewer?
 13 MS. SMITH: Sewer, well, we can't --
 14 you know, you can't use the sewer to balance
 15 the water. They have to stand on their own.
 16 So I'm not sure. The sewer,
 17 probably about -- in usable retainer,
 18 probably over a million or so.
 19 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: That's on the
 20 sewer side?
 21 MS. SMITH: On the sewer.
 22 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Yes, sir? The
 23 public is closed, unfortunately. Sorry.
 24 Any other commissioners wish to
 25 speak?

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1 All right. I'll entertain a
 2 motion --
 3 COMMISSIONER GREENE: I just don't
 4 like the word pass-through. It's pass-on.
 5 MR. ROY: Pass-on.
 6 COMMISSIONER GREENE: Pass-on.
 7 MS. SMITH: Right.
 8 COMMISSIONER GREENE: That's my
 9 comment.
 10 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: I
 11 would just like to say this pass-on,
 12 pass-through from Middlesex Water, we did
 13 absorb it. We've tried to contain costs
 14 but, unfortunately, also for those in the
 15 public, to operate the authority we are
 16 continuously getting unfunded mandates from
 17 the state and the federal government and
 18 this puts a cost and a burden on the MUA.
 19 So basically if this is not approved
 20 tonight, we see that we don't have a
 21 reserve, we don't have the surplus, and this
 22 is going to impact the authority.
 23 So with that understanding and based
 24 on the professionals, their opinion and all
 25 the efforts that we made to avoid this

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1 increase, I mean we partnered with Marlboro,
 2 we spent money on attorneys, we tried to
 3 fight with the BPU and it clearly was at
 4 19.7 percent. We got it down half.
 5 So I think every effort was made to
 6 stop this pass-through, and once we knew
 7 that it was coming from the BPU, that we did
 8 our due diligence and every effort was made
 9 to contain the cost.
 10 And it's just an unfortunate thing
 11 of reality, and I hope that the public
 12 understands. I never like increasing taxes
 13 or rates or anything, but it is a fact.
 14 Cost of everything goes up, and we, as an
 15 authority, as was explained, we buy forty
 16 percent of our water, forty percent of our
 17 water from Middlesex.
 18 So literally, with that in mind, we
 19 have to be prudent in maintaining the
 20 systems and also to realize that this cost,
 21 although we did it for three years, the
 22 negative impact that it would have on the
 23 authority and we've run out. We can't do it
 24 this year. We would all like to do it but
 25 realistically you can't. The authority

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1 can't sustain it.
 2 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: And one thing
 3 I would like to mention before I call for a
 4 vote is the rate to seniors, if it hadn't
 5 been said, I don't recall, where it would
 6 have been \$0.75 a month overall for the
 7 average ratepayer, it's \$0.61 to those who
 8 are eligible for the senior discount, which
 9 brings it down to \$7.25 per year rather than
 10 \$9.
 11 Is there any other discussion from
 12 the commissioners?
 13 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: You're
 14 telling me there's zero percent surplus in
 15 the water?
 16 MS. SMITH: Yeah, usable retainers.
 17 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: And when
 18 medical went up 150,000, does that get split
 19 evenly between the number of employees or
 20 does that come out of one side or the other?
 21 MS. SMITH: Between water and sewer?
 22 Well, yeah, they are split. You have the
 23 water employees, you have the sewer
 24 employees.
 25 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: You take it

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1 out separately?
 2 MS. SMITH: Yes, and the admin, they
 3 are split fifty/fifty.
 4 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: John?
 5 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: I'm sorry, I
 6 have one more thing.
 7 She talked about the other
 8 increases. There was one increase this
 9 year. They call it unregulated
 10 contaminants. They passed a bill in 1983
 11 and they called it -- it was the A280 bill.
 12 Things came out of that, like THMs, but I
 13 think there's like twenty-six items and
 14 eleven can't be tested yet because they
 15 don't have the equipment to go into that.
 16 And what's going to happen -- one of the
 17 tests this year was \$10,000. I don't even
 18 know if that effects this area.
 19 That's the problem that EPA does.
 20 Rather than regionalize it, like there's
 21 stuff that could be possible in the Rocky
 22 Mountains, stuff on the west coast that
 23 would never hit here, we also have to test
 24 for that. And the reason we can't test is
 25 because they are down to parts per trillion

