#### COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

#### BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

| ELECTRONIC APPLICATION OF NORTH      | ) | CASE NO.   |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------|
| NELSON WATER DISTRICT FOR A RATE     | ) | 2024-00234 |
| ADJUSTMENT PURSUANT TO 807 KAR 5:076 | ) |            |

#### ORDER

On August 7, 2024,<sup>1</sup> North Nelson Water District (North Nelson District) filed its application with the Commission requesting an adjustment to its water service rates pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076.

In its application, North Nelson District requested rates that would increase its base rate revenue by \$91,357, or 5.21 percent to pro forma present rate water sale revenues.<sup>2</sup> North Nelson District utilized calendar year ended December 31, 2023, as the test year to determine the reasonableness of its existing and proposed water rates as required by 807 KAR 5:076, Section 9.

To ensure the orderly review of the application, the Commission established a procedural schedule by Order dated September 5, 2024.<sup>3</sup> North Nelson District

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> North Nelson District tendered its application on August 7, 2024. By letter dated August 12, 2024, the Commission accepted the application as there were no filing deficiencies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Application, Attachment #2, Reasons for Application and Attachment #4, Statement of Adjusted Operations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Order (Ky. PSC Sept. 5, 2024).

responded to two rounds of discovery.<sup>4</sup> North Nelson District timely filed responses to all rounds of discovery.

Commission Staff issued its report (Commission Staff's Report) on December 10, 2024,<sup>5</sup> summarizing its findings and recommendations regarding North Nelson District's requested rate adjustment. In Commission Staff's Report, Commission Staff found that North Nelson District's adjusted test-year operations support an overall revenue requirement of \$1,846,659 and that a \$91,714 revenue increase, or 5.23 percent, to proforma present rate revenues is necessary to generate the overall revenue requirement.<sup>6</sup> In the absence of a cost-of-service study (COSS), Commission Staff allocated its recommended revenue increase evenly across all customer classes to calculate its recommended water rates.

On December 18, 2024, North Nelson District filed its response to Commission Staff's Report.<sup>7</sup> In its written comments, North Nelson District disagreed with the removal of certain labor expenses from Non-recurring charges but did not want to contest the adjustment in this case. Additionally, North Nelson District concurred with the remainder of the findings presented in Commission Staff's Report and waived its right to request an informal conference or a hearing. As part of the Commission Staff's Report, Commission Staff recommended two new Non-recurring after hours charges, reconnection and service

<sup>4</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Commission Staff's First Request for Information (Staff's First Request) (filed Oct. 9, 2024); North Nelson District's Response to Commission Staff's Second Request for Information (Staff's Second Request) (filed Nov. 5, 2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Commission Staff's Report (issued Dec. 10, 2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Commission Staff's Report at 24, Revenue Requirement table.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Commission Staff's Report (filed Dec. 18, 2024).

call/investigation.<sup>8</sup> In its response, North Nelson District accepted those recommended charges as well.<sup>9</sup> On January 30, 2025, the Commission issued an Order requiring North Nelson District to give notice of the new fees to its customers.<sup>10</sup> On February 11, 2025, North Nelson District filed proof in the record of publication pursuant to the Order and administrative regulation 807 KAR 5:076 Section 5.<sup>11</sup> The case now stands submitted for a decision by the Commission.

# **LEGAL STANDARD**

Alternative rate adjustment proceedings, such as this one, are governed by Commission regulation 807 KAR 5:076, which establishes a simplified process for small utilities to use to request rate adjustments, with the process designed to be less costly to the utility and the utility ratepayers. The Commission's standard of review of a utility's request for a rate increase is well established. In accordance with KRS 278.030 and case law, the utility is allowed to charge its customers "only fair, just and reasonable rates." Further, the utility bears the burden of proof to show that the proposed rate increase is just and reasonable under KRS 278.190(3).

