

SECOND TAXING DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS  
Regular Meeting  
October 19, 2010

Present: Al Ayme Vice Chairperson  
Mary Geake  
Mary Mann  
Cesar Ramirez

Also Present: John M. Hiscock General Manager  
Gwendolyn Gonzalez Asst. District Clerk

Absent: Mary E. Burgess Chairperson  
Maria Borges-Lopez  
Sherelle Harris

Public Present: Larry Keith Johnson  
Travis Simms

Call To Order

Vice Chairperson Al Ayme called the Regular Meeting of the Second Taxing District Commissioners to order at 7:05 p.m. on Tuesday, October 19, 2010. The meeting was held at South Norwalk Electric and Water, One State Street, South Norwalk, Connecticut.

Acceptance of the Minutes

Commissioner Ayme: "I will call the Second Taxing District City of Norwalk District Commissioners meeting to order, Tuesday, October 19, 2010 at 7:05 pm. Before we start I just want to mention that Chairman Burgess won't be here tonight because she's sick and the other thing is, I was wondering if we can get an update on Candace' condition."

Mr. Hiscock: "Okay, you want to, or me (directed to Gwendolyn Gonzalez). Okay, I talked to her today actually for the first time in quite some time. Gwen talks to her quite often. She sounded very, very good today, best I heard. She indicated that she gets tired very easily. And she can't drive, can't do a lot of things yet. But essentially she gets up, she moves around she talks to people and she is bored out of her mind, really unhappy because she can't do a lot of things yet. She's going to see the Neurosurgeon, I think next week. Actually I'll have a better indication of her condition, but since I haven't talked to her in quite a few weeks it was a very big change. Certainly, a very big change. So I was really pleased. And Gwen talks to her more frequently. I probably can't give you any other information."

Commissioner Ayme: "Okay."

Mr. Hiscock: "Okay."

Commissioner Ayme: "Thank you."

Mr. Hiscock: "I also need to report that Maria (Borges-Lopez) will not be here this evening. She notified me by email yesterday that she was unable to attend."

Commissioner Ayme: "Okay. All right, the final agenda, we need a motion for approval of the minutes of September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010."

Commissioner Geake: "I make a motion that we approve the minutes."

Commissioner Mann: "I'll second."

Commissioner Ayme: "All those in favor?"

Commissioner Ramirez: "Well, I will be in favor but I this, I forgot about to do the corrections on some of the explanations that I request. It's just that the proper grammar itself, it was not really put together, and I don't really think that's the way I explained it, but I don't have the marks with me right now, so I'm going to have to let it go."

Mr. Hiscock: "I will say one thing if you don't mind. The individuals who normally do this work are not present. Candace normally does all of this and she is better at it than most of our staff. It's very hard to do so, were going to have to, and Gwen is doing her absolute best."

Commissioner Ramirez: "No, I understand, but it's just the way that it shows here, it shows like I was going backwards instead going forward, and I said 'wait a minute I don't recall that I expressed myself that way'. I saw only two, the rest was just a great job in general though, but those were the only things that I was upset..."

Mr. Hiscock: "If you would bare with us."

Commissioner Ramirez: "I certainly will, yes."

Mr. Hiscock: "I know Gwen asked me to review them and I just didn't have the time."

Commissioner Ramirez: "No that's fine, it's not a big deal but, when it came to me I thought I said, gee, okay, never mind, but in general its excellent."

Commissioner Ayme: "All those in favor?"

Simultaneously: "Aye."

Commissioner Ayme: "Opposed?"

No opposed.

Commissioner Ayme: "One abstention I have here."

CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Ayme: “We need a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, the Write Offs as of June 30, 2010 through September 30, 2010.”

Commissioner Mann: “Motion approved.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “I second the motion, stating that we’ve been doing very good. I think that’s facing the new procedures that you have implemented, is that correct? I haven’t seen a big, a large number so, which is good.”

Commissioner Ayme: “All those in favor?”

Simultaneously: “Aye.”

