

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 4190

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BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

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In the matter of the application
of CORTE MADERA WATER COMPANY to
establish rates.

) Application No. 2751.
)

F. A. Wilson for applicant.
John J. Mazza for Town of Corte Madera.
E. L. Doherty in propria persona.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N.

A public hearing was conducted at Corte Madera by Myron Westover, Examiner, on February 20, 1917, in above application to establish rates for domestic water served to inhabitants of Corte Madera, Larkspur and vicinity, in Marin County.

The system is operated by F. A. Wilson under the name of Corte Madera Water Company and has 135 services, 67 of which are metered, but many of which are inactive. Mr. Wilson owns the pumps and motors, about 3100 feet of pipe, with a number of services and meters.

The westerly portion of the system lying on the high wooded ridge west of the station, on which are about 51 services, is owned by E. L. Doherty. For it Mr. Wilson pays rental at the rate of \$30 per year. That part of the system on the level ground easterly of the Northwestern

Pacific Railroad is owned by G. G. Vickerson. For this Mr. Wilson pays a rental of \$30 per year. The pipe leading from what is known as the Bradbury well at Larkspur to Mr. Wilson's tanks at Corte Madera belongs to Bradbury Estate Investment Company, and is used principally for an extra supply of water in the summer time. For the use of the well and transmission line Mr. Wilson pays a rental of \$31 per month.

The main supply of water throughout the year is obtained from well belonging to A. W. Larsen who also owns and operates a distributing system. In return for the use of the Larsen well, Mr. Wilson pumps water for consumers on the Larsen system.

The 4 inch wrought iron pipe line about 2800 feet long connecting the Vickerson system east of the tracks with ten fire hydrants in the business part of Corte Madera belong to the Town of Corte Madera as successor in interest of the Corte Madera Fire District which was dissolved at about the time the town was incorporated in June, 1915.

The town owns all of the 29 fire hydrants on the system operated by Mr. Wilson. They were installed by the fire district. The pressure at these hydrants ranges from 25 pounds to 170 pounds per square inch owing to topography and location of tanks at various points on the hills. The high pressure is about uniform over the flat ground where the business section of the town is located. The town's pipe has heretofore been and is now being used by Mr. Wilson in return for free fire service rendered by Mr. Wilson. However, he has paralleled most of the town pipe with his

own mains and can use his mains for fire service to seven hydrants.

The pumping plant consists of four small pumps and four motors with a combined capacity of eight horsepower. Water is pumped to five tanks belonging to Mr. Doherty, located at various points and elevations on the ridge. Some of the water is relayed by pumps two or three times to the various elevations, especially in the summer.

Mr. Wilson operates all of the system above described and has installed service connections on all parts of it as well as upon that portion of the system in which mains are owned by him.

In addition to services upon the Corte Madera system above described, the Chapman Water Company has on its system about 120 services and the Marin Municipal Water District has about 10 services on its transmission lines, which pass through Corte Madera.

The particular reason for asking the establishment of new rates is that the Commission may consider what rate should be charged for fire service in view of the fact that the town owns the hydrants, and that part of the mains were installed by the fire district at a cost of \$1940.86 for mains and hydrants on the Wilson system. The transient character of a very large part of the summer population must also be considered. At the hearing Mr. Doherty announced that he intended to soon begin operating his part of the system, as he is now operating a water utility at San Anselmo, a few miles from Corte Madera. He proposes to pay Mr. Wilson for services and extensions installed by him. Attention must therefore be given to conditions as they will exist after the Doherty property is severed. All parties expressed a willingness to use approximately the rates charged by Marin Municipal Water District. The rates fixed

in the order approximate the Marin rates.

Of the above items of expense the rental of \$31.00 per month paid to the Bradbury Estate Investment Company under contract constitutes a severe strain on the revenues of the system and places an undue burden on the consumers, especially as no charge has heretofore been made for water served to the Bradbury residence and grounds, two cottages, a stable, butcher shop and public park at Corte Madera. The contract requires such water to be furnished, not exceeding, however, the maximum limit of 200,000 gallons per month. All water served from the system should be collected for at regular rates without discrimination.

The Commission's engineers estimate that a fair return to the Bradbury Estate Investment Company upon its estimated investment in the property used by Mr. Wilson would be about \$14 per month and this sum is being allowed in the determination of rates herein.

The fluctuation in gross revenue between winter and summer when many additional services are used by the transient summer population, is shown by the records of the smallest and largest numbers served during 1916.

On the Doherty part of the system 34 were served in January and 45 were served in July. On the remainder of the system 26 were served in January and 44 were served in June. The average number paying water bills on the system exclusive of the Doherty property was in June, July, August and September 42, and during the other months of the year 1916, 29.

We have attempted to so arrange the minimum charges that those who are consumers during all or most of the year

may pay the same minimum monthly/^{charge} while those who are summer visitors will be required to bear their proper share of the burden in the shape of a ready to serve charge.

Mr. Milo H. Brinkley, one of the Commission's assistant hydraulic engineer's, estimates Mr. Wilson's investment, exclusive of improvements installed by him on the Doherty system, which Mr. Doherty expects to purchase and pay for, at the sum of \$1820.

The rates fixed in the order it is estimated will provide for suitable maintenance, operation, depreciation and a fair return on the above investment.

O R D E R.

F. A. WILSON having applied to the Commission in the name of Corte Madera Water Company for an order establishing just and reasonable rates for water served to the residents of Corte Madera, Larkspur and vicinity in Marin County, and a public hearing having been held thereon and the matter having been submitted to the Commission for determination,

IT IS HEREBY FOUND AS A FACT by the Railroad Commission of the State of California that the rates of said applicant, in so far as they differ from the rates herein found to be reasonable, are unreasonable and unjust and that the rates hereinafter set out are hereby found to be just and reasonable rates and basing its order on the foregoing findings of fact and upon the further findings of fact set out in the opinion preceding this order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED by the Railroad Commission of the State of California that said F. A. Wilson, operating a public water utility under the name of Corte Madera Water Company, be and he is hereby directed to establish and file with this Commission within 20 days from the date of this order the following schedule of rates for water served to the inhabitants of Corte Madera, Larkspur and vicinity in Marin County, said schedule to be effective upon filing.

Monthly Meter Rates.

For 280 cu. ft. or less	\$1.00
For next 220 cu. ft. per 100 cu. ft.	.35
For next 500 cu. ft. per 100 cu. ft.	.25
For use above 1000 cu. ft. per 100 cu. ft.	.20

Monthly minimum charge \$1.00

Monthly Flat Rates.

Fire Service

Monthly charge for service through 20 hydrants or less	\$22.50
For service through each additional hydrant installed	.50

Upon beginning service to any premises, or upon resuming service after discontinuance of service or monthly payment of bill for any period, a charge of \$5.00 will be collected in advance to cover the monthly minimum charge for the following five months or any fraction thereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 19th day of March, 1917.

Max Thelen
J. P. Leland
Edwin C. Edgerton