# **BACKGROUND**

North Nelson District is a water utility organized pursuant to KRS Chapter 74 that owns and operates a distribution system through which it provides retail water service to approximately 4,949 residential customers, 67 commercial customers, 6 public

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Commission Staff's Report at 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Commission Staff's Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Order (Ky. PSC Jan. 30, 2025) at 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> North Nelson District's Affidavit and Tear Sheet for NRC public notice (filed Feb. 11, 2025).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> City of Covington v. Public Service Commission, 313 S.W.2d 391 (Ky. 1958); and Public Service Comm'n v. Dewitt Water District, 720 S.W.2d 725 (Ky. 1986).

authorities, and 89 Multiple Family Dwellings that reside in Bullitt, Nelson, and Spencer counties, Kentucky.<sup>13</sup> North Nelson District purchases all of its water from the city of Bardstown (Bardstown) and Louisville Water Company (Louisville Water).<sup>14</sup>

North Nelson District's application was filed, in part, pursuant to the Commission's Order in Case No. 2022-00146,<sup>15</sup> which required North Nelson District to file an application for an adjustment of its base rates by June 24, 2023. Thereafter, North Nelson District requested a one-year extension on June 23, 2023, which was granted until June 24, 2024.<sup>16</sup> North Nelson District requested an additional 90-day extension on June 7, 2024, which was denied, and North Nelson District was ordered to file immediately, ultimately leading to the August 7, 2024, application filed in this matter.<sup>17</sup> North Nelson District's last base rate increase pursuant to the alternative rate filing procedure was in Case No. 1997-00255.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Annual Report of North Nelson District to the Public Service Commission for the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2023 (2023 Annual Report) at 12, 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> 2023 Annual Report at 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Case No. 2022-00146, *Electronic Purchased Water Adjustment Filing of North Nelson Water District* (Ky. PSC June 24, 2022).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Case No. 2022-00146, July 31, 2023 Order.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Case No. 2022-00146, June 20, 2024 Order.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Case No. 1997-00255, The Application of the North Nelson Water District (1) For A Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity Authorizing Construction of Major Additions and Improvements To Its Water Distribution System; (2) Seeking Approval of Revised Water Service Rates and Charges; and (3) Seeking Approval of the Issuance of Certain Securities, Pursuant To the Issuance of Certain Securities, Pursuant To the Provisions of KRS 278.020, KRS 278.300, and KAR 5:001 (Ky. PSC June 20, 1997).

#### **UNACCOUNTED-FOR WATER LOSS**

The Commission notes that in its 2023 Annual Report, North Nelson District reported a water loss of 8.4565 percent, <sup>19</sup> and North Nelson District's water loss over the past five years has averaged 7.0713 percent as shown in the table below. <sup>20</sup>

| Year                  | 2019    | 2020    | 2021    | 2022    | 2023    |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Water Loss Percentage | 8.8958% | 5.6420% | 5.6337% | 6.7286% | 8.4565% |
| Average               |         |         |         | _       | 7.0713% |

Commission regulation 807 KAR 5:066, Section 6(3), states that for ratemaking purposes, a utility's water loss shall not exceed 15 percent of total water produced and purchased, excluding water consumed by a utility in its own operations. The table below shows that the 2023 total annual cost of water loss to North Nelson District is \$71,656, while the annual cost of water loss in excess of 15 percent is \$0.

|                     | P  | urchased | F  | Purchased |               |
|---------------------|----|----------|----|-----------|---------------|
| Total Water Loss    |    | Water    |    | Power     | Total         |
| Pro Forma Purchases | \$ | 830,661  | \$ | 16,686    | \$<br>847,347 |
| Water Loss Percent  |    | 8.4565%  |    | 8.4565%   | 8.4565%       |
| Total Water Loss    | \$ | 70,245   | \$ | 1,411     | \$<br>71,656  |

#### **TEST PERIOD**

The calendar year ended December 31, 2023, was used as the test year to determine the reasonableness of North Nelson District's existing and proposed wastewater rates as required by 807 KAR 5:076, Section 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> 2023 Annual Report at 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Annual Report of North Nelson District to the Public Service Commission for the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2019 at 58; Annual Report of North Nelson District to the Public Service Commission for the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2020 at 58; Annual Report of North Nelson District to the Public Service Commission for the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2021 at 58; Annual Report of North Nelson District to the Public Service Commission for the Calendar Year Ended December 31, 2022 at 58; 2023 Annual Report at 58.

## SUMMARY OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Commission Staff's Report summarized North Nelson District's pro forma income statement as follows:

|                                | Commission Staff's Report |             |             |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|                                | Test-Year                 | Pro Forma   | Pro Forma   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Description                    | Operations                | Adjustments | Operations  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Operating Revenues             | \$1,735,859               | \$ 52,379   | \$1,788,238 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Operating Expenses             | 1,904,606                 | (119,152)   | 1,785,454   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Total Utility Operating Income | \$ (168,747)              | \$ 171,531  | \$ 2,784    |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## REVIEW OF COMMISSION STAFF'S RECOMMENDATIONS

North Nelson District proposed adjustments to its revenues and expenses to reflect current and expected operating conditions. In Commission Staff's Report, Commission Staff calculated a different revenue requirement based on additional pro forma adjustments to expenses and additional fees. The Commission approves the recommendations contained in the Commission Staff's Report. The following is the Commission's complete pro forma based on the Commission Staff's Report.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Commission Staff's Report at 9.