Commissioner Ayme: “Opposed?”

No opposed.

REGULAR AGENDA:

Commissioner Ayme: “Now the next item on the agenda is number 4 – Community Service Funds.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “Which one? That’s for Mr. Dumas right?”

Commissioner Ayme: “This one requires an approval but it’s a request for funds that...”

Commissioner Ramirez: “Through the, you’re acting as the chair today? If you don’t mind I will definitely, strongly support this petition of funds and the reason why I have been experienced at such an excellent and glorious job that this couple are doing for our community and you can see how so many homeless and other people in our community that really are so impressed and also go through all this program every year. It is marvelous. I wish that it could be a lot more money that we can donate to these people so they can enhance the services towards our community, but I will, that’s my statement. I definitely support it and I will put the motion to vote yes.”

Commissioner Ayme: “Okay, we need a second.”

Commissioner Geake: “I’ll second it.”

Commissioner Ayme: “All those in favor?”

Mr. Hiscock: “Excuse me Mr. Chair. There is one issue that we have to reconcile, a very simple issue but the record here is not clear. There is no dollar amount in the actual request by David Shockley and I kind of feel that it’s simply was a drafting error on his part. He starts of ‘Thanks to SNEW’s generous 2009 donation of \$1,500’. He never asked for \$1,500 for this year.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “Exactly.”

Mr. Hiscock: "So I think we need to place a dollar amount in it."

Commissioner Ramirez: "In an official [inaudible] talking to both parties they were actually, that's why I actually say that I'm hoping we can increase the fee itself, but that's fine. \$1,500, I will put the motion to provide and [inaudible] the \$1,500."

Commissioner Ayme: "\$1,500."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Yes."

Commissioner Mann: "Agreed."

Commissioner Ayme: "Okay."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Beautiful."

Commissioner Ayme: "Alright so, we have to take another vote. All those in favor?"

Simultaneously: "Aye."

Commissioner Ayme: "Opposed?"

No opposed.

Commissioner Ramirez: "That was very nice to correct that."

Mr. Hiscock: "I just needed to make it clear that that's the amount that was going to be approved. The fifth item on the agenda, I have been asked to withdraw. The Golden Hill Association was going to make a request, or at least clarify their request with respect to the Cedar Street Revitalization Project. They were unable to put their request together in sufficient detail to come before the commission. I've advised them by email that the next commission meeting is actually the 9<sup>th</sup> of November. It's early, and offered them several meeting dates to meet with myself and staff to further discuss this before the next commission meeting. So, in essence I'm requesting to withdraw the item."

Commissioner Ayme: "Okay, let's make a motion to suspend item number 5."

Commissioner Ramirez: "I place the motion."

Commissioner Geake: "I second it."

Commissioner Ayme: "All in favor?"

Simultaneously: "Aye."

Commissioner Ayme: "Opposed?"

No opposed.

Commissioner Ayme: "Okay, number 6 is the Annual Electors' Meeting Schedule."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes."

Commissioner Ayme. "I'll turn that over to Mr. Hiscock."

Mr. Hiscock: "Okay. In the back of the board book, it's the last page of the actual schedule for the annual meeting for the 2009, 2010 audit of the district. It is very similar to last year's. The audit report will be transmitted to the District Commissioners on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November. We tried to have that moved forward a little better in than recent years and we have not succeeded. It's been right around the same time frame. 6<sup>th</sup> of November, the annual meeting notice gets posted in Hour and the audit packet is available to the public and then the commission meets with it's regular monthly meeting for November, on November 9<sup>th</sup>. In addition to doing all of our normal November business, we will deal with discussing, accepting and recommending to the electors if that's commissioner's desire, the approval of the audit report for July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010. To speak a little bit about that, if at that meeting there is significant discussion by the commission and the commission desires to delay their approval because they need more information or they want clarification on anything, we have the opportunity to insert a special meeting prior to the annual meeting which is the following week on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The other two issues, on the 13<sup>th</sup> we put a second notice in the Hour and on the 15<sup>th</sup> we put a display ad in the Hour in attempt to notify the electors of the process. 'Yes'."