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1 any new employees to do that or we dedicated
 2 people?
 3 MR. DONATELLI: Currently we
 4 dedicated the current staff we have. We're
 5 trying to get through it for the
 6 October 19th deadline. I know they've
 7 doubled up on the crews and so forth, and,
 8 you know, we'll get there.
 9 The unfortunate thing is it is a
 10 yearly thing.
 11 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Yeah.
 12 MR. DONATELLI: So as soon as you're
 13 done, you're back, you know, October 19th, I
 14 got to go back to hydrant number one, which,
 15 you know, wouldn't be my best situation.
 16 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: I
 17 would like to add to that.
 18 Due to the expertise and the
 19 professionalism of the employees of the MUA
 20 doing that work, if we pass that cost on to
 21 the fire department, people don't realize
 22 there is a budget, their budget would go up
 23 and that would come out of the taxpayers
 24 too.
 25 So this authority is doing a lot of

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1 and they can't find anything yet. So they
 2 are looking for a number that really doesn't
 3 exist.
 4 And as long as they keep putting
 5 these rates and stuff on us with doing all
 6 these testings, like she said, like she had
 7 asked, rates are going to keep going up.
 8 We're going to have to keep increasing our
 9 budgets to do this and, you know, getting
 10 paid for mandates and stuff, and that's
 11 just -- it's going to be hard unless we do
 12 something about where it's coming from, and
 13 that's DEP and EPA.
 14 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: And just one
 15 item I want to mention.
 16 The inspection of fire hydrants, the
 17 higher level of inspection that has been
 18 required by the state, we are performing
 19 that for all of the fire companies in town.
 20 MR. DONATELLI: Correct.
 21 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: And we are not
 22 passing on the expense to them.
 23 MR. DONATELLI: We don't collect
 24 anything.
 25 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Did we hire

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1 things that the average resident doesn't
 2 understand.
 3 MR. DONATELLI: We absorb a lot.
 4 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: We've
 5 absorbed a lot.
 6 This is not because of anything
 7 within the MUA. This is strictly because of
 8 the Middlesex Water Company which is a
 9 private company that has expenses and goes
 10 to the BPU with a rate, and we fought it and
 11 we got it down more than fifty percent. And
 12 I think that absorbing it three years and
 13 coming to pass that, what would happen, the
 14 negative impact on the authority, we cannot
 15 not pass this.
 16 As much as everyone says you don't
 17 like things increased, we don't like it.
 18 You can talk about your gas, your electric,
 19 everything. No one likes it. People who
 20 sit here on this board don't like it. But
 21 it is a fact to run the authority properly
 22 you have to have a stable financial picture
 23 and this is the way to do it.
 24 We've tried our best to minimize the
 25 impact. And as you can see, as was