#### PRO FORMA OPERATING STATEMENT

North Nelson Water District Commission Proposed Staff Total Description Test Year Adjustments Adjustments Adjustments Pro Forma Operating Revenues Metered Retail Sales 1,630,425 \$ Metered Commercial Sales 53,622 0 0 Sales to Public Authorities 1,147 Sales to Multiple Family Dwellings 21,180 0 48,571 48,571 1,754,945 Miscellaneous Service Revenues 8,235 29,485 8,235 (4,427)(4,427)33.293 3,808 1,788,238 **Total Operating Revenues** 1,735,859 48,571 52,379 Operation and Maintenance Salaries and Wages - Employees 261.770 (34.920)(34.920)273.669 46.819 46.819 Salaries and Wages - Officers 7,200 (7,200)(7,200)Employee Benefits - Medical 120,883 (10,254)(23,445)(13, 191)15,478 15,478 (61,097)(61,097)51,819 Employee Retirement Benefits (CERS) 61,097 61,097 4,145 (4,145)0 (9,502)(9,502)9,228 9,228 60,823 **Purchased Water** 830,468 24,011 854,479 24,011 **Purchased Power** 16,686 0 16,686 Materials and Supplies 111,754 (81,480)(81,480)(6,251)(6,251)24,023 Contractual Services - Accounting 12,342 12,342 Contractual Services - Legal 11,322 0 11,322 Contractual Services - Other 113,740 0 113,740 **Transportation Expenses** 15,749 0 15,749 Insurance - General Liability 8,027 11,678 11,678 19,705 Insurance - Workers Comp 12,069 1,218 13,287 1,218 Insurance - Other 2,069 2,069 Miscellaneous 12,568 14,104 (1,536)(1,536)Total 1,538,183 (54,616)(1,286)(55,902)1,482,281 Depreciation Expense 344,282 (73,967)3,212 (70,755)273,527 Taxes Other Than Income 22,141 2.017 1,738 3.755 25.896 Amortization Expense 3,750 3,750 3,750 1.785.454 **Total Operating Expenses** 1.904.606 (122,816)3.664 (119, 152)(168,747)171,387 144 171,531 2,784 Net Operating Income Interest Income 107,105 107,105

171,531

\$

109,889

171,387 \$

144 \$

\$

(61,642) \$

Income Available to Service Debt

Metered Water Sales. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$1,630,425 for metered residential sales, \$53,622 for metered commercial sales, \$1,147 for sales to public authorities, and \$21,180 for sales multiple family dwellings.<sup>22</sup> This results in a combined test year amount of \$1,706,374 for its total metered water sales. North Nelson District proposed an increase of \$48.571<sup>23</sup> resulting in total pro forma metered sales of \$1,754,945.24 Commission Staff reviewed the billing analysis adjustment and determined that the \$48,571 increase was comprised of three items. First, a Purchased Water Adjustment (PWA) adjustment, due to an increase from Louisville Water of \$0.08 per thousand gallons, effective July 1, 2024, in Case No 2024-00156,<sup>25</sup> which subsequently increased revenues by \$21,858 from the PWA adjustment made to North Nelson District's rates.<sup>26</sup> Second, non-recurring charges of \$8,235 recorded in Metered Sales were reclassified. Third, an adjustment of \$18,478 to increase revenue to match the billing analysis was made. After a thorough review of North Nelson District's billing analysis, Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept North Nelson District's proposed total adjustment of \$48,571. The Pro Forma amount is reasonable and supported by the evidence included.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> North Nelson District's Application (Application), Attachment 4, Schedule of Adjusted Operations (SAO).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference A.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Application, Attachment 10 2, Rate Study, Existing Billing Analysis Tab.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> See Case No. 2024-00156, Electronic Purchased Water Adjustment Filing of North Nelson Water District.

 $<sup>^{26}</sup>$  273,230 (thousands of gallons sold during the test year) \* \$0.08 = \$21,858.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Application, Attachment 10 2, Rate Study, Existing Billing Analysis Tab.