Commissioner Geake: "I would like to know, isn't that when we usually have annual meeting at 8:00 pm vs meeting at 7:00 pm like we usually do?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes, we normally do the annual meeting at 8:00 pm. I don't believe there is any reason for us to change that unless the commission wishes to change it. It is a commission decision when to schedule a meeting. When we scheduled it earlier, we received significant objection. We haven't scheduled it any earlier than 8:00 pm in many, many, many years. So, I think 8:00 pm is the appropriate time. And that would give us the ability to have a special meeting before that if we so desired."

Commissioner Ayme: "Any other questions?"

Commissioner Ramirez: "No."

Commissioner Ayme: "This item doesn't require any approval."

Mr. Hiscock: "No, it's just informational."

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Commissioner Ayme: "All right, now we move to the Public Participation and I believe we have [inaudible]."

Mr. Hiscock: A member of the public."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Yes."

Mr. Simms: I'm a member of the public. I'll take my council man hat off, but as a resident I'm just here to..."

Commissioner Ayme: "Would you please state your name and address before..."

Mr. Simms: "Absolutely."

Commissioner Ayme: "Thank you."

Mr. Simms: "My name is Travis Simms, 28 Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, Norwalk, any things else."

Commissioners Ayme and Geake and Mr. Hiscock: "No."

Mr. Simms: "I just want to , you know, it's my first time coming to the district meeting here and I want to see exactly what it's all about and also to see what, in regards to the rates and programs for the electric service, such as like they do with Yankee gas. What programs do you actual offer to the constituents and the residents of the district to help them with hardship with paying their bills, etc.?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Several..."

Mr. Simms: "The electric rates are extremely high right now and I'm here for a lot of the residents and the constituents in my district is that the rates are just too high and there is not enough help from, coming from South Norwalk Electric Works or programs that will help them assist in keeping the electric service on especially for during the winter months."

Mr. Hiscock: "There's quite a few issues related to that. One, our rates are significantly lower than CL&P by a very wide margin. The district commission has always approved rates that give a higher level of relief to residents as opposed to businesses and that can be seen by a comparison of a residential rate to CL&P vs our commercial rate to CL&P. Our commercial rates are cheaper than CL&P. They are nowhere near as deep a discount as given to residential customers. The other programs that are available, there is the LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program) which is for electric heat customers and they get a check through the Community Action Agency which is NEON after they apply. And if they are eligible we receive a check to place on their account as a credit to be used to help deal with the winter heating cycle which generally results in much higher bills. The other program that we have is the district commission through the budgetary process, sets aside \$25,000, up to \$25,000 per year to be administered by NEON to give assistance to those who need help in a formula in which, if they are not entitled to LIHEAP funds for their electric bill, we will issue funds or NEON will issue funds that come out of our budget equal to the amount of the annual LIHEAP payment. For those who already receive LIHEAP we permit the issuance of funds equal to one half of the LIHEAP payment. So, in our particular case in the Second District we subsidize the LIHEAP rate by an additional 50% over what the state does and if you need to apply, you need to apply through NEON."

Mr. Simms: "But the lighting only pertains to customers whose heat run by electricity."

Mr. Hiscock: "That's correct, and we subsidize the additional 50% over what the state already pays. But the amount of the LIHEAP Grant in dollars, example, if the state approved funds for the year is \$750, we through the same NEON program will provide to non electric heat customers that \$750. It's simply implying to NEON under the exact procedure rules, and eligibility as the likely program."

Mr. Simms: Okay, in regards to that, we have constituents who applied for, you know, that LIHEAP or what you applied through NEON only applied toward customers who needs this [inaudible] electricity not gas. So if you have an issue with your electric bill in general and there is no service out there to help, they just, I guess go to Joe and set up a payment program."

