			Page 1
1	PUBI	LIC UTILITIES COMMI	SSION OF OHIO
2			
3	IN THE MATTER	OF THE APPLICATION	
4	OF CHRISTI WAT	TER SYSTEM,	
5	INC., FOR AN	INCREASE IN RATES	
6	AND CHARGES,		Case No.
7	App.	licant,	24-798-WW-AIR
8			
9		PUBLIC HEARI	NG
10	DATE:	Monday, April 28,	2025
11	TIME:	6:04 p.m.	
12	BEFORE:	Honorable Jay Agr	anoff
13		Honorable Ian Kie	ffer
14	LOCATION:	City of Defiance	City Council
15		631 Perry Street	
16		Defiance, OH 4351	2
17	REPORTED BY:	Micheal Rennillo	
18	JOB NO.:	7281284	
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

	Page 2
1	APPEARANCES
2	ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT CHRISTI WATER SYSTEM,
3	INCORPORATED:
4	KENT BEILHARZ
5	Christi Water System, Incorporated
6	200 Perry Street
7	Defiance, OH 43512
8	(419) 782-1040
9	
10	ON BEHALF OF MAUREEN WILLIS OF THE OHIO OFFICE OF THE
11	CONSUMERS' COUNSEL:
12	DON KRAL
13	Ohio Consumers' Counsel
14	65 East State Street, Suite 700
15	Columbus, Ohio 43215
16	
17	ALSO PRESENT:
18	Erin Biehl, Public Affairs, PUCO
19	Keegan Fay, Ohio Consumers' Counsel
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

		Page 3
1	INDE	Σ
2	WITNESS(ES):	PAGE
3	Karl Kissner	11
4	Galen Locher	16
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			Page 4
1		EXHIBITS	
2	NO.	DESCRIPTION	ID/EVD
3		(None marked.)	
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1 PROCEEDINGS

JUDGE AGRANOFF: The Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio has scheduled for public hearing at
this time and place. Case number 24-798-WW-AIR, which
is captioned in the matter of the application of
Christi Water System, Incorporated for an increase in
rates and charges.

My name is Jay Agranoff. With me is Ian Kieffer, and we are the administrative law judges assigned by the commission to hear this case. Also with us this evening is Erin Biehl in the back. She is with our public affairs office, and she will be assisting us with signing in witnesses and answering any questions that you may have.

At this time, I will take the appearances on behalf of the parties on behalf of the Christi Water System, Incorporated.

MR. BEILHARZ: Kent Beilharz, vice president.

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. What was your name again, sir?

MR. BEILHARZ: Kent Beilharz.

THE REPORTER: Can you spell the last?

MR. BEILHARZ: B as in boy,

25 E-I-L-H-A-R, Z as in zebra.

	Page 6
1	THE REPORTER: Thank you very, very
2	much.
3	JUDGE AGRANOFF: And on behalf of the
4	Ohio Consumers' Counsel?
5	MR. KRAL: Thank you, Your Honors. My
6	name is Don Kral assistant consumers' counsel on
7	behalf of Maureen Willis, Consumers' Counsel of the
8	Ohio Office of the Consumers' Counsel at 65 East State
9	Street, Columbus, Ohio, Suite 700, 43215.
10	And for those who don't know the Office
11	of Consumers' Counsel, also with me is Keegan Fay with
12	the OCC Public Affairs Department. And Keegan has
13	brought some flyers along, which I think he's handed
14	out, on the rate increase. We're a state agency
15	that's designated to represent residential consumers
16	when utility companies file for rate increases. So we
17	represent the residential consumer in whatever the
18	rate increase may be. Thank you.
19	JUDGE AGRANOFF: You're welcome. Thank
20	you.
21	And let the record reflect that the
22	staff of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio is
23	also a party to this proceeding, but I do not believe
24	counsel is present at this point in time.

On August 8, 2024, as amended on August

25

29, 2024, Christi Water filed its application to increase rates and charges for water service to residents of the Christi Meadows subdivision, the River Chase Properties, and Webco properties in the city of Defiance.

2.5

Under the rates and terms proposed within the application, Christi proposes a new consolidated rate structure. Under the proposed rate design, a customer's minimum bill would increase from \$34.81 to \$45.43 or \$10.62 per month, a -- which represents a 30.5 percent increase. Also under the company's proposed rate structure, a company using 400 cubic feet of water would see their bill increase approximately 18.5 percent.

On April 7th -- I'm sorry. I need to check something for a minute. On March 21, 2025, the Commission staff filed the staff report which recommends that the Commission adopt a rate structure in which customers of all usage levels would experience a 19.33 percent increase, which would generate a revenue requirement of approximately -- I believe it's \$203,000 [sic].

Staff recommends a monthly charge of \$41.54 for the first 50 cubic feet of water and one volumetric rate of 0.1581 -- 0.158197 for usage above

50 cubic feet.

Under staff's recommended rate design and revenue requirement, a customer's minimum bill would increase from \$34.81 to \$41.54 or a \$6.73 per month increase. This represents a 19.3 percent increase. Also under staff's developed rates, a customer using 400 and -- 400 cubic feet of water would see their bill increase approximately 19.33 percent.

The purpose of this evening's hearing is to receive comments from the public regarding Christi Water's application in this case. This is not intended to be a question-and-answer session, but instead is your opportunity to let the commission know what you think about the applicant's request. An evidentiary hearing in this matter is scheduled for May 21, 2025, at the offices of the commission.