The Commission finds that the recommended adjustments and the normalized revenue are reasonable. This adjustment reflects verifiable usage patterns and revenue data that were evaluated and normalized using the information provided in the record. The Commission finds that the methodology used to determine this adjustment is reasonable and consistent with regulatory principles.

Miscellaneous Service Revenues. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$29,485 and proposed no changes to the account. Request, North Nelson District confirmed that this account was entirely composed of forfeited discounts. It also confirmed that non-recurring charges were recorded in a sub account of Metered Water Revenue. North Nelson District provided the number of instances that each non-recurring charge was performed during the test period as well as the cost justification sheets. Commission Staff reviewed the responses, the cost justification sheets, and the general ledger. As discussed in the non-recurring charge section below, Commission Staff followed the Commission's precedent in removing field labor and office/clerical labor costs. Using this information, as well as the current non-recurring charge amount listed in its current tariff, Commission Staff

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's Second Request, Item 2a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's Second Request, Item 2b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 13, NRC Charges.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 14, NRC Cost Justification.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Case No. 2020-00141, Electronic Application of Hyden-Leslie County Water District for an Alternative Rate Adjustment (Ky. PSC Nov. 6, 2020); Case No. 2020-00167, Electronic Application of Ohio County Water District for an Alternative Rate Adjustment (Ky. PSC Dec. 3, 2020);, Case No. 2020-00196, Electronic Application of West Daviess County Water District for an Alternative Rate Adjustment (Ky. PSC Dec. 30, 2020); and Case No. 2020-00195, Electronic Application of Southeast Daviess County Water District for an Alternative Rate Adjustment (Ky. PSC Dec. 30, 2020).

calculated Pro Forma revenue from Non-recurring Charges of \$3,808 as shown in the table below.

|  |             | Current     | Revised     |           |            |            |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Description                              | Occurrences | Charge      | Charge      | Test Year | Pro Forma  | Adjustment |
| Meter Re-Read Charge                     | 0           | \$25.00     | \$11.00     | \$ -      | \$ -       | \$ -       |
| Service Call/Investigation               | 0           | \$25.00     | \$11.00     | 0         | 0          | 0          |
| Connection/Turn-on Charge                | 27          | \$25.00     | \$25.00     | 675       | 675        | 0          |
| Meter Relocation Charge                  | 0           | Actual Cost | Actual Cost | 0         | 0          | 0          |
| Returned Check Charge                    | 99          | \$20.00     | \$8.50      | 1,980     | 841        | (1,139)    |
| Re-Connection Charge                     | 108         | \$50.00     | \$20.00     | 5,400     | 2,160      | (3,240)    |
| Field Collection Charge                  | 12          | \$15.00     | \$11.00     | 180       | 132        | (48)       |
| Meter Test Charge                        | 0           | \$45.00     | \$70.00     | 0         | 0          | 0          |
| Reconnection Charge (After Hours)        | 0           | N/A         | \$136.00    | 0         | 0          | 0          |
| Service Call/Investigation (After Hours) | 0           | N/A         | \$109.00    | 0         | 0          | 0          |
| Pro Forma Test Year NRC Revenue          |             |             |             | \$ 8,235  | \$ 3,808   | \$ (4,427) |
| Test Year NRC Revenue ( )                |             |             |             |           | (8,235)    |            |
| Adjustment                               |             |             |             | ,         | \$ (4,427) | =          |

Commission Staff noted the \$48,571 adjustment to Metered Water Sales included an embedded amount of \$8,235 of Non-Recurring Charge revenue (NRC) that should have been included in Miscellaneous Service Revenues. Commission Staff proposed to include the test year NRC revenue of \$8,235 in Miscellaneous Service Revenues. Commission Staff further recommended a reduction of \$4,427 to Miscellaneous Service Revenues to bring the NRC revenues to the Pro Forma amount of \$3,808 shown in the table above. Commission Staff's total Miscellaneous Service Revenues of \$33,293 is shown in the table below. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept Commission Staff's adjustments to Miscellaneous Service Revenues because the amounts are known and measurable.