Mr. Hiscock: "Joe handles the collection aspect of it. Okay. People are referred to NEON routinely and we leave it to the NEON staff to make the determination of the eligibility because they have experts in that field. We don't have experts in that field. They are used to dealing with customers who need or individuals who need assistance, so they use the same, as far as I'm aware they use the same eligibility requirements as the LIHEAP program to determine if the person is eligible."

Mr. Simms: "But as a body don't you feel that that this district is primarily all for the middle working class as well as the poor, that you have a program assistance to help set up to help with issues for those residents who live in this district rather than sending them to NEON. Shouldn't South Norwalk Electric have a program designed to help their clients or their customers with those issues they have with this company vs NEON, going to NEON?"

Mr. Hiscock: "I think it's been the position of the commission that NEON is better they will disburse the funds and understand the eligibility rules and we provide the \$25,000 for use and we simply have an agreement with NEON with respect to their administration of the program. If the commission felt that it would be better administered by staff than by NEON the commission certainly would have the option to change that. It is simply a choice that we believe NEON was the most appropriate agency to administer, based on their experience."

Mr. Simms: "I don't know if I'm asking the question in the right format, but what, I guess what I'm getting to is, is the program same, a similar program as to what the Yankee gas has for their customers, that's ran through the Yankee gas not the NEON. You know, they have a program where, you know, a program that's set up to help customers with their..."

Mr. Hiscock: "Okay, conservation issue, we are part of the HES program, with is the Home Energy Savings program. It's funded by quite a few sources of money, some from these collected as a statutory requirement from customers. We run a conservation program. We get funds from the state and the federal government in quite a few different ways. Our HES program, the Home Energy Savings program is moving along. An example, we just went through the entire Cedar Court Housing and entered every unit at Cedar Court. We met recently with Yankee Gas and we've come to an agreement with Yankee Gas to share in the HES program as it relates to gas heat and they fund the, through their programs, they fund the gas savings measures and we fund the electric savings measures. So we do a significant amount of conservation and it's through the HES program. We have sent flyers out to our customers and we contacted the agency that manages large complexes with customers. So we are steadily moving in that direction. I think if you go into our

website and look under the conservation section you can see some of the information, but we also do it by flyers. I don't know if any of you recall the flyer you received in your electric bill. It speaks of the same issue."

Mr. Simms: "I never, I've been a customer, you know, pretty much my whole life. I've never seen a flyer that pertains to conservation or pertain to programs that would assist residents with their monthly electric service, and I guess that's what I'm getting to. Why isn't there a program designed to set up a especially for middle class and poor people know that this is a district where a lot of people primarily are shut or short of funds, out of work making minimum wage you know through their work so paying a high electric rates or, to them is high."

Mr. Hiscock: "Right. I understand."

Mr. Simms: "So you know, having a program set up to help them meet their needs and in terms of keeping your service with them. So how do we get to a point to where we can set up a program that design, that will help the people in this district to be able to keep their services turned on without having to pay, you know, the entire bill up front."

Commissioner Geake: "Can I ask a question?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Sure."

Commissioner Geake: "May I ask a question?"

Mr. Simms: "Sure."

Commissioner Geake: "I like to know, are, are people, are they not willing to go to NEON to apply, is that the problem?"

Mr. Simms: "A lot of them have been turned away, saying that there is no such program that assist them with electric service, only if they have, if they need, that they have their heat is ran from electric, but heat is not ran from electric. They have no program set up to help them with their electric service in general. So, it's either they get paid for the entire bill or get shut off. Now I think that's where it boils down to they have to come here and work some kind of arrangement out with Joe which again is the same thing, either you pretty much got to pay your whole bill up front or the further go up with some of the residences a few months or something like that. But, you know, I think primarily they just need to come up with a better program, a better solution to deal with customers individually."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Commissioner Mann sorry to put you on the spot but, there is a lady in NEON and responded to you, how perhaps maybe you will able to determine okay, how the whole program works specifically from such agency and if I understood correctly, that was long before I came in that NEON was elected because, yes, based on their experience okay, that the deal on a daily basis with all different facts of life, in our residents with, SNEW residents I'm referring to, okay, therefore, they would choose, through the previous commissioners to be the proper agency to pass on those \$25,000, if that's the case, for the people in need. But they have to go through requirements, is that correct then?"