Subsequent to this hearing, the commission will review the application, the staff report, the public and evidentiary hearing records, as well as the comments and other applicable documents to reach a decision with respect to Christi's application. I would note that pursuant to the entry of October 15, 2025, the Ohio Consumers' Counsel was granted intervention in this proceeding.

Tonight's hearing is being transcribed by a court reporter. If you plan to testify, please speak clearly so that the court reporter can accurately reflect your comments on the record. if you have a prepared written statement, it would be helpful if you provide a copy to the court reporter for reference, in order to ensure that the transcript is accurate.

After I finish with my introductory remarks, we will begin inviting individuals who have signed up to speak about the application. Each person who has signed up to testify shall be permitted to speak and provide about five minutes of testimony. Before you present your testimony, we'll ask you to take an oath or an affirmation that what you're about to say is the truth. We'll also ask you to state your name and address for the record, that you will provide your thoughts regarding Christi's application.

The parties in this case, Mr. Kieffer and myself, will be permitted to ask you questions about your statements. The testimony that you'll provide tonight will be considered part of the official record in this case. It will be reviewed by the commission before a final decision is rendered on the application.

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Page 10

A couple of other notes. If you decide not to testify, when I call your name, you certainly have the opportunity to pass, and we will merely move on to the next witness. If you decide that you prefer to file written comments in the docket, Erin Biehl -- as I mentioned before, of our commission staff -- can provide you with information about how you can submit those comments.

Once you finish testifying or if you're here only to observe, you may leave the hearing at any time that you wish; we only ask that you do so quietly. The commission appreciates your participation in tonight's hearing, and we want everyone who has signed up to testify to have the opportunity to do so. For this reason, please keep your testimony, as I mentioned before, to approximately five minutes in length.

And right now we will call our first witness.

And, Mr. Kieffer, if you --

JUDGE KIEFFER: I'm not quite sure how to -- I can't -- it's pretty faint -- but the address is 2133, in Hawthorne. I apologize, sir. Before you testify, could you please raise your right hand?

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Page 11 1 WHEREUPON, 2 KARL KISSNER, 3 called as a witness and having been first 4 duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, was 5 examined and testified as follows: 6 JUDGE KIEFFER: Okay. Thank you. You 8 can put your hand down. And could you please state 9 your name -- spell and state your name and provide your address for the record. 10 11 MR. KISSNER: Karl Kissner, K-A-R-L K-I-S-S-N-E-R. Address is 2133 Hawthorne Drive, 12 13 Christi Meadows. 14 JUDGE KIEFFER: I was way closer with 15 your name than I thought, but I didn't want to mess it 16 So -up. 17 MR. KISSNER: That's fine. 18 JUDGE KIEFFER: Please go ahead 19 whenever you're ready, sir. 20 MR. KISSNER: Okay. I've been a 21 resident of Christi Meadows for approximately 19 22 years. What I'm about to testify on is nothing more 23 than my observation. In regards to the actual rate increase, I have very little objection to it. All of 24 2.5 our costs have went up. I understand that probably

Page 12

1 better than most.

What I have objection to is, based on the last increase, there were promises made to the addition of upgrades that were never made. At least to my observation, the only upgrade I saw was a kid walking around finding where the shutoffs were because they were not documented. I actually found my own shutoff and documented it for them.

If this is their idea of reinvesting in the community, in the addition, in an infrastructure that in some areas is 50 years old, then I have objection to a rate increase. Until they are willing to document what they're going to do for our addition in the future in regards to repair, maintenance, and any funds needed for a major catastrophe, I will object to any increase. Thank you.

JUDGE KIEFFER: Thank you, sir. I have a -- before you step down, I have a question.

MR. KISSNER: Sure.

JUDGE KIEFFER: So you mentioned the addition. Could you elaborate on that? I understand it's a subdivision, but --

MR. KISSNER: The addition is Christi Meadows; okay? So Christi Meadows -- you're probably not familiar with the area. I don't know -- Galen

which is a state agency, to represent residential consumers like yourself during the case.

2.5

Now, what's your understanding of the condition of the infrastructure of the water system, and are you aware that it looks like approximately 30 percent of the water is unaccounted for?

MR. KISSNER: The only thing I can tell you about the infrastructure of it from my own personal experience is over seven months ago, I had a horrendous water bill. So we tested the meter. We tested the reader part outside; we tested the house to make sure there were no leaks. There were no leaks.

It was a faulty meter, and it was a faulty reader device outside. This was well over seven months ago. I just got a new meter two weeks ago. It took over seven months to get a meter. Now, you could say it took that long to get one, but that means you have none in backup.

And as any utility, they're generally required to have a spare, so I'm a little disheartened at the overall preparedness. And if that is any example -- one house, one meter -- of the addition as a whole, we have a problem.

MR. KRAL: Thank you very much.

