

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 25153

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of
John Rentz for an increase in non-
resident rates and authorization to
install meters on certain individuals.

Application No. 18146.

John Rentz, in propria persona.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

John Rentz, applicant herein, owns and operates a public utility water system supplying twenty-seven consumers in the Fairview Heights section of Capitola, in the County of Santa Cruz, and asks the Commission to authorize an increase in the rates charged non-resident consumers. Applicant alleges that certain permanent residents use water wastefully for lawn and garden irrigation and that his system cannot supply the demand during the summer periods under such conditions and for this reason he also asks permission to install meters.

A public hearing was held in this matter before Examiner Johnson at Santa Cruz.

The Commission in its Decision No. 20385 dated October 24, 1928, authorized John Rentz to file the following schedule of rates:

METER RATES

Annual Charge:

Minimum annual charge, payable in advance, which entitles consumer to a maximum of 500 cubic feet of water per month for a period of eight months-----\$12.00

All use during other months, 500 cubic feet or less, per month----- 1.50

For Use over 500 Cubic Feet:

Next 3,500 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet-----\$00.25
Next 3,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet----- .20
Over 7,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet----- .15

FLAT RATES

Annual Charges:

Domestic rate for permanent residents-----\$15.00
Domestic rate for non-permanent residents----- 12.00
Domestic and garden use, permanent residents----- 19.20

Any consumer is entitled to metered service upon application therefor and the utility may meter any and all service connections.

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Authority to install meters was granted through the establishment of the above meter rates and requires no further action at this time by the Commission. Applicant therefore is at liberty to install meters at any time.

Mr. Rentz desires to increase the present flat rate charge to non-resident or summer users from twelve dollars (\$12) per year to fifteen dollars (\$15) per year and asks for permission to modify the monthly minimum quantity rate for all classes of service to an allowance of 4,000 gallons per month, or 533 cubic feet. From the evidence it appears that the request of Mr. Rentz for a modification of the monthly quantity rate will make little, if any, difference in the charges to the consumers; however, serious objection was made by many of the consumers to any increase in the rates now charged

based primarily upon the fact that the water service is now and for many years last past has been exceedingly poor, unreliable and generally unsatisfactory. The quality of the water is acknowledged by all to be very fine; however, the water supply is obtained from two small wells, one a 3-inch cased well, 168 feet in depth, and the other a 60-foot dug well, the water from the latter being elevated by means of a windmill. The pumping equipment is obsolete and overloaded and the storage facilities, consisting of two tanks of a total capacity of 17,000 gallons, are wholly inadequate to properly supply the demands of the consumers during the summer months. Certain of the pipe lines in the distribution system are too small to deliver good service to the consumers. It is evident that, in order to supply sufficient water to the users, it will be necessary to reconstruct the entire system, including the drilling of new wells and the installation of additional storage tanks or reservoirs. The revenues derived from the small number of consumers under the present rates would not justify the expenditures for this purpose. The rates now charged are similar to those in effect on other systems in the general vicinity delivering a far better class of service and any substantial increase therein would be prohibitive. It was admitted by applicant and alleged by all the water users present at the hearing that it would be unfair and unreasonable to make any increased charges for water delivered under the present system as long as the service is so unsatisfactory.

Efforts have been made by applicant from time to time during the past several years to dispose of the distribution system to adjoining water utilities or to persons allegedly interested in its acquisition. Although applicant on several occasions has

offered to give the distribution system away, no one has been found who is willing to assume the responsibility of operating the plant. Under the circumstances the Commission does not feel justified therefore in making any change in the present rate schedule until such a time as applicant has improved the water works both as to the quantity of water available and the service rendered his consumers.

According to the statements of witnesses, there is immediately adjoining the area served by applicant a public utility water works operated by Public Utilities California Corporation which supplies the major part of the Town of Capitola and certain subdivided property in the immediate vicinity thereof. The water mains of the municipal water works of the City of Santa Cruz are now within a mile or so of the Rentz plant. It is suggested that the logical solution of the water problems of the consumers of this utility is to obtain water from either one or the other of these two sources for it is apparent that at this time the Commission is neither justified nor warranted in directing applicant to expend the amount of money necessary to rehabilitate his system so that it will provide proper service. The application therefore will be denied.

O R D E R

John Rentz having applied to the Railroad Commission for an order authorizing an increase in the rates charged non-resident consumers and for authority to install meters on his water system in and in the vicinity of the Fairview Heights section of Capitola, Santa Cruz County, California, a public hearing having been held thereon, the matter having been submitted and the Commission being

now fully advised in the premises,

It is hereby found as a fact that the present rates charged by John Rentz as authorized by Decision No. 20385 are fair and reasonable under existing circumstances and that applicant already has authority to install meters through previous action of this Commission, and

Basing this Order upon the foregoing finding of facts and upon the further statement of facts contained in the Opinion which precedes this Order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the application herein for authority to increase and/or modify rates be and it is hereby denied.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 6th day of September, 1932.

C. L. ...
Tom ...
W. H. ...
M. B. ...
Geo. C. ...
Commissioners.