Commissioner Mann: “Absolutely.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “And also perhaps maybe not as, not as a NEON rep., but perhaps as commissioner. Do you have any experience such as program how it works?”

Commissioner Mann: “My understanding of the program requirements is this. If a person does not qualify for LIHEAP and they come in with a SNEW bill then immediately get referred for additional assistance.”

Mr. Simms: “Well, again, we’re talking about the \$25,000 set into an account for...”

Commissioner Ramirez: “To assist those in need.”

Mr. Simms: “Being in charge of being able to assist those LIHEAP customers.”

Commissioner Mann: “Right.”

Mr. Simms: “But when customers aren’t LIHEAP customers and they don’t, their heat is depending on electric services, what about, I’m talking about primarily just the customers who are need help with their electric service part and not their heat part.”

Commissioner Mann: “If a customer, my understanding, I do not do energy, understand. This is not my program. But my understanding is if a customer does come in with a SNEW bill and they don’t qualify for LIHEAP, it’s not their primary source of heating being electricity, then they’re referred. They’re referred to Ms. Ball for additional assistance.”

Commissioner Ramirez: “What would be the name of the person, it’s a lovely lady, very, very helpful lady.”

Commissioner Mann: “Juanita Ball?”

Commissioner Ramirez: “What’s her name?”

Commissioner Mann: “Juanita Ball?”

Commissioner Ramirez: “Juanita Ball. That’s the person that I personally say to you to go and find out exactly how that whole program works. It’s an excellent lady and she knows her business. And believe me, she can go the, if you have to go the extra mile to help somebody, she will because I’ve seen that by her experience.”

Mr. Simms: “I mean, you know, I’m looking into this because I would like to convey this to my constituents in this district because a lot of them are saying that if, you know, there is nowhere to turn when, you know, they’re having trouble with the electric services or paying their bill. There is no program designed to help them take care of that. Again, they want their route returned from my perspective, they told me that they went to their route or gone to NEON but they were turned away saying because they weren’t LIHEAP customers that there was not a program designed to help them with...”

Commissioner Mann: "Let me just say that should not be the case."

Mr. Simms: "Okay."

Commissioner Mann: "In working in community action and meeting with clients, especially during the energy, you know, period, a lot of them are very confused."

Mr. Simms: "Maybe there is a communication issue. I think somehow they need to convey a little much easier of the procedures to the constituents, to the people in the district, that there are programs such programs out there that can assist them and can help them with their services, not just LIHEAP customers."

Commissioner Ramirez: "So, perhaps will be, correct me if I'm wrong, this one, would you like to see a memo or perhaps a flyer through SNEW delivering to individuals meaning all the clients perhaps and stating that such a, it's a reminder of such a program that exists. Will that be understanding correctly?"

Mr. Simms: "I think that would certainly help. It will release some of the tension, you know, and really you know, inform the customers of SNEW that there are programs that can assist them and helping them. That would be a start."

Commissioner Ramirez: "And perhaps through to make it a lot more easy for Juanita and as well as for the client, perhaps if such a flyer briefly describing the points of qualifications that, that person needs to approach when they, when she or he approach NEON. Is that correct?"

Commissioner Ayme: "I think it's more on a case by case basis right?"

Mr. Simms: "Case by case basis."

Commissioner Mann: "Absolutely."

Commissioner Ramirez: "What is that? Is that what it is?"

Commissioner Ayme: "Case by case with a general..."

Commissioner Mann: "My concern is that if you really put it out there, that there are programs out there to help individuals, I can tell you for a fact, that it is going to be grossly abused."

Commissioner Geake: "Yes."

Commissioner Mann: "It will be abused."