JUDGE AGRANOFF: Sir, if we could --

	Page 15
1	just have a couple of clarifying questions. With
2	respect to the need for meter replacement that you
3	discussed, from your perspective, was your bill
4	inaccurate as a result of the faulty meter?
5	MR. KISSNER: They couldn't read it.
б	They were guessing. The numbers outside, some of them
7	were so sun-faded you couldn't read them. So was it a
8	faulty meter, or was it a faulty meter reader? I'm
9	not going to make that call.
10	JUDGE AGRANOFF: Okay. Was there
11	MR. KISSNER: I can merely tell you it
12	was in error.
13	JUDGE AGRANOFF: Was there any
14	rectification of it?
15	MR. KISSNER: They adjusted the one
16	bill.
17	JUDGE AGRANOFF: Okay.
18	Any questions from the company?
19	MR. BEILHARZ: No.
20	JUDGE AGRANOFF: Okay.
21	JUDGE KIEFFER: Thank you, sir.
22	Next, I believe, it might be "Kalen"?
23	They reside at 4105 Timber Lane.
24	MR. LOCHER: Good evening, gentlemen.
25	JUDGE KIEFFER: Good evening, sir.

- 1 Before you testify, could you please raise your right
- 2 hand?
- 3 WHEREUPON,
- 4 GALEN LOCHER,
- 5 | called as a witness and having been first
- 6 duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole
- 7 truth, and nothing but the truth, was
- 8 examined and testified as follows:
- JUDGE KIEFFER: Thank you, sir. You
- 10 | can put your hand down. And could you please say and
- 11 | spell your name for the record and provide your
- 12 address.
- MR. LOCHER: I'm Galen, G-A-L-E-N,
- 14 Locher, L-O-C-H-E-R. I reside at 4105 Timber Lane
- 15 Drive, located in -- in the -- in the Township of
- 16 | Noble, in the county of Defiance.
- 17 JUDGE KIEFFER: Thank you, sir. You
- 18 can proceed whenever you're ready.
- MR. LOCHER: I wear two hats. I'm a
- 20 consumer, and I also work for Christi Water. I've
- 21 been helping with the system for a period of almost 40
- 22 years. I have installed meters; I have helped with
- 23 leaks; I bring in contractors to repair.
- And as pointed out, we are an aging
- 25 | community. We came, we had children, we raised our

children, and we're an old neighborhood now. I'm an 82-year-old member of that neighborhood now. I have a history of being there almost 50 years, almost as old as the community itself.

As far as repairs go, I was the one that came and put a meter in for Karl Kissner, as soon as they made a meter available to me -- and directions. I made effort to contact him; I needed to get another phone number. I contacted him, made arrangements -- he was extremely cordial to me. We installed a new meter. We put in a solid state reader, and I made sure that the meter was working and the reader was working that day.

And I came back a week later to verify that it was still working. And it indeed was operating. I have no prior knowledge to the condition. I do have to agree with Karl. There was no way to read the numbers on the outside reader; it -- the -- the sun had baked it clean.

As far as repairs, we've pointed out that we're a 50-year-old company. And we had a 12-inch water main break last year that had to be repaired. We had to work with a lot of people --contractors, get materials in. And we did it smoothly, and we maintained water pressure throughout

the repair with the over guidance of a lady from the city water treatment plant and made sure that everything was in line. We established boil alerts in case it would -- have to; it proved to be unnecessary.

We had another leak on Misty Shores; we took care of -- as soon as we could. We had some residential leaks on -- on properties that -- we worked with the property owners to repair them quickly. As far as meters, they are damn hard to get -- excuse me. But they're hard to get. We are in a society now that's moving on to a better meter, and we are looking to fund ourselves so that we can put in those new meters and have more accurate water readings.

We have a lady -- a -- a lady of record that reads our -- does our paperwork for the state.

And she drives our community three days a week looking for a leak, and I'm proud to say she hasn't kept me busy at all this summer. So --

As far as the second hat, I've had water every morning.

JUDGE KIEFFER: I don't have any questions for -- if you're done, sir, I don't have any questions for you.

Judge Agranoff?

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	Page 19
1	JUDGE AGRANOFF: Nothing from me.
2	MR. KRAL: Just one or two few
3	questions. Thank you first, thank you for
4	testifying.
5	MR. LOCHER: I appreciate that. Thank
6	you.
7	MR. KRAL: Does Christi Water, to your
8	knowledge, have meters in storage or as backup?
9	MR. LOCHER: I have one right now.
10	MR. KRAL: You have one?
11	MR. LOCHER: I have one.
12	MR. KRAL: Okay. What does that
13	MR. LOCHER: That means I have one in
14	my garage and a reader.
15	MR. KRAL: Okay. And that's you
16	you keep that in your garage?
17	MR. LOCHER: And I keep that in my
18	garage. I don't have to search for it; it's right
19	there.
20	MR. KRAL: Okay. Other than your
21	garage, are you aware of any other meters that Christi
22	Water has as backups in storage?
23	MR. LOCHER: You don't know how busy I
24	am.
25	MR. KRAL: Okay.

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Page 20
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                    MR. BEILHARZ: Can I answer that?
                    MR. KRAL: Well, no. He's --
 2
 3
                    JUDGE KIEFFER: No.
 4
                    MR. KRAL: But are you aware of any
     other meters that Christi Water has?
5
 6
                    MR. LOCHER: I -- I'm -- you want me to
     give under oath an -- to answer that, and I don't
8
     believe I can give you an accurate answer. So I'm
9
     not -- not trying to do that.
10
                    MR. KRAL: Okay. So is it fair to say
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     that, as we stand here today, you don't know of any
12
     other meters other than the one in your garage?
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                    MR. LOCHER: And I'd have to -- I'd
14
     have to say yes to that.
15
                    MR. KRAL: Now, you heard
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     Mr. Kaisner --
17
                    MR. LOCHER: Kissner. It's a good
18
     name.
                    MR. KRAL: -- Kissner testify. Now,
19
20
     did you know him outside of this?
21
                    MR. LOCHER: Outside -- 40 years,
22
     probably.
23
                    MR. KRAL: Okay. Is -- does he live
24
     near -- near you, or --
                    MR. LOCHER: I think he's -- I've been
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Page 21

1 in his home in the last couple weeks.

