

1 **STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**

2 **PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

3
4 **April 9, 2021 - 9:12 a.m.**

5 *[Remote Hearing conducted via Webex]*

6 **RE: DE 21-041**

7 **UNITIL ENERGY SYSTEMS, INC.:**

8 2021 Default Service.

9 *(Hearing regarding the six-month
period beginning June 1, 2021)*

10 **PRESENT:** Chairwoman Dianne H. Martin, Presiding
11 Cmsr. Kathryn M. Bailey

12 Doreen Borden, Clerk

13 Corrine Lemay, PUC Remote Hearing Host

14
15 **APPEARANCES:** **Reptg. Unitil Energy Systems, Inc.:**
16 Gary Epler, Esq.

17 **Reptg. PUC Staff:**

18 Lynn H. Fabrizio, Esq.

19 Richard Chagnon, Asst. Dir./Electric

20 Stephen Eckberg, Electric Division

21
22
23 Court Reporter: Steven E. Patnaude, LCR No. 52

24

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

I N D E X

PAGE NO.

**WITNESS PANEL: LINDA S. McNAMARA
 JEFFREY M. PENTZ
 DANIEL T. NAWAZELSKI**

Direct examination by Mr. Epler	9
Cross-examination by Ms. Fabrizio	11
Interrogatories by Commissioner Bailey	22

* * *

CLOSING STATEMENTS BY:

Ms. Fabrizio	23
Mr. Epler	26

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

E X H I B I T S

EXHIBIT NO.	D E S C R I P T I O N	PAGE NO.
1	Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. 2021 Default Service filing, including a Table of Contents, the Testimony of Jeffrey M. Pentz with attachments, the Testimony of Linda S. McNamara with attachments, and the Testimony of Daniel T. Nawazelski with attachments (CONFIDENTIAL VERSION)	<i>premarked</i>
2	Unitil Energy Systems, Inc. 2021 Default Service filing, consisting of a Table of Contents, the Testimony of Jeffrey M. Pentz with attachments, the Testimony of Linda S. McNamara with attachments, and the Testimony of Daniel T. Nawazelski with attachments <i>(REDACTED - For PUBLIC Use)</i>	<i>premarked</i>

P R O C E E D I N G

1
2 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: We are here this
3 morning in Docket DE 21-041, which is the Unitil
4 Energy Systems, Incorporated, Default Energy
5 Service rate proceeding.

6 I need to make the necessary findings
7 and go over ground rules related to having a
8 remote hearing.

9 As Chairwoman of the Public Utilities
10 Commission, I find that due to the State of
11 Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of
12 the COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with the
13 Governor's Emergency Order Number 12, pursuant to
14 Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is
15 authorized to meet electronically. Please note
16 that there is no physical location to observe and
17 listen contemporaneously to this hearing, which
18 was authorized pursuant to the Governor's
19 Emergency Order.

20 However, in accordance with the
21 Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are
22 utilizing Webex for this electronic hearing. All
23 members of the Commission have the ability to
24 communicate contemporaneously during this

1 hearing, and the public has access to
2 contemporaneously listen and, if necessary,
3 participate.

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

11 Okay. We have to take a roll call
12 attendance of the Commission. My name is Dianne
13 Martin. I am the Chairwoman of the Public
14 Utilities Commission. And I am alone.

15 Commissioner Bailey.

16 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Good morning,
17 everyone. Kathryn Bailey, Commissioner at the
18 Public Utilities Commission. And I am alone.

19 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. And we need
20 to take appearances. Let's see. Mr. Epler.

21 MR. EPLER: Yes. Good morning,
22 Chairwoman Martin, Commissioner Bailey. My name
23 is Gary Epler. I'm the Chief Regulatory Counsel
24 of Unitil Service Company, appearing on behalf of

1 Unitil Energy Systems, Incorporated.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you.

4 And Ms. Fabrizio.

5 MS. FABRIZIO: Good morning, Madam
6 Chair and Commissioner Bailey. I am Lynn
7 Fabrizio, Staff Attorney with the Commission, and
8 I am here on behalf of Commission Staff. With me
9 today are Steve Eckberg, a Utility Analyst in the
10 Electric Division, and Rich Chagnon, Assistant
11 Director of the Electric Division of the
12 Commission.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right. Thank
15 you.