Commissioner Geake: "It will be abused."

Commissioner Mann: "As a commission we need to think very carefully about doing something of that nature. One of the major problems and a lot of reasons why people will not qualify because if you have utility, if you come into our programs and you already don't have enough money to pay your rent and we know there is a possibility that you're going to be evicted anyway, we're not

paying your SNEW bill. Okay, so there are criteria's and things that we definitely, definitely look into before decisions are made as to whether or not we're going to assist you."

Commissioner Ramirez: "But how you determine that this person, I mean I know that if you really (don't) pay your rent you will eventually be evicted. But at any chance also that NEON perhaps will be able to assist specifically individuals in need to pay their rent."

Commissioner Ayme: "They do."

Commissioner Geake: "They do all the time."

Commissioner Ramirez: "So with that in mind, if they do qualify in such a department then they will pay, they will help to pay the bill. Is that correct?"

Commissioner Mann: "If they qualify then they get assistance. Yes."

Mr. Simms: "From what I understand, I think NEON might have a program that helps individuals pay their mortgage or their rent if they're behind. Now, I understand that Yankee Gas has such a program that help individuals, individual customers, out with setting up payment programs, payment programs that will help them meet their terms of being able to pay for service and keep their services on. Again,..."

Commissioner Mann: "It is a matching payment program and if they take their bill consistently a certain amount that has been established for a full year, they will match a portion of the payment for Yankee Gas."

Mr. Simms: "Correct. Now again, that's why I'm asking if SNEW has such a program other than going through another entity, going through another business with such an organization, such as NEON. Why don't they have a program like they implemented for SNEW customers and to deal with SNEW customers directly, in terms of their individual bill, instead of throwing all in one pool and saying 'okay, this is \$25,000 set aside for LIHEAP customers' and what have you. I don't, they have a program set up for SNEW customers to help them with their overall bill."

Commissioner Ayme: "That's exactly what we do but we do it through NEON."

Commissioner Mann: "I think when you're dealing with an entity such as Yankee Gas you're talking about a much, much, much larger utility company, much larger. In order for us as an organization to create that kind of program of coming in special arrangement, we are going to have to hire another staff person. In order just to handle that one piece, and I understand you should..."

Mr. Simms: "I do apologize, but again, this is something that was never conveyed to me and never conveyed to constituents. I'm trying to find out what..."

Commissioner Ramirez: "You have the right to ask. Yes."

Mr. Simms: "When I'm asked these questions I know how to respond. And right now I'm still unclear really of how to respond."

Commissioner Geake: "I think what you can tell them basically is that we don't have the personnel because we're a small company, but we've given it money to NEON and NEON will handle it so they have to apply at NEON and there a several different way that they can get it through, if they have electricity heating there is one way, but if they don't there is another way and than that way. Begin again. You don't want to come to NEON with two or three months of electricity because then it's going to make it a lot more difficult. They should be willing to accept the fact that if they're having problems the first time. Try to find an answer before gets to the point that they owe a couple of months and they're really behind. And I understand. They think well somewhere we'll find the money. We'll be able to do it. But its rough and in today's economy they've got to just realize that everybody is facing a situation and everybody knows this and everybody is willing to try."

Commissioner Ramirez: "I have a question for them other two..."

Mr. Hiscock: "Yes."

Commissioner Ramirez: "If you don't mind through you commissioner, I mean the chair. And I know I understand the criteria that the agency NEON has referenced to qualify people. But on the same token some [inaudible] through Travis. If a person already went through the criteria of NEON and the qualification and didn't qualify, okay, or denied, excuse me, was denied for the specifics ex-reason and they approached SNEW how can SNEW provide excess any assistance do we, are we open to assisting any way, shape or form or that's the end or perhaps we have another agency we can direct. I'm sorry to put you in the spot but that was a good [inaudible]."

Mr. Hiscock: "No, that's quite alright. That's quite alright. No, there is no program. Once they don't qualify, and if they don't qualify at NEON there has to be a very specific reason for them not qualifying. Either they make too much money."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Okay."