MR. KRAL: Okay. You heard him testify that, basically, it took seven months after he raised the issue for him to get the meter. Do you have any explanation or understanding yourself why it took that long?

MR. LOCHER: Once they -- once they appointed me to -- to go change it, I made an effort to contact them. I found out that the number we had wasn't correct; we got -- got that corrected. And Karl made an appointment with me very quickly, and we were cordial with each other.

MR. KRAL: Sure. I'm glad to hear that.

MR. LOCHER: I'm not much of a fighter.

MR. KRAL: In terms of your role, I mean, how long would you say -- between when you were notified of the need to replace that meter and when you got it in, how long was that process?

MR. LOCHER: I probably messed around three, four days trying to get a phone number, and then when I got that corrected, I got ahold of Karl. And I think he said, "Next couple days."

MR. KRAL: Okay. So of the seven months, you maybe took up one week of that?

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Page 22
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                    MR. LOCHER: I -- I'm fairly efficient.
                    MR. KRAL: Okay. The 12-inch water
 2
 3
     main that broke, are you aware of how old that water
 4
     main was?
 5
                    MR. LOCHER:
                                 I can't quarantee -- 50.
 6
                    MR. KRAL: Fifty years at least?
 7
                    MR. LOCHER: Fifty -- pretty close to
8
     50 years.
                The community was established back in '74.
9
     So --
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                    MR. KRAL: Okay. So -- and you believe
11
     that was an original water meter?
12
                    MR. LOCHER: Oh, absolutely.
13
                    MR. KRAL:
                              And are you aware of other
14
     meters like his that are unable to be read?
15
                    MR. LOCHER:
                                 I replaced one last week.
16
                    MR. KRAL: Okay. I believe, in
17
     discovery, Christi Water said that basically every
18
     meter needs to be replaced; would you agree with that?
                    MR. LOCHER: Absolutely. They last --
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20
     they have a -- a 11- to 19-year history of operating;
21
     ours are well over that. The company tells me they've
22
     been working in a deficit, and we need to -- to
23
     replace it with a much more accurate, much more
     updated water system and -- and water meter.
24
2.5
                    MR. KRAL: All right. Thank you very
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Page 23

much.

JUDGE KIEFFER: Thank you, sir. All righty. That's everyone that we have signed up to testify today. Is there anyone else present who would like to put anything onto the record as a witness?

MR. BEILHARZ: Should I put on the

record for the meters on hand?

JUDGE AGRANOFF: Actually, that would be something that you would be providing at the evidentiary hearing.

MR. BEILHARZ: Okay.

JUDGE AGRANOFF: Thank you. Why don't we take about a 15-minute break and see whether any other individuals come in who may have anticipated testifying this evening.

I also would like to clarify that the statement that I had read earlier regarding staff's proposed rate design and the revenue requirement that would result from that is actually an amount that — the revenue requirement that would be generated would've been \$221,939. So I just wanted to clarify the record with respect to that.

And at this time, let's take a 15-minute break, and we will reconvene at 6:45. Thank you.