|                              |              | Utility  |     | Co  | mmission<br>Staff |    |         |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|----|---------|
| Description                  | Test         | Adjustme | nts | Adj | ustments          | Pr | o Forma |
| Non-Recurring Charges        |              |          |     |     |                   |    |         |
| Connection/Turn-on Charge    | \$<br>675    |          |     |     |                   | \$ | 675     |
| Returned Check               | 1,980        |          |     |     | (1,139)           |    | 841     |
| Re-Connection Charge         | 5,400        |          |     |     | (3,240)           |    | 2,160   |
| Field Collection Charge      | 180          |          |     |     | (48)              |    | 132     |
| sub-total                    | 8,235        |          | 0   |     | (4,427)           |    | 3,808   |
| Other                        |              |          |     |     |                   |    |         |
| Forfeited Discounts          | 0            |          |     |     | 29,485            |    | 29,485  |
| Miscellaneous Water Revenues | 29,485       |          |     |     | (29,485)          |    | 0       |
| sub-total                    | 29,485       |          | 0   |     | 0                 |    | 29,485  |
| Total Other Income           | \$<br>37,720 | \$       | -   | \$  | (4,427)           | \$ | 33,293  |

The Commission finds that Commission Staff's recommendations are consistent with recent Commission decisions addressing labor expenses resulting from work occurring during normal business hours which should not be recovered through Non-recurring charges, rather is recovered through the normal salary and wages amounts.<sup>34</sup> Non-recurring charges must be directly related to the actual cost incurred to provide the service. It is unreasonable to allocate an expense already incurred and recovered in customer rates as a day-to-day cost of maintaining a system, such as the salary of a distribution operator, to a Non-recurring service such as the connection and reconnection of a meter during normal working hours. Thus, the Commission finds that the revised

<sup>34</sup> Case No. 2023-00090, Electronic Application of Henry County Water District #2 for an Alternative Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC Oct. 24, 2023); Case No. 2023-00284, Electronic Application of Montgomery County Water District No. 1 for an Alternative Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC Mar. 4, 2024); Case No. 2023-00090, Electronic Application of Kirksville Water Association Inc. for a Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC May 3, 2024); and Case No. 2023-00252, Electronic Application of Oldham County Water District for an Alternative Rate Adjustment (Ky. PSC June 18, 2024).

Non-recurring charges set forth in Appendix B to this Order and the decrease of \$4,427 to Other Water Revenue are reasonable.

Salaries and Wages - Employees. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$261,770 and proposed two changes to the account.<sup>35</sup> The first adjustment was a decrease of \$34,290 to remove the labor portion, 30 percent, of the tap-fees installed by North Nelson District during the test year.<sup>36</sup> The Uniform System of Accounts (USoA) for Class A/B Water Systems requires that these costs be capitalized as Utility Plant in Service and depreciated over their estimated useful lives.<sup>37</sup> Commission Staff capitalized the costs and made a corresponding adjustment to test-year depreciation. North Nelson District then proposed to increase its salaries and wages expense by \$46,819 to adjust wages to current wage rates.<sup>38</sup> Commission Staff noted that part of this increase was to account for one of North Nelson District's employees, hired during the test year, working a full year as the employee did not have a full year worth of payroll expenses in the test year.<sup>39</sup> Commission Staff reviewed North Nelson District's General Ledger<sup>40</sup> and submitted pay information<sup>41</sup> and agreed with both adjustments. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept North Nelson District's proposed adjustments because the amounts are known and measurable.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference B.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> USoA, Accounting Instruction 19 and 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference C.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 3b, Employee Hire Dates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Application, Attachment 10 1, General Ledger

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Application, Attachment 10 2, North Nelson Rate Study, Wages Tab.

The Commission finds that the adjustments are based upon the current wage rates of North Nelson District employees and reflect the expected number of employees documented in the case record; as such, the adjustments are reasonable and should be approved.

Salaries and Wages - Officers. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$7,200 and proposed no changes to the account. Commission Staff requested documentation from the Fiscal Court that authorized each Commissioner's appointment and compensation, as well as training records for each Commissioner. North Nelson District provided documentation of its Commissioners' appointments and the respective Commissioner Training Certificates. North Nelson District stated its "three Commissioners receive \$2,400 in compensation each annually" and its "records indicate this amount has been in effect since prior to 1995. Commission Staff found the submitted documentation was not enough to support the compensation amounts requested by North Nelson District and proposed to remove the entire amount from its revenue requirement. KRS 74.020(6) states that "[e]ach commissioner shall receive an annual salary of not more than thirty-six hundred dollars (\$3,600) ..." and that "[i]n fixing and approving the salary of the commissioners, the county judge/executive and the fiscal court shall take into consideration the financial condition of the district and its ability to

<sup>42</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 7a, Commissioners Appointments.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 7b, Commissioner Training Certs.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 7a.

meet its obligations as they mature."<sup>47</sup> Commission Staff recommended the Commission not include commissioner salaries and remove \$7,200 from the revenue requirement because North Nelson District did not provide evidence to support the requisite fiscal court approval of the compensation amounts as required by KRS 74.020(6).