Mr. Hiscock: "Either they don't meet the income requirement because it's low enough."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Right."

Mr. Hiscock: "Right. Or they don't meet the eligibility requirements. If they don't meet the eligibility requirements and they're not entitled to assistance I have a hard time understanding how we would deal with those people who are not eligible for assistance."

Commissioner Ramirez: "So, would it be fair to say, sorry to cut your short. Would it be fair to say that this person perhaps maybe because he is making too much money for whatever the reason might be, can SNEW say, then okay, you owe us \$1,000? Can you make payments, specifically in such reason that would be reasonable payments that you will be able to pay and if you fail to pay X then, I'm sorry about that..."

Mr. Hiscock: "We do that right now. We certainly do that now. We offer payment plans. Individuals come in and see Mr. Tamburri and his job is to try to work out a payment plan."

Mr. Ramirez: "Are we in the same line here I..."

Mr. Simms: "I think what the question you're asking is the same question that I'm asking but I don't think that we are getting the clear answer that I'm actually looking for. Going through Joe, which is collection, you know, Joe is very fair, but Joe is collection. He has a job to do. His job is to collect. So, He doesn't really work out a plan in essence to say, okay, you owe us \$700 and we'll work this out over a period of time to collect this debt as well as keeping your current bill up to date. His job is to collect. His job, Joe is like, hey, you owe \$700 we need \$700 dollars. That's it."

Commissioner Ayme: "No. My understanding is that he goes, he obviously paints a plan for payment, a payment arrangement."

Commissioner Ramirez: "A payment arrangement."

Commissioner Ayme: "Normally, although I don't want to, I don't want to say exactly because I'm not thoroughly familiar with the, with Joe's work..."

Mr. Simms: "Neither am I."

Commissioner Ayme: "But what I think is done is that people have to, the overdue amount is broken up into a plan, like maybe two or three months whatever, providing that the person pays the current bill and the portion of the overdue amount. In terms of what has already been talked about on NEON is that when people are unable to come to an arrangement, I'm going to go to NEON. The other side of the question which I think you may want an answer to, is when people are making, say the minimum wage of \$7.75 in Connecticut, if you are talking about a subsidy, from someone, maybe NEON, I don't think you have that type of a plan. What people say well, I cannot afford to pay my monthly bill, but you know, for whatever, permanently, every single month, and they are looking for, well, my bill is \$100 I want a subsidy of \$50 or \$100. I don't think [inaudible]."

Mr. Simms: "No. That wasn't my question."

Commissioner Ayme: "Oh, okay, alright."

Mr. Simms: "My question just pertains to an overall program that will assist customers when they, individuals when they need it."

Commissioner Ramirez: "In the moment of need."

Commissioner Ayme: "And we do."

Mr. Simms: "Is there a program that work with them individually that will help them keep their services on, especially through the winter months, because I mean the worst time of the year for some people and with all the holidays and with the winter months coming up obviously they are going to be using more electricity, so it becomes more of a baring, more of an issue trying to keep your service going and also paying their mortgages and other utilities, etc."

Commissioner Ayme: "So that's what we offer. We offer the payment arrangement and we offer NEON."

Mr. Hiscock: "The other thing that's important to know is our termination procedure matches identically State Law and State Regulation and is identical to the programs of both CL&P and UI. We are required by law, we are not allowed to shut off anybody who meets income requirements and a whole series of other requirements during the winter time. We are not permitted to do that, we don't do that."

Commissioner Geake: "We can't turn it off."

Mr. Hiscock: "We cannot shut..."

Mr. Simms: "You can't shut people off during the winter months. You guys do it all the time."

Mr. Hiscock: "We do it only to people who don't come under the requirements of the law. And CL&P and UI both do it. They're very, very specific set of requirement that are extraordinarily long and very detailed with respect to the notification procedure. How we go about it? We're scrupulous with respect to paying attention to those rules. And the assistance programs are outside of that. But when it comes down, if you're on Social Security, if you're unemployed, Gwen, you know the list certainly more than I do."