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Page 24
                    THE REPORTER: Going off the record at
1
 2
     6:28 p.m.
 3
                    (Off the record.)
 4
                    THE REPORTER: Back on the record at
     6:45 p.m.
 5
 6
                    JUDGE AGRANOFF: Okay. We're going to
 7
     go back on the record at this time.
                    As I had mentioned previously, before
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9
     we took a break, we were going to afford individuals
     that may have wanted to testify that were not here
10
11
     when we began the opportunity to still provide their
     testimony. Is there anybody present currently that
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     would like to testify who may have not, up until this
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     point?
15
                    Hearing none, then we will conclude our
16
     hearing for this evening. And I thank you, everybody,
     for the participation. And we will have, as I
17
18
     mentioned previously, the evidentiary hearing which is
     currently scheduled for May 21st at the commission's
19
20
     offices.
               Thank you.
21
                    We are in recess.
                                        Thank you.
22
                    THE REPORTER: Going off the record at
23
     6:46 p.m.
                     (Whereupon, at 6:46 p.m., the
24
2.5
                    proceeding was concluded.)
```

1

CERTIFICATE

I, MICHEAL RENNILLO, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn; that the proceedings were recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action. Muhal R. Rom

17

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MICHEAL RENNILLO

Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

this transcript was prepared from the digital audio

proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and

recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said

transcript is a true and accurate record of the

I, ASHLEY JEMISON, do hereby certify that

ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

ASHLEY JEMISON

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0.1581 7:25	30 14:5	7th 7:15	9:15
0.158197 7:25	30.5 7:11	8	afford 24:9
1	32201 26:14	8 6:25	agency 6:14
10.62 7:10	34.81 7:10 8:4	82 17:2	14:1
	4	a	aging 16:24
11 3:3 22:20 12 17:21 22:2			ago 14:9,15,16
12 17:21 22:2	40 16:21 20:21	ability 25:10	agranoff 1:12
15 8:24 23:13	400 7:12 8:7,7	26:7	5:2,8 6:3,19
23:24	41.54 7:24 8:4	above 7:25	13:12,13 14:25
16 3:4	4105 15:23	absolutely	15:10,13,17,20
18.5 7:14	16:14	22:12,19	18:25 19:1
19 11:21 22:20	419 2:8	accurate 9:8	23:8,12 24:6
19.3 8:5	43215 2:15 6:9	18:13 20:8	agree 17:17
19.33 7:20 8:8	43512 1:16 2:7	22:23 25:9	22:18
2	45.43 7:10	26:5	ahead 11:18
200 2:6	5	accurately 9:4	ahold 21:22
2024 6:25 7:1	50 7:24 8:1	action 25:12,16	air 1:7 5:4
2025 1:10 7:16	12:11 17:3,21	26:8,12	alerts 18:3
8:17,24	22:5,8	actual 11:23	amended 6:25
203,000 7:22	6	actually 12:7	amount 23:19
21 7:16 8:17		13:8 23:8,19	answer 8:13
21018 25:17	6.73 8:4	addition 12:4	20:1,7,8
2133 10:23	631 1:15	12:10,13,21,23	answering 5:13
11:12	65 2:14 6:8	13:2,2 14:22	anticipated
21st 24:19	6:04 1:11	address 9:17	23:14
221,939 23:21	6:28 24:2	10:22 11:10,12	anybody 24:12
24-798 1:7 5:4	6:45 23:24 24:5	16:12	apologize 10:23
28 1:10	6:46 24:23,24	adjusted 15:15	appearances
28 1.10 29 7:1	7	administrative	5:16
49 1.1	700 2:14 6:9	5:9	applicable 8:21
	7281284 1:18	adopt 7:18	applicant 1:7
	74 22:8	affairs 2:18	2:2
	22.0	5:12 6:12	
		cal Calutions	

applicant's	b	boy 5:24	christi 1:4 2:2,5
8:15		break 17:22	5:6,17 7:1,3,7
application 1:3	b 4:1 5:24	23:13,24 24:9	8:12 11:13,21
5:5 7:1,7 8:12	back 5:11	bring 16:23	12:23,24 16:20
8:19,23 9:11	17:14 22:8	broke 22:3	19:7,21 20:5
9:18,25	24:4,7	brought 6:13	22:17
appointed 21:8	backup 14:18	busy 18:19	christi's 8:22
appointment	19:8	19:23	9:18
21:11	backups 19:22	C	city 1:14,14 7:5
appreciate 19:5	baked 17:19	_	13:7 18:2
appreciates	based 12:2	c 2:1 5:1 16:14	clarify 23:16,21
10:12	basically 21:3	call 10:2,18	clarifying 15:1
approximately	22:17	15:9	clean 17:19
7:14,21 8:8	began 24:11	called 11:3 16:5	clearly 9:3
10:17 11:21	behalf 2:2,10	captioned 5:5	close 22:7
14:5	5:16,16 6:3,7	care 18:6	closer 11:14