The Commission is unable to allow recovery for commissioner salaries unless approval of the salaries by the appropriate fiscal court is of record. The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustment is consistent with KRS 74.020(6), and the removal of North Nelson District's commissioners' pay from its revenue requirement is appropriate. The Commission notes that the removal of this expense from the revenue requirement does not prevent North Nelson District from addressing the issue with the fiscal court in the future.

Employee Benefits (Medical). Commission Staff identified costs by expense type by reviewing payroll and general ledger information that was provided by North Nelson District. Commission Staff determined that separation of the medical and related benefits costs from retirement benefits would better facilitate discussion of the respective adjustments and reclassified \$61,907 to Employee Benefits – Retirement (CERS) in the Schedule of Adjusted Operations (SAO). This results in a test year amount for medical benefits of \$59,786. North Nelson District proposed a reduction of \$13,191 to reduce employer contributions toward medical insurance premiums to the average of the Bureau of Labor Statistics report. Commission Staff determined that an additional adjustment

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> KRS 74.020(6), Appointment of commissioners – Number – Terms – Removal – Vacancies – Organization – Bond – Compensation – Mandatory Training – Notice of Vacancy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Application, Attachment 10 1, General Ledger.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference E.

to North Nelson District's proposed amount of \$13,191, in the amount of \$10,254 is appropriate, for a total of \$23,445, to decrease North Nelson District's contributions to health insurance to align employee contribution rates with the national average for a private industry worker reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 20 percent for single coverage and 32 percent for family coverage,<sup>50</sup> and the Willis Benchmarking Survey for national average for an employer's share of dental insurance, consistent with the Commission's precedent.<sup>51</sup>

Commission Staff reviewed the benefit invoices<sup>52</sup> submitted by North Nelson District and determined that an increase of \$15,478 was necessary to account for increased benefit costs and the additional benefits paid to the employee hired during the test year that were not included in the test year amount. This resulted in a Pro Forma yearly cost of \$75,264 and a reduction for the total employee contribution adjustment of \$23,445 as shown in the table below. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept Commission Staff's adjustments as the amounts are known and measurable.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Share of Premiums Paid by Employer and Employee for Single Coverage, March 2023 https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ebs2.t03.htm, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Share of Premiums Paid by Employer and Employee for Family Coverage, March 2023 https://www.bls.gov/news.release/ebs2.t04.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> See Case No. 2017-00263, *Electronic Application of Kentucky Frontier Gas, LLC for Alternative Rate Adjustment* (Ky. PSC Dec. 22, 2017), Order at 9-10; and The Willis Benchmarking Survey, 2015, at 62-63.

<sup>(</sup>https://www.willis.com/Documents/publications/Services/Employee\_Benefits/20151230\_2015WillisBenefitsBenchmarkingSurveyReport.pdf).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's Second Request, Item 1, Medical, Dental, Vision, and Life Invoice.

Commission Staff's Calculated Employer Contribution

| Description                         | Health | (Single)     | Hea | Ith (Family)  | Dental       | Vision      | Life        | Total         |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------------|-----|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Proforma Monthly                    | \$     | 737          | \$  | 5,236         | \$<br>218    | \$<br>49    | \$<br>32    |               |
| Proforma Yearly<br>Employer Cont. % |        | 8,844<br>80% |     | 62,832<br>68% | 2,616<br>40% | 588<br>100% | 384<br>100% | 75,264<br>n/a |
| Employer Cont.                      |        | 7,075        |     | 42,726        | 1,046        | 588         | 384         | 51,819        |
| BLS / Survey Amounts                | \$     | 1,769        | \$  | 20,106        | \$<br>1,570  | \$<br>-     | \$<br>-     | \$<br>23,445  |

The Commission finds that the recommended adjustments are reasonable and should be approved as they are consistent with applicable average employer paid health insurance premium expenses and reflect the difference in test-year medical expenses and what North Nelson District filed in the case record. Although not required, North Nelson District did not provide any sufficient evidence to stray from this adjustment, such as a wage study or comparative information for the area, in the record.