16 And, for exhibits, I have Exhibits 1
17 and 2 prefiled and premarked for identification.
18 Any other exhibits this morning?

19 MR. EPLER: No, Madam Chair.

20 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. And we have
21 the Request for Confidential Treatment, pursuant
22 to Administrative Rule 201.06 and 201.07. So, we
23 will treat all of that designated information as
24 confidential during this hearing.

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Are there any other preliminary matters
2 we need to cover?

3 *[No verbal response.]*

4 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Seeing none. Let's
5 get the witnesses sworn in. Steve, would you
6 swear them in please.

7 (Whereupon **Linda S. McNamara,**
8 **Jeffrey M. Pentz,** and **Daniel T.**
9 **Nawazelski** were duly sworn by the Court
10 Reporter.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right.
12 Mr. Epler.

13 MR. EPLER: Thank you, Chairwoman
14 Martin. The Company filed its default service
15 filing last Friday. We have, as indicated, two
16 exhibits. The two exhibits are identical, with
17 the exception that Exhibit Number 1 is the
18 confidential version and Exhibit Number 2 is the
19 redacted version. But, otherwise, they are
20 identical in scope, pagination, and so on.

21 I think it may be similar, for purposes
22 of this hearing, that the witnesses will refer to
23 Exhibit Number 1 throughout, so that we're not
24 bouncing between exhibits. And if there is -- if

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 we're referring to confidential information,
2 either in the exhibits or through their
3 testimony, we will so indicate, so that the court
4 reporter is able to appropriately mark that
5 section.

6 As indicated, we have -- the Company
7 has three witnesses this morning. And, I'm
8 sorry, have they been sworn?

9 *(Court reporter indicating in the*
10 *affirmative.)*

11 MR. EPLER: Yes. Okay. I missed
12 that. Okay. So, I will start my
13 cross-examination [*sic*], if there is no other
14 issues -- or, actually, there is one other issue.
15 In the Petition, the Company requested an order
16 by today. We will -- we are amending that
17 Petition request, and request that the Commission
18 issue an order in this docket early next week.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you
21 for the clarification.

22 MR. EPLER: So, I will start my
23 examination by turning to Witness McNamara.

24 **LINDA S. McNAMARA, SWORN**

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

JEFFREY M. PENTZ, SWORN

DANIEL T. NAWAZELSKI, SWORN

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. EPLER:

Q Could you please state your name and position with the Company?

A (McNamara) My name is Linda McNamara. I am a Senior Regulatory Analyst for Unitil Service Corp.

Q Ms. McNamara, turning to what's been marked as "Exhibit Number 1", and if you refer to Pages, I'm looking at the pagination at the bottom right-hand corner of that exhibit, Pages 150 through 200. Was that material prepared by you or under your direction?

A (McNamara) Yes, it was.

Q And do you have any changes or corrections to anything in that, in those materials?

A (McNamara) No.

Q And do you adopt those materials as your testimony in this proceeding?

A (McNamara) Yes.

Q Thank you. Mr. Pentz, would you please state your full name and your position with the

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Company?

2 A (Pentz) My name is Jeff Pentz. And I'm a Senior
3 Energy Analyst at Unitil Service Corp.

4 Q Mr. Pentz, could you please refer to what's been
5 marked as "Exhibit Number 1", and the Pages 1
6 through 149. Was the material on those pages
7 prepared by you or under your direction?

8 A (Pentz) Yes, it was.

9 Q And do you have any changes or corrections?

10 A (Pentz) I do not.

11 Q And do you adopt the material there as your
12 testimony in this proceeding?

13 A (Pentz) Yes.

14 Q Thank you. Mr. Nawazelski, could you please
15 state your full name and your position with the
16 Company?

17 A (Nawazelski) My name is Dan Nawazelski. I'm a
18 Lead Financial Analyst for Unitil Service
19 Corporation.

20 Q And, as with the other witnesses, can you please
21 refer to Exhibit Number 1. And was this, at
22 Pages 201 through 242, was this material prepared
23 by you or under your direction?

24 A (Nawazelski) It was.

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Q And do you have any changes or corrections?