april 1:10 7:15	beilharz 2:4	case 1:6 5:4,10	clothesline 13:9
area 12:25	5:18,18,22,22	8:12 9:19,23	columbus 2:15
areas 12:11	5:24 13:15	14:2 18:4	6:9
arrangements	15:19 20:1	catastrophe	come 23:14
17:10	23:6,11	12:15	comments 8:11
ashley 26:2,15	believe 6:23	certainly 10:2	8:21 9:4 10:5,8
assigned 5:10	7:22 15:22	certificate 25:1	commission 1:1
assistant 6:6	20:8 22:10,16	26:1	5:3,10 6:22
assisting 5:13	best 25:10 26:6	certify 25:4	7:17,18 8:14
attorney 25:14	better 12:1	26:2	8:17,19 9:24
26:10	18:11	change 21:8	10:6,12
audio 25:8 26:3	biehl 2:18 5:11	charge 7:23	commission's
	10:5	charges 1:6 5:7	24:19
august 6:25,25	big 13:6	7:2	
available 17:7 aware 14:5	bill 7:9,13 8:3,8	chase 7:4	community 12:10 16:25
	14:10 15:3,16	check 7:16	17:4 18:17
19:21 20:4	boil 18:3	children 16:25	
22:3,13		17:1	22:8

	I		
exactly 13:1	fine 11:17	glad 21:13	24:18
examined 11:6	finish 9:9 10:9	go 11:18 17:5	helped 16:22
16:8	first 7:24 10:18	21:8 24:7	helpful 9:6
example 14:22	11:3 16:5 19:3	goes 13:3	helping 16:21
excuse 18:10	five 9:13 10:17	going 12:13	hereto 25:15
experience 7:20	flyers 6:13	15:9 24:1,6,9	26:11
14:9	follows 11:6	24:22	history 17:3
explanation	16:8	good 13:2	22:20
21:5	foregoing 25:3	15:24,25 20:17	home 21:1
extremely	25:4 26:4	granted 8:25	honorable 1:12
17:10	found 12:7	guarantee 22:5	1:13
f	21:9	guessing 15:6	honors 6:5
faded 15:7	four 21:21	guidance 18:1	horrendous
faint 10:22	fund 18:12	h	14:10
fair 20:10	funds 12:15	h 4:1 5:25	house 14:11,22
fairly 22:1	further 25:13	16:14	houses 13:1
familiar 12:25	26:9	hand 10:24	i
far 17:5,20	future 12:14	11:8 16:2,10	ian 1:13 5:9
18:9,20	g	23:7	idea 12:9
faulty 14:13,14	g 5:1 16:13	handed 6:13	inaccurate 15:4
15:4,8,8	galen 3:4 12:25	hard 18:9,10	inch 17:22 22:2
fay 2:19 6:11	16:4,13	hat 18:20	incorporated
feet 7:13,24 8:1	garage 19:14	hats 16:19	2:3,5 5:6,17
8:7	19:16,18,21	hawthorne	increase 1:5 5:6
fifty 22:6,7	20:12	10:23 11:12	6:14,18 7:2,9
fighter 21:15	generally 14:19	hear 5:10 13:22	7:11,13,20 8:4
file 6:16 10:5	generate 7:21	21:13	8:5,6,8 11:24
filed 7:1,17	generated	heard 20:15	12:3,12,16
final 9:24	23:20	21:2	increases 6:16
financially	gentlemen	hearing 1:9 5:3	individuals
25:15 26:11	15:24	8:10,16,18,20	9:10 23:14
finding 12:6	give 20:7,8	9:1 10:10,13	24:9
		23:10 24:15,16	

information	k	20:11,20	located 16:15
10:7		knowledge	location 1:14
infrastructure	k 11:11,12	17:16 19:8	locher 3:4
12:10 14:4,8	kaisner 20:16	25:10 26:6	15:24 16:4,13
installed 16:22	kalen 15:22	kral 2:12 6:5,6	16:14,19 19:5
17:11	karl 3:3 11:2	13:18,19,24,24	19:9,11,13,17
intended 8:13	11:11 17:6,17	14:24 19:2,7	19:23 20:6,13
interested	21:11,22	19:10,12,15,20	20:17,21,25
25:15 26:12	keegan 2:19	19:25 20:2,4	21:7,15,20
intervention	6:11,12	20:10,15,19,23	22:1,5,7,12,15
8:25	keep 10:15	21:2,13,16,24	22:19
introductory	19:16,17	22:2,6,10,13,16	long 14:17 21:6
9:9	kent 2:4 5:18	22:25	21:17,19
inviting 9:10	5:22	1	looking 18:12
issue 21:4	kept 18:18	_	18:17
j	kid 12:5	1 5:25 11:11	looks 14:5
	kieffer 1:13 5:9	16:13,14	lot 17:23
jay 1:12 5:8	9:19 10:20,21	lady 18:1,15,15	m
jemison 26:2	11:7,14,18	lake 13:3	***
	12.17 20 12.4	15.00	1 10 2 4
26:15	12:17,20 13:4	lane 15:23	made 12:3,4
26:15 job 1:18	13:10,14,20,23	16:14	17:7,8,9,12
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9	16:14 law 5:9	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25 15:10,13,17,20	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17 11:20 12:19,23	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17 levels 7:19	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance 12:14
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25 15:10,13,17,20 15:21,25 16:9	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17 11:20 12:19,23 13:6,17,22	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17 levels 7:19 limits 13:8	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance 12:14 major 12:15
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25 15:10,13,17,20 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22,25	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17 11:20 12:19,23 13:6,17,22 14:7 15:5,11	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17 levels 7:19 limits 13:8 line 18:3	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance 12:14 major 12:15 make 14:12