Employee Retirement Benefits (CERS). Commission Staff reclassified \$61,907 from Medical Benefits to Retirement, as discussed above. North Nelson District participates in the County Employees Retirement System (CERS), which is managed by the Kentucky Public Pension Authority (KPPA). North Nelson District proposed an increase of \$4,145 to its Pension Expense for the increase in wage rates.<sup>53</sup> Commission Staff determined that two separate adjustments would be more appropriate and recommended its own adjustments. First, Commission Staff proposed an increase of \$9,228 to account for the increased wages discussed above. Second, Commission Staff proposed a decrease of \$9,502 to account for the reduction in the CERS contribution rate from the test year.<sup>54</sup> This results in net reduction of \$274 as shown in the chart below.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference D.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> CERS Board of Trustees December 4, 2023 Meeting, Minutes at 2. CERS Contribution Rate in test year was 26.79%, and 19.71% in current year.

Commission Staff recommended accepting Commission Staff's proposed adjustments because the amounts are known and measurable.

| Description                               | Т  | est Year | Pro Forma |         |  |
|---|----|----------|-----------|---------|--|
| Wages                                     | \$ | 261,770  | \$        | 308,589 |  |
| Contribution Rate                         |    | 23.34%   |           | 19.71%  |  |
| Contributions                             |    | 61,097   |           | 60,823  |  |
| Excess (Cost) / Income Over Contributions |    | 0        |           | 0       |  |
| Total                                     | \$ | 61,097   | \$        | 60,823  |  |
| Increase / (Decrease)                     |    |          | \$        | (274)   |  |

The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustments are reasonable and should be accepted. North Nelson District's Employee Pensions and Benefits expense should be decreased by \$274 because the evidence provided recognized the adjustment to the contribution expense to account for the normalization of Salaries and Wages, as well as reduction of the required contribution percent by CERS.

Purchased Water. North Nelson District purchases its water from Bardstown and Louisville Water.<sup>55</sup> North Nelson District reported a purchased water expense of \$830,468 in the test year and proposed one adjustment.<sup>56</sup> This adjustment was an increase of \$24,011 to account for the increased purchased water expense outlined in North Nelson District's recent PWA case, 2024-00156.<sup>57</sup> Commission Staff calculated North Nelson District's Pro Forma purchased water cost as shown in the chart below and agreed with the proposed amounts. North Nelson District does not require an adjustment

<sup>55 2023</sup> Annual Report at 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference F.

for water loss above 15 percent, as its 8.4565 percent water loss is below the 15 percent maximum allowed for ratemaking purposes by regulation. Commission Staff recommended accepting the proposed purchase cost adjustment as the amounts are known and measurable.

| Description   | City of<br>Bardstown | Lo | ouisville Water<br>Company |    | Total       |
|---|----------------------|----|----------------------------|----|-------------|
| Gallons   | <br>90,706,800       |    | 221,117,000                | 3  | 311,823,800 |
| Current Purchase Rate Service Charge 1 (monthly * 12) Service Charge 2 (monthly * 12) | \$<br>2.7200         | \$ | 2.7200<br>1,895<br>4,423   |    |             |
| Pro Forma Cost  | \$<br>246,722        | \$ | 607,757                    | \$ | 854,479     |
| Test Year Purchase Cost ( )   |                      |    |                            |    | (830,468)   |
| Increase in Purchase Cost   |                      |    |                            | \$ | 24,011      |

The Commission finds that the adjustment is reasonable and the amounts known and measurable, thus they should be accepted because they reflect and properly account for North Nelson District's actual purchased water cost.

Materials and Supplies. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$111,754 and proposed one change to the account.<sup>58</sup> This adjustment was a decrease of \$81,480 to remove the materials portion, 70 percent, of the tap-fees installed by North Nelson District during the test year.<sup>59</sup> The USoA for Class A/B Water Systems requires that these costs be capitalized as Utility Plant in Service and depreciated over their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Application, Attachment 4, References, Reference B.

estimated useful lives.<sup>60</sup> Commission Staff capitalized the costs and made a corresponding adjustment to test-year depreciation.

Commission Staff identified other capital expenditures in North Nelson District's general ledger. In response to Staff's First Request, North Nelson District confirmed that its purchase of a GPS system from Seiler Instruments should have been capitalized and depreciated over ten years, 61 which is consistent with midpoint lives of communication equipment set forth in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) publication titled Depreciation Practices for Small Utilities. Commission Staff proposed to remove the purchase of this meter as a reduction to Materials and Supplies in the amount of \$6,251. This results in a total adjustment of \$87,731 to Materials and Supplies. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept the Commission Staff's adjustments because the amounts are known and measurable.

The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustments reasonable to properly capitalize these known and measurable expenses, and therefore accepts the adjustment as reasonable.