Commissioner Mann: "There is a child under a certain age."

Mr. Hiscock: "If you're under 150% of the poverty level, there are a whole series of issues."

Mr. Simms: "I agree. I think that SNEW may be doing a more thorough job in conveying that to their customers because a lot of people really don't know what to do, especially, you know, going into this time of year."

Mr. Hiscock: "The termination letter right in the back of this, spells out the entire procedure what they have to do and what they don't have to do."

Commissioner Mann: "They don't read them."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Have you seen a copy of the termination. Have you seen a copy of the termination, I mean yes, the procedure."

Mr. Simms: "No."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Joe, will he be able to get a copy of it?"

Mr. Simms: "Did you say in the back of your termination letter to customers?"

Commissioner Geake: "When they're going to be terminated."

Ms. Gonzalez: "When they receive a termination letter in the winter, there is an insert, there is a flyer in there explaining the procedures."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Will he be able to get a copy?"

Mr. Hiscock: "Sure."

Mr. Ramirez: "Maybe you could get a copy so you could keep it in your file and if you have any questions..."

Mr. Hiscock: "You know, we certainly can make an appointment with you and have you come it and talk about it in extreme detail. We are more than willing to do that to explain everything in detail and show you all the things we're doing and not doing and how this process works. We will be happy to do that."

Mr. Simms: "I think that is something that will be convenient especially for the thousands of residents that in this district. Maybe I could talk to different, instead of filling a room with a bunch of residents, get a lot of tenants associations down here that couldn't convey, that can take that back to their neighbors etc., living in their area. Maybe, you know, kind of broaden and educate them on how to deal with their electrical services in the district. I think that would be a lot, be extremely helpful for residents in the district that have service with SNEW."

Commissioner Geake: "What bothers me is and I heard you say it before, is the fact they don't realize how cheap they are getting their electricity as compared to CL&P. They're thinking we're being as hard, we're doing it so much cheaper than CL&P."

Mr. Simms: "It's not about being cheaper. It's about having a programs designed for individuals to help them during hardship to keep the service on but also to be able to pay down their debts to SNEW as well. I don't think it's about the rates. I don't think it's about the LIHEAP, etc., or dealing with NEON. I'm just talking about SNEW in general basis, to have a program designed to deal with individuals, individual customer, on an individual basis."

Commissioner Ramirez: "I think it would be very healthy for you and John perhaps now that he offered himself to explain to you in details and provide to you any information that will definitely help you to deliver the news to anybody that ask you any questions. I think it will be very, definitely very healthy if the two of you get together and rehearse the whole process and how it works."

Mr. Simms: "Oh, this is all very educational for me as well, so, I'm learning a lot of it myself, so that's good."

Commissioner Mann: "As well as, please, please feel free to come and speak to me any time. I'm pretty sure I can enlighten you on a lot of things."

Mr. Simms: "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your time. That's all the questions I have."

Commissions Ayme: "Do you have any more questions. "

Mr. Simms: "No, that's it."

Commissioner Ayme: "We have another member of the public."

Mr. Johnson: "I came in because I smelled the coffee."

Laughter

Commissioner Ramirez: "Would you like to have a cup of coffee?"

Mr. Johnson: "I'm good. I just like the smell."

Commissioner Ayme: "Okay, before I call for adjournment, I just want to make a correction to today's record. At the beginning of the meeting I made a reference to Chairman Burgess. I like to change that and say Chairperson Burgess. Okay, I need a motion to Adjourn."

Commissioner Ramirez: "Motion to adjourn."

Commissioner Geake: "I'll second it."

Commissioner Ayme: "All those in favor?"

Simultaneously: "Aye."

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Attest:

Gwendolyn Gonzalez  
Asst. District Clerk

Transcribed by: Connie Farrugia  
Reviewed by: Gwendolyn Gonzalez