2 A (Nawazelski) No, I do not.

3 Q And do you adopt those materials as your
4 testimony in this proceeding?

5 A (Nawazelski) Yes, I do.

6 MR. EPLER: Thank you very much.
7 Chairwoman Martin, the witnesses are available
8 for cross-examination.

9 The only other addition that I will
10 note for the record is that the Staff and the
11 Company did engage in a technical session this
12 past Wednesday, from 9 o'clock, for approximately
13 an hour and a half, where the materials that the
14 Company submitted were reviewed, and extensive
15 questions were asked and answered.

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Thank you,
18 Mr. Epler. Ms. Fabrizio.

19 MS. FABRIZIO: Thank you, Madam Chair.
20 And I would like to start with some questions for
21 Mr. Pentz. Excuse me.

22 **CROSS-EXAMINATION**

23 BY MS. FABRIZIO:

24 Q Mr. Pentz, did the Company receive a sufficient

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 number of bids to deem the solicitation to have
2 been competitive in this docket?

3 A (Pentz) Yes, we did. We received similar
4 participation to previous RFPs. And I would
5 consider this a competitive solicitation.

6 Q Thank you. And what criteria did the Company use
7 to evaluate the bids?

8 A (Pentz) For this particular solicitation, we used
9 price points as our most significant point. You
10 know, there are other circumstances where, you
11 know, non-price points may be an issue, such as a
12 qualitative issue, like credit. But, for this
13 particular solicitation, it was price point which
14 was the determining factor.

15 Q And where in your testimony would we find the
16 criteria laid out for reference? Would that be
17 at Bates Pages 008, Lines 1 through 7?

18 A (Pentz) Yes. That's correct.

19 Q Okay. Great. And I believe this is not
20 confidential. Who were the winning bidders?

21 A (Pentz) The winning bidders were NextEra Energy
22 Company -- NextEra Energy Services for the small
23 and medium classes. And then, we had Exelon who
24 won the large class.

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Q Thank you. Did the resulting bids conform to the
2 Company's internal estimate of market prices?

3 A (Pentz) Yes. They did.

4 Q And is that reflected in your testimony as well?

5 A (Pentz) Yes. We, you know, what we do is, we
6 take power forwards and natural gas forwards, and
7 we do look at those prices going forward and
8 review if the prices were appropriate, and they
9 were.

10 Q Thank you. And did the Company determine that
11 the results are market-based?

12 A (Pentz) Yes.

13 Q And how was that determined?

14 A (Pentz) Well, through the solicitation, it's a
15 competitive solicitation. And, you know, we
16 reviewed these prices when compared to power
17 forwards to determine their consistency and
18 accuracy. And we determined they were in scope.

19 Q Okay. Thank you. And did either of the selected
20 suppliers request any substantive changes to the
21 master supply agreement or to the credit terms
22 proposed by the Company?

23 A (Pentz) No. No. There were no changes to the
24 master supply agreement.

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Q Okay. Thank you. And when will these rates, if
2 approved, go into effect?

3 A (Pentz) June 1st, 2021.

4 Q Thank you. And, Mr. Pentz, on Bates Page 147,
5 you provide information on the calculation of the
6 RPS costs to be included in those rates, is that
7 correct?

8 A (Pentz) Yes. That's correct.

9 Q And, just for the record, "RPS" are
10 "Renewable" -- I'm forgetting the "P". What does
11 "RPS" stand for? "Portfolio Standard".

12 A (Pentz) "Renewable Portfolio Standards", right.

13 Q Thank you.

14 A (Pentz) So, what we have here is, we just have
15 the compliance obligations for the period June
16 2021 through November 2021. We also have some
17 market price assumptions that we used broker
18 quotes for, to come up with a "proxy price", if
19 you will, to try to estimate REC costs for 2021.

20 Q Okay. And, on the table that you have, I have
21 Bates Page 147, on this matter, excuse me. Do
22 you have that in front of you?

23 A (Pentz) Yes.

24 Q Okay. In the center section of that table, you

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 show market price assumptions for each REC class,
2 is that correct?

3 A (Pentz) Yes. And, just to add. So, in, for
4 example, in Class III, we used the alternative
5 compliance payment rate, due to the expected
6 shortage in New Hampshire Class III RECs for
7 2021. So, you know, for example, Class I uses
8 market prices, because those RECs are readily
9 available. But, if we're trying to estimate what
10 our compliance costs are, it makes sense to use
11 the alternative compliance rate for some of these
12 classes that we think are going to be under
13 supplied and will result in an alternative
14 compliance payment.