Insurance – General Liability. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$8,027 and proposed no changes to the account.<sup>62</sup> During Commission Staff's review of North Nelson District's general ledger, prepaid insurance expenses were identified that were not included in the test year amount. Commission Staff proposed an increase of \$11,678 to add the prepaid insurance expense to North Nelson District's revenue

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> USoA, Accounting Instruction 19 and 33.

<sup>61</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 16, Seiler Invoice Review.xlsx.

<sup>62</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

requirement. Commission Staff verified the amounts using the invoices provided by North Nelson District.<sup>63</sup> Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept Commission Staff's adjustment as the amount is known and measurable.

The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustments to be known and measurable and therefore, approves the Commission Staff's adjustments.

Insurance – Workers Comp. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$12,069 and proposed no changes to the account. During Commission Staff's review of North Nelson District's general ledger, prepaid insurance expenses were identified that were not included in the test year amount. Commission Staff calculated an increase of \$1,218 to add the expense to North Nelson District's revenue requirement. Commission Staff verified the amounts using the invoices provided by North Nelson District. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept the Commission Staff's proposed adjustment as the amount is known and measurable.

The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustments to be known and measurable and therefore, approves the adjustments.

Miscellaneous Expenses. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$14,104 and proposed no changes to the account.<sup>66</sup> During Commission Staff's review of North Nelson District's general ledger, it identified items that should be removed from North Nelson District's revenue requirement. The items identified are shown in the chart

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 5.

<sup>64</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

below. Commission Staff calculated a decrease of \$1,536 to Miscellaneous Expenses as expenses that are unrelated to providing water service are inappropriate. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept Commission Staff's adjustment to remove expenses unrelated to water service.

| Date       | Vendor                        | Description  | A  | mount |
|------------|-------------------------------|--|----|-------|
| 07/24/2023 | Jury's Farmview Garden Center | Gift Card - Nicky Rapier sympathy gift                   | \$ | 50    |
| 09/08/2023 | Scout and Scholar Brewing Co. | Gift Card for Nicky Rapier - 6 year service as Bd Member |    | 50    |
| 10/18/2023 | OKHCC                         | Deposit for X-mas party 12/8/2023                        |    | 225   |
| 11/10/2023 | Pamela K Shouse               | Reimbursement for Robert Cecil's sympathy gift           |    | 53    |
| 12/12/2023 | OKHCC                         | 2023 Christmas party                                     |    | 1,158 |
|            |                               | Total  | \$ | 1,536 |

The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustments to remove expenses from the revenue requirement are known and measurable as they are unrelated to water service and therefore, accepts the adjustments.

Depreciation Expense. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$344,282 and proposed one adjustment to the account.<sup>67</sup> This change was a decrease in the amount of \$73,967 to bring asset lives to the midpoint set forth in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) publication titled Depreciation Practices for Small Utilities.<sup>68</sup> To evaluate the reasonableness of the depreciation practices of small water utilities, the Commission has historically relied upon the NARUC study. When no evidence exists to support a specific life that is outside the NARUC ranges, the Commission has historically used the midpoint of the NARUC ranges to depreciate the utility plant. Commission Staff found no evidence to support depreciable lives that vary significantly from the midpoint of the NARUC ranges. In addition to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO, Reference H.

adjustment proposed by North Nelson District for depreciation expense, Commission Staff determined that an additional adjustment, an increase of \$3,212 to account for tap fee removal discussed above as well as the capitalization of the GPS system discussed under Materials and Supplies above is appropriate. This results in a total depreciation expense of \$273,527. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept Commission Staff's adjustment because the amounts are known and reasonable.

| Asset                         | Original Cost |        | Staff Life | Dep | oreciation |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------|------------|-----|------------|
| Commission Staff Adjustments  |               |        |            |     |            |
| GPS System                    | \$            | 6,251  | 10.00      | \$  | 625        |
| Labor Portion of Tap Fees     |               | 34,920 | 45.00      |     | 776        |
| Materials Portion of Tap Fees |               | 81,480 | 45.00      |     | 1,811      |
| Depreciation Adjustments      |               |        |            | \$  | 3,212      |

The Commission finds that the proposed adjustment and decrease of Depreciation Expense in the amount of \$70,755 is reasonable given that there is insufficient evidence to support depreciable lives that vary significantly from the midpoint of the NARUC ranges and accepts the adjustment.

Taxes Other Than Income. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$22