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Decision No. 28742

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of
JOHN GONNELLA, operator of the
OCCIDENTAL WATER WORKS, for authority
to charge meter rates and to have
existing flat rates adjusted.

Application No. 19144.

John Gonnella, for applicant.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

Applicant herein serves water for domestic uses and garden irrigation to some twenty-seven consumers in and about the unincorporated town of Occidental, in Sonoma County, and alleges that the present flat rates are not uniform and cannot be equitably applied to the various classes of use. Request is made that the Commission fix just and reasonable flat rates and also establish a schedule of charges for measured service to prevent the present large waste of water.

A public hearing in this matter was held before Examiner MacKall at Occidental.

The Occidental water system was installed originally about forty years ago by M.C. Meeker who owned large tracts of land in the vicinity. Water came from a spring on Meeker's ranch and was transported into town by pipe line, the consumers installing their own connecting service facilities. About twenty years ago, Meeker turned over the pipe lines to applicant Gonnella

with the understanding that the latter could use the spring on his ranch for a monthly rental (now ten dollars),¹ in return for which he was to assume the duty and obligation of supplying the community with water. From the very beginning, water has been sold for compensation to residents of Occidental by the owner and/or operator of this plant.

Two years ago, many complaints were made against the inadequacy of the water supply and the generally worn-out condition of the mains. Connella agreed with his consumers to repair and improve the system and to apply to the Commission for establishment of a fair schedule of rates. Accordingly, the spring was cleaned out, additional water developed, and a nine-thousand-gallon concrete cistern installed at the source of supply. The distribution mains have been repaired and improved with a considerable amount of new pipe with the result that the consumers are now satisfied with the service being rendered. There are 5,200 feet of mains in the plant and 12,200 gallons of storage available. The evidence shows that the estimated original cost of the physical properties exclusive of the land upon which the spring is located amounts to two thousand dollars (\$2,000) as of November 1, 1933.

According to the testimony, the revenues for 1932 were two hundred thirty-one dollars (\$231) and the operating expenses including depreciation two hundred twenty-three dollars (\$223).

1. After the death of M.C. Meeker, applicant paid the monthly water rental to the estate of said M.C. Meeker, deceased, and now makes the payments to Miss Effie Meeker who succeeded by inheritance to that particular parcel of land upon which the spring is located.

The present schedule of rates is all flat and ranges from fifty cents (50¢) to two dollars and fifty cents (\$2.50) per month. The rates set out below are more commensurate with the improved service now being furnished and the meter charges should enable the applicant to prevent unnecessary waste of water and at the same time provide a uniform means of properly assessing the larger water users.

O R D E R

Application having been made to the Railroad Commission as entitled above, a public hearing having been held thereon, the matter having been submitted and the Commission now being fully advised in the premises,

It is hereby found as a fact that the rates now charged by John Connella, in so far as they differ from the rates herein established, are unjust and unreasonable and the rates herein established are just and reasonable rates to be charged for the service rendered, and

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

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that John Connella be and he is hereby authorized and directed to file with the Railroad Commission, within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, the following schedule of rates for water delivered to his consumers in and in the vicinity of the town of Occidental, Sonoma County, California, said rates to become effective for all service rendered subsequent to the 31st day of January, 1934.

FLAT RATES

For all uses-----\$1.00 per month
For garden irrigation, to be charged only
for months during which consumer irrigates,
per 100 square feet irrigated----- .03

METER RATES

Monthly Minimum Charges:

For 5/8-inch meter-----\$1.00
For 3/4-inch meter----- 2.50
For 1-inch meter----- 3.50

Each of the foregoing "Monthly Minimum Charges"
will entitle the consumer to the quantity of
water which that minimum monthly charge will
purchase at the following "Monthly Quantity
Rates."

Monthly Quantity Rates:

0 to 1,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet-----\$0.20
Next 1,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet----- .15
Next 3,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet----- .10
All over 5,000 cubic feet, per 100 cubic feet----- .08

A meter may be installed on any service at the
option of either the utility or the consumer.
In the event the utility installs the meter,
it shall be at the utility's expense; where
a consumer demands a meter, a deposit may be
required upon the basis of fifteen dollars
(\$15.00) for a 5/8-inch by 3/4-inch meter,
larger sizes in like proportion to their costs,
said deposit to be returned to the consumer
upon the basis of credit of fifty per cent
(50%) of each monthly water bill until the
entire deposit has been satisfied.

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IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED that John Gonnella be and
he is hereby directed to file with the Railroad Commission, within
thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, rules and regulations
governing relations with his consumers, said rules and regulations

to become effective upon their acceptance for filing by this Commission.

For all other purposes, the effective date of this Order shall be twenty (20) days from and after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 22nd day of January, 1934.

C. J. Deane
Leon White
W. A. Lee
W. B. Lewis
W. H. Brown
Commissioners.