15 Q Thanks. And how do your market price assumptions
16 compare to the alternative compliance prices?

17 A (Pentz) Sure. So, for Class I, you know, the
18 market prices are lower than the alternative
19 compliance rate. So, the alternative compliance
20 rate, I believe, for Class I, is around \$58 for
21 2021. So, you can see the market prices are
22 lower. And that indicates that there's, you
23 know, there's supply out there of New Hampshire
24 Class I RECs, and there probably won't be a

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 shortage.

2 When we go to "Class I Carve-Out",
3 which are your New Hampshire Class I Thermal,
4 this we're also using the alternative compliance
5 rate for. And this is because, typically,
6 there's a shortage in this REC class as well. I
7 understand this class to be around, I think,
8 usually two-thirds supplied. So, there's usually
9 a pretty significant deficit in this particular
10 class.

11 So, moving on to "Class II", we've used
12 "\$45.00", which is, you know, what we've seen in
13 brokerage pricing. It's a very thinly traded
14 class, because you can actually, you know, we get
15 a lot of net metering credit for Class II, which
16 covers most of the obligation.

17 And, like we had just said on Class
18 III, we're going to use the ACP, because there
19 isn't that much supply out there. You know, I
20 think we talk about this a little bit later, too,
21 but many of these RECs in Class III are actually
22 going to Connecticut, because most of these RECs
23 are co-qualified in Connecticut, and Connecticut
24 has a higher ACP rate. So, we're seeing a lot of

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 shortages, in particular, in Class III. So, we
2 use the ACP rate. And Unitil is expecting to
3 comply with Class III almost entirely by
4 alternative compliance payments.

5 And then, moving onto "Class IV" here,
6 "\$23.25" is the market price, which is slightly
7 lower than the ACP, which I believe is around,
8 let's see, around 27 -- I'm sorry, \$29.

9 Q Thank you. That was very helpful. And, with
10 respect to the Class III REC situation that you
11 mentioned, are you aware that the Commission
12 currently has an open docket in DE 20-037 to
13 review the 2020 Class III RPS requirement?

14 A (Pentz) Yes. I'm aware of the docket.

15 Q And did the Company provide any comment to the
16 Commission on the current Class III situation?

17 A (Pentz) The Company did not.

18 Q Was the Company successful in procuring Class III
19 RECs for the 2020 compliance year?

20 A (Pentz) The Company was not successful in
21 procuring Class III RECs for 2020. You know, we
22 issued an RFP last October in 2020 for 50 percent
23 of our requirement. But we did not get any
24 bidders at all. And I followed up with the

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 brokerage we work with as well, and, you know,
2 they have advised me that there really is no
3 supply of New Hampshire Class III RECs, because
4 they're all going to Connecticut.

5 Q And does the Company have any expectation that it
6 would be able to acquire some of those Class III
7 RECs during the final trading period for 2020
8 compliance between April 15 and June 15?

9 A (Pentz) I expect that we will not be able to
10 procure New Hampshire Class III RECs at all for
11 2020. And, you know, we'll see what happens with
12 2021 next year.

13 Q Okay. Thank you. And, speaking of next year,
14 does your calculation of RPS compliance cost
15 estimates on Bates Page 147 reflect similar
16 market conditions for Class III with respect to
17 the 2021 compliance year?

18 A (Pentz) Yes. Yes. You know, we put down the ACP
19 of "\$34.99", which is the ACP rate for 2021.

20 Q Okay. Thanks. And that's all I have for
21 Mr. Pentz. Thank you very much.

22 And turning now to Ms. McNamara. How
23 do the prices resulting from this energy
24 solicitation impact customer rates for the Small,

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Medium, and Large Customer Groups?

2 A (McNamara) The proposed rates are shown on Bates
3 Page 166 and 168. Page 166 provides the Non-G1
4 Default Service prices proposed for the June to
5 November 2021 period. And, as shown, the Company
6 is proposing a rate of 7.091 cents per
7 kilowatt-hour. And, for the -- for the
8 Residential class; and for the G2 and Outdoor
9 Lighting class it's 5.992 dollars [cents?] per
10 kilowatt-hour. The G1 rates, which are provided
11 on Page 168, are only a portion of the charge as
12 those are market-based.