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25 15:10,13,17,20 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22,25 19:1 20:3 23:2	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17 11:20 12:19,23 13:6,17,22 14:7 15:5,11 15:15 17:6	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17 levels 7:19 limits 13:8 line 18:3 little 11:24	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance 12:14 major 12:15 make 14:12 15:9
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25 15:10,13,17,20 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22,25 19:1 20:3 23:2 23:8,12 24:6	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17 11:20 12:19,23 13:6,17,22 14:7 15:5,11 15:15 17:6 20:17,19	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17 levels 7:19 limits 13:8 line 18:3 little 11:24 13:20 14:20	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance 12:14 major 12:15 make 14:12 15:9 march 7:16
26:15 job 1:18 judge 5:2 6:3 6:19 10:21 11:7,14,18 12:17,20 13:4 13:10,12,13,14 13:20,23 14:25 15:10,13,17,20 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22,25 19:1 20:3 23:2	13:10,14,20,23 15:21,25 16:9 16:17 18:22 20:3 23:2 kind 13:8 kissner 3:3 11:2,11,11,17 11:20 12:19,23 13:6,17,22 14:7 15:5,11 15:15 17:6	16:14 law 5:9 leak 18:5,18 leaks 14:12,12 16:23 18:7 leave 10:10 length 10:17 levels 7:19 limits 13:8 line 18:3 little 11:24	17:7,8,9,12 18:2 21:8,11 main 17:22 22:3,4 maintained 17:25 maintenance 12:14 major 12:15 make 14:12 15:9

materials 17:24	minute 7:16	never 12:4	ohio 1:1 2:10
matter 1:3 5:5	23:13,24	new 7:7 14:15	2:13,15,19 5:3
8:16	minutes 9:13	17:11 18:13	6:4,8,9,22 8:24
maureen 2:10	10:17	nice 13:3,6,8	13:25 25:20
6:7	misty 18:5	noble 16:16	okay 11:7,20
meadows 7:3	monday 1:10	notary 25:19	12:24 13:9
11:13,21 12:24	month 7:10 8:5	note 8:23	15:10,17,20
12:24	monthly 7:23	notes 10:1	19:12,15,20,25
mean 21:17	months 14:9,15	notified 21:18	20:10,23 21:2
means 14:18	14:16 21:3,25	number 5:4	21:24 22:2,10
19:13	morning 18:21	17:9 21:9,21	22:16 23:11
member 17:2	move 10:3	numbers 15:6	24:6
mentioned 10:6	moving 18:11	17:18	old 12:11 17:1
10:16 12:20	n	0	17:2,3,21 22:3
24:8,18	n 2:1 3:1 5:1	o 5:1 16:14	once 10:9 21:7
merely 10:3	11:12 16:13	oath 9:15 20:7	21:7
15:11	name 5:8,21	object 12:16	operating
mess 11:15	6:6 9:17 10:2	objection 11:24	17:16 22:20
messed 21:20	11:9,9,15	12:2,12	opportunity
meter 14:10,13	16:11 20:18	observation	8:14 10:3,15
14:15,16,22	name's 13:18	11:23 12:5	24:11
15:2,4,8,8 17:6	13:24	observe 10:10	order 9:7
17:7,11,12	near 20:24,24	occ 6:12 13:14	original 22:11
18:11 21:4,18	need 7:15 15:2	october 8:24	outcome 25:16
22:11,18,24	21:18 22:22	office 2:10 5:12	26:12
meters 16:22	needed 12:15	6:8,10 13:25	outside 13:7
18:9,13 19:8	17:8	officer 25:2	14:11,14 15:6
19:21 20:5,12	needs 22:18	offices 8:17	17:18 20:20,21
22:14 23:7		24:20	overall 14:21
micheal 1:17	neighborhood		own 12:7 14:8
25:2,18	17:1,2	official 9:23	owners 18:8
minimum 7:9	neither 25:11	oh 1:16 2:7	
8:3	26:7	22:12	

[p - recess] Page 7

р	please 9:2	process 21:19	quickly 18:9
p 2:1,1 5:1	10:15,24 11:8	promises 12:3	21:11
p.m. 1:11 24:2	11:18 16:1,10	properties 7:4	quietly 10:12
24:5,23,24	point 6:24	7:4 18:7	quite 10:21
page 3:2	24:14	property 18:8	r
paperwork	pointed 16:24	proposed 7:6,8	r 2:1 5:1,25
18:16	17:20	7:12 23:18	11:11,12 16:14
part 9:22 13:5	prefer 10:4	proposes 7:7	raise 10:24
13:6,7 14:11	prepared 9:5	proud 18:18	16:1
participation	26:3	proved 18:4	raised 16:25
10:13 24:17	preparedness	provide 9:6,13	21:3
parties 5:16	14:21	9:17,22 10:7	rate 6:14,16,18
9:19 25:12,14	present 2:17	11:9 16:11	7:8,8,12,18,25
26:8,11	6:24 9:14 23:4	24:11	8:2 11:23
party 6:23	24:12	providing 23:9	12:12 23:18
pass 10:3	president 5:19	public 1:1,9	rates 1:5 5:7
people 17:23	pressure 17:25	2:18 5:2,3,12	7:2,6 8:6
percent 7:11,14	pretty 10:22	6:12,22 8:11	reach 8:22
7:20 8:5,9 14:6	13:2,3 22:7	8:20 25:19	read 15:5,7
period 16:21	previously 24:8	puco 2:18	17:18 22:14
permitted 9:12	24:18	purpose 8:10	23:17
9:20	prior 17:16	pursuant 8:23	reader 14:11
perry 1:15 2:6	25:5	put 11:8 13:9	14:14 15:8
person 9:11	probably 11:25	16:10 17:6,11	17:12,13,18
personal 14:9	12:24 13:1	18:12 23:5,6	19:14
perspective	20:22 21:20	q	readings 18:14
15:3	problem 14:23	qualified 25:7	reads 18:16
phone 17:9	proceed 16:18	question 8:13	ready 11:19
21:21	proceeding	12:18 13:16	16:18
place 5:4 13:3	6:23 8:25	questions 5:14	reason 10:15