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1 explained with the things that we do through
 2 the fire company and other services
 3 throughout the town, if you look all the
 4 time on the reports from the sewer and the
 5 water, what we do personally with each
 6 residence, every individual tries to do
 7 their best. And I think they should be
 8 commended, the entire staff, for trying
 9 their best, as always, in upholding a level
 10 of in the best interest of the residents.
 11 This is not the MUA. This is the
 12 BPU and this is Middlesex Water. And we
 13 have to do what's right to maintain the --
 14 COMMISSIONER GREENE: If this is a
 15 rate increase due to Middlesex Water, why
 16 are we talking about fire hydrants?
 17 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: All right.
 18 COMMISSIONER GREENE: I understand
 19 it is an issue. I have no problem with
 20 that.
 21 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: We
 22 can't absorb --
 23 COMMISSIONER GREENE: You know,
 24 you're bloviating, seriously. Let's move
 25 on.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: You have your
 2 opinion.
 3 COMMISSIONER GREENE: Let's move on.
 4 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: It's not
 5 really Middlesex Water. They are showing us
 6 right here, they have the same problem.
 7 They have a lot more tests. They are in
 8 probably worse trouble than we are.
 9 COMMISSIONER GREENE: Whatever.
 10 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Im saying --
 11 COMMISSIONER GREENE: What does this
 12 have to do with fire hydrants?
 13 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: -- it's not
 14 just an Old Bridge rate increase. The
 15 entire state is like this.
 16 MR. JACOBS: Guys, you can't talk
 17 over each other because the court reporter
 18 can't transcribe it.
 19 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: This is a rare
 20 opportunity in a rate hearing. People have
 21 expressed opinions in public which are not
 22 just impacted by this increase in rates.
 23 And I think it's our duty to make them aware
 24 of what those circumstances are.
 25 COMMISSIONER GREENE: You are right.

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1 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: So they better
 2 understand.
 3 COMMISSIONER GREENE: You're right.
 4 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: That's not
 5 bloviation.
 6 COMMISSIONER GREENE: We can talk
 7 about fire hydrants at another forum.
 8 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: The public
 9 isn't here necessarily for that. This is
 10 connected all to the cost of doing business.
 11 MR. JACOBS: Any other comments from
 12 the commissioners?
 13 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Ill make a
 14 motion to pass the resolution.
 15 MR. JACOBS: So a resolution to
 16 adopt the new rate structure --
 17 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Yes.
 18 MR. JACOBS: -- for the water
 19 division in accordance with the resolution
 20 which we've marked as Exhibit H --
 21 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Correct.
 22 MR. JACOBS: -- in the meeting?
 23 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Do I hear a
 24 second?
 25 MR. JACOBS: You need a first and a

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1 second.
 2 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: I made the
 3 first.
 4 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI:
 5 Second.
 6 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Roll call?
 7 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Carullo?
 8 COMMISSIONER CARULLO: No.
 9 MS. MORRIS: Dr. Greenberg?
 10 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: Yes.
 11 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Greene?
 12 COMMISSIONER GREENE: No.
 13 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Murphy?
 14 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Yes.
 15 MS. MORRIS: Mr. Weber?
 16 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Yes.
 17 COMMISSIONER GREENBERG-BELLI: It's
 18 easy to say no, but they don't have a
 19 solution. That's amazing.
 20 MR. JACOBS: Motion to adjourn?
 21 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: Motion to
 22 adjourn. And we will --
 23 COMMISSIONER MURPHY: Ill make a
 24 motion.
 25 VICE CHAIRMAN WEBER: We will open

1 the regular meeting.
 2 MR. JACOBS: Everybody in favor of
 3 adjourning?
 4 THE COMMISSIONERS: Aye.
 5 (Whereupon, the proceedings were
 6 concluded at approximately 6:56 in the evening.)
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CERTIFICATE

1
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 3
 4
 5 I, MICHELLE D. WILCOX, a Certified Court
 6 Reporter and Notary Public of the State of New
 7 Jersey, certify that the foregoing is a true and
 8 accurate transcript to the best of my ability of
 9 the deposition of said witness who was first duly
 10 sworn by me, on the date and place hereinbefore set
 11 forth.

12 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither
 13 attorney, nor counsel for, nor related to or
 14 employed by, any of the parties to the action in
 15 which this deposition was taken, and further that I
 16 am not a relative or employee of any attorney or
 17 counsel employed in this action, nor am I
 18 financially interested in this case.
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23

24 _____
 MICHELLE D. WILCOX, C.C.R.
 25 LICENSE NO. XI01745

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