13 Q I'm sorry, those are what? I didn't hear that.

14 A (McNamara) "Market".

15 Q Oh. Okay. Thank you. And, with respect to
16 residential customers, will some of those
17 residential customers experience individual
18 differing monthly rates?

19 A (McNamara) Some residential customers are on the
20 Variable Default Service rate. Most residential
21 customers do not opt for the variable rate.
22 There are some that opt for it, and there are
23 some that are put on it, because they have
24 returned from a supplier.

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 Q Okay. Thank you. And are there any additional
2 rate increases going into effect at the same time
3 as these default service rate changes?

4 A (McNamara) The Company has proposed, and I
5 believe it is noted in my testimony, I just want
6 to point you to it.

7 Q Thank you.

8 A (McNamara) It's Bates Page 153. There is
9 discussion of tariff changes, both on Lines 5
10 through 10, which discusses the changes to the
11 Low-Income Discounts as a result of the proposed
12 Default Service charges, but, as footnoted as
13 well, the Company recently filed a base rate case
14 in Docket DE 21-030. And there are proposed
15 temporary rates for June 1 as well.

16 Q Thank you. That's helpful. Actually, that
17 concludes my questions for Ms. McNamara. So,
18 thank you very much.

19 And just a couple questions, one
20 question -- well, a couple of questions for Mr.
21 Nawazelski. Mr. Nawazelski, your testimony
22 provides the results of Unitil's 2020 Lead-Lag
23 Study for default service and REC purchases, is
24 that correct?

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 A (Nawazelski) Yes, it does.

2 Q Thank you. And, as you state in your testimony,
3 the methodology followed is similar to that
4 previously used and provided annually in prior
5 dockets, is that correct?

6 A (Nawazelski) That is correct.

7 Q And you mention that on Bates Page 204, Lines 18
8 to 20, is that right?

9 A (Nawazelski) Yup.

10 Q Thank you. Are there any changes of note in the
11 results of this year's study? For example, was
12 there any noticeable increase in revenue lag due
13 to slower payments by customers possibly related
14 to the impacts of the COVID pandemic?

15 A (Nawazelski) There was a -- there was a 2.58 day
16 increase in revenue lag for the G1 customers, and
17 a 1.28 increase on the non-G1 customer side for
18 revenue lag. I can't say if that's directly
19 attributable to the pandemic itself. It could be
20 based on other consumer behaviors. And I
21 wouldn't say that that's a noticeable increase in
22 revenue lag days year over year.

23 So, I can't say if it's for sure
24 related to the pandemic. But I would say that

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 there is -- some of that increase probably is
2 attributable to the pandemic.

3 MS. FABRIZIO: Okay. Thank you. Madam
4 Chair, that concludes my questions for the
5 Company witnesses. Thank you all.

6 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you,
7 Ms. Fabrizio. And thank you for that very
8 thorough cross-examination.

9 Commissioner Bailey.

10 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Yes. I just have
11 one follow-up question for Mr. Nawazelski. But
12 Ms. Fabrizio asked all the questions I had
13 prepared. So, thank you, Ms. Fabrizio.

14 BY COMMISSIONER BAILEY:

15 Q Mr. Nawazelski, you said that there was a "1.28
16 day increase in the revenue lag for residential
17 customers", is that right?

18 A (Nawazelski) That's Non-G1 customers, which the
19 Residential class is a part of.

20 Q Okay. And, so, what that means is that the
21 non-G1 customers took 1.28 days longer to pay
22 their bills than they did last year, is that what
23 that means?

24 A (Nawazelski) That's correct. There is -- there's

[WITNESS PANEL: McNamara|Pentz|Nawazelski]

1 four different components that roll up to the
2 revenue lag itself. But the net increase is all
3 attributable to billing-to-collection, which is
4 the time from when the Company sends out to bill
5 the customer to when the customer makes the
6 payment.

7 So, yes. It was a 1.28 day increase
8 compared to the prior period study. But I
9 wouldn't say that, in aggregate, that the total
10 revenue lag days is any out of the norm from
11 previous studies as well.

12 COMMISSIONER BAILEY: Okay. Thank you.
13 That's all I have.

14 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Great. Thank you.
15 Mr. Epler, do you have any redirect?

16 MR. EPLER: No, I do not. Thank you.

17 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Anything
18 else that we need to do before we close?