plan 9:2	24:25 26:4	9:20 13:11	receive 8:11
plant 18:2	proceedings	15:1,18 18:23	recess 24:21
	25:3,5,6,9 26:6	18:24 19:3	

Veritext Legal Solutions

1 1	•11 1 17	•1 4 72	. 7.00
recommended	rennillo 1:17	residents 7:3	sic 7:22
8:2	25:2,18	respect 8:22	signature 25:17
recommends	repair 12:14	15:2 23:22	26:14
7:18,23	16:23 18:1,8	result 15:4	signed 9:11,12
reconvene	repaired 17:23	23:19	10:14 23:3
23:24	repairs 17:5,20	revenue 7:21	signing 5:13
record 6:21 9:4	replace 21:18	8:3 23:18,20	sir 5:21 10:23
9:17,23 11:10	22:23	review 8:19	11:19 12:17
16:11 18:15	replaced 22:15	reviewed 9:23	13:16 14:25
23:5,7,22 24:1	22:18	right 10:18,24	15:21,25 16:9
24:3,4,7,22	replacement	16:1 19:9,18	16:17 18:23
25:9 26:5	15:2	22:25	23:2
recorded 25:6	report 7:17	righty 23:3	size 13:2
recording 25:8	8:20	river 7:4	skills 25:10
26:4	reported 1:17	role 21:16	26:6
records 8:20	reporter 5:20	S	smoothly 17:25
rectification	5:23 6:1 9:2,3	s 2:1 4:1 5:1	society 18:11
15:14	9:6 13:19 24:1	11:12,12	solid 17:11
reduced 25:7	24:4,22	saw 12:5	soon 17:6 18:6
reference 9:7	represent 6:15	scheduled 5:3	sorry 5:20 7:15
reflect 6:21 9:4	6:17 13:25	8:16 24:19	spare 14:20
regarding 8:11	14:1	search 19:18	speak 9:3,11,13
9:18 23:17	represents 7:11	second 18:20	spell 5:23 11:9
regards 11:23	8:5	see 7:13 8:8	16:11
12:14	request 8:15	23:13	staff 6:22 7:17
reinvesting	required 14:20	service 7:2	7:17,23 8:19
12:9	requirement	session 8:13	10:6
related 25:11	7:21 8:3 23:18	seven 14:9,15	staff's 8:2,6
26:7	23:20	14:16 21:3,24	23:17
relative 25:13	reside 15:23	shores 18:5	stand 20:11
26:10	16:14	shutoff 12:8	state 2:14 6:8
remarks 9:10	resident 11:21	shutoffs 12.6	6:14 9:16 11:8
rendered 9:24	residential 6:15	511410115 12.0	11:9 14:1
	6:17 14:1 18:7		17:11 18:16

[state - want] Page 9

25.20	4-1 25.2.12	4b b 4 0.10	4
25:20	taken 25:3,12	thoughts 9:18	typewriting
statement 9:5	26:9	three 18:17	25:7
23:17	tell 11:4 13:1	21:21	u
statements	14:7 15:11	timber 15:23	unable 22:14
9:21	16:6	16:14	unaccounted
step 12:18	tells 22:21	time 1:11 5:4	14:6
storage 19:8,22	terms 7:6 21:16		under 7:6,8,11
street 1:15 2:6	tested 14:10,11	10:11 23:23	8:2,6 20:7
2:14 6:9	14:11	24:7	understand
structure 7:8	testified 11:6	today 20:11	11:25 12:21
7:12,18	16:8	23:4	understanding
subdivision 7:3	testify 9:2,12	tonight 9:22	14:3 21:5
12:22 13:5,7	10:2,14,24	tonight's 9:1	unnecessary
submit 10:7	11:22 16:1	10:13	18:4
subsequent	20:19 21:2	took 14:16,17	updated 22:24
8:18	23:4 24:10,13	18:6 21:3,5,25	upgrade 12:5
suite 2:14 6:9	testifying 10:9	24:9	upgrades 12:4
summer 18:19	19:4 23:15	township 16:15	usage 7:19,25
sun 15:7 17:19	25:5	transcribed 9:1	using 7:12 8:7
sure 10:21	testimony 9:13	transcriber	utilities 1:1 5:2
12:19 13:17	9:14,21 10:16	26:1	6:22
14:12 17:12	24:12	transcript 9:7	utility 6:16
18:2 21:13	thank 6:1,5,18	26:3,5	14:19
sworn 11:4	6:19 11:7	transcriptionist	
16:6 25:5	12:16,17 14:24	25:8	V V
system 1:4 2:2	15:21 16:9,17	treatment 18:2	verify 17:14
2:5 5:6,17 14:4	19:3,3,5 22:25	true 25:9 26:5	vice 5:18
16:21 22:24	23:2,12,24	truth 9:16 11:4	volumetric
t	24:16,20,21	11:5,5 16:6,7,7	7:25
t 4:1	thing 14:7	trying 20:9	W
take 5:15 9:15	think 6:13 8:15	21:21	walking 12:6
	20:25 21:23	two 14:15	want 10:13
23:13,23	thought 11:15	16:19 19:2	11:15 13:9

Veritext Legal Solutions

[want - zebra] Page 10

20:6	worked 18:8
wanted 23:21	working 17:12
24:10	17:13,15 22:22
water 1:4 2:2,5	would've 23:21
5:6,17 7:1,2,13	written 9:5
7:24 8:7 14:4,6	10:5
14:10 16:20	ww 1:7 5:4
17:22,25 18:2	
18:13,21 19:7	X
19:22 20:5	x 3:1 4:1
22:2,3,11,17,24	y
22:24	yeah 13:15,18
water's 8:12	13:23
way 11:14	year 17:2,21,22
13:19,22 17:18	22:20
we've 17:20	years 11:22
wear 16:19	12:11 16:22
webco 7:4	17:3 20:21
week 17:14	22:6,8
18:17 21:25	Z
22:15	z 5:25
weeks 14:15	zebra 5:25
21:1	
welcome 6:19	
went 11:25	
willing 12:12	
willis 2:10 6:7	
wish 10:11	
witness 3:2	
10:4,19 11:3	
16:5 23:5 25:4	
witnesses 5:13	
work 16:20	
17:23	

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in

Case No(s). 24-0798-WW-AIR

Summary: Transcript in the matter of the application of Christi Water System, Public Hearing held April 28, 2025 at :00 p.m. before the Honorable Jay Agranoff and the Honorable Ian Kieffer at the City of Defiance Council, 631 Perry Street, Defiance, Ohio 43512 electronically filed by Ms. Donielle M. Hunter on behalf of Veritext Legal Solutions.