19 *[No verbal response.]*

20 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: All right. Then,
21 we will strike ID on Exhibits 1 and 2 and submit
22 them as full exhibits. And hear from
23 Ms. Fabrizio first, in closing.

24 MS. FABRIZIO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

1 Staff has reviewed the filings in this docket and
2 determined that the Company conducted the
3 solicitation and selection of winning bids for
4 default energy service in compliance with the
5 Settlement Agreement and process approved by
6 Commission Order Number 24,511, in Docket 05-064,
7 and as modified by approvals granted in
8 subsequent orders.

9 Staff believes that the current
10 selection of suppliers is reasonable and based on
11 a competitive procurement, and that the resulting
12 proposed rates are market-based. Staff has also
13 reviewed the components of the updated Lead-Lag
14 Study provided by the Company and finds the
15 results to be acceptable. Staff therefore
16 recommends that the Commission find the results
17 of the Company's 2020 Default Service and
18 Renewable Energy Credits Lead-Lag Study used in
19 the calculation of the working capital
20 requirement to be just and reasonable.

21 Staff further finds that the requests
22 for approval laid out in the Company's Petition
23 filed and dated April 2nd, 2021, and repeated in
24 Mr. Pentz's testimony on Bates Pages 005 and 006,

1 to be reasonable, and the solicitation process as
2 discussed today and laid out in the Company's
3 April 2nd filing in Mr. Pentz's testimony and in
4 the Bid Evaluation Report attached to his
5 testimony to have been conducted as required and
6 approved through prior Commission orders.

7 For these reasons, Staff supports the
8 approval of the three contracts for Default
9 Service, and recommends that the Commission
10 approve Unitil's Petition and proposed rates.

11 And, finally, Staff would like to add
12 that today's hearing marks an unusual milestone
13 worth noting. It was just one year and one day
14 ago that the PUC began remote hearings, on April
15 8th, in last year's Unitil Default Service
16 docket, DE 20-039, when we conducted our first
17 remote Webex hearing with Chairwoman Martin, and
18 Commissioners Bailey and Giaimo. Staff Attorney
19 Suzanne Amidon did the hearing for Staff, and
20 Attorney Epler represented Unitil. Staff and
21 Company participants were exactly the same one
22 year ago.

23 So, it's probably safe to say that none
24 of us thought at the time we would still be

1 conducting business in this way. We've learned a
2 lot and have all demonstrated our ability to
3 tackle new challenges, and adjust how we go about
4 doing the business of our work. We appreciate
5 the significant effort that our colleagues in the
6 Commission and state government have made to
7 enable our remote approach to work. And we
8 appreciate similar efforts from our counterparts
9 at Unitil and other utilities, and stakeholder
10 organizations have made to facilitate the ongoing
11 business of the Commission.

12 So, I want to thank you.

13 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Thank you,
14 Ms. Fabrizio. And thank you for noting that. I
15 didn't realize that. But that is a pretty huge
16 accomplishment. And I agree, I don't think any
17 of us ever thought we'd be doing this a year
18 later. But I think we're doing it pretty well at
19 this point. We started off rough, but we've
20 certainly gotten pretty good at it. So, thank
21 you for noting that.

22 Mr. Epler.

23 MR. EPLER: Yes. Thank you very much.
24 That's a hard act to follow. A very eloquent

1 statement by Attorney Fabrizio.

2 I have very little to add. But I
3 direct the Commission to the Company's Petition
4 and the relief requested therein. And, as
5 indicated, with the change in the request for an
6 order to sometime early next week, if possible.

7 And I would also, again, just thank the
8 Staff for the opportunity to engage in the
9 technical session on Wednesday. I think it was
10 very helpful, both for the Company and the Staff,
11 to have an opportunity to review the long history
12 of these default service filings, and to affirm
13 that there's a reason why we do what we do. And
14 we had a chance to review some of the early
15 orders. And I think was very helpful to
16 understanding on both sides.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN MARTIN: Okay. Well, thank
19 you, everyone.

20 It looks like it's nice outside. So, I
21 hope you all have a great weekend.

22 With that, we will close the record,
23 take this matter under advisement. And we will
24 issue an order early next week.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

The hearing is adjourned. Enjoy the
rest of the day.

***(Whereupon the hearing was adjourned
at 9:43 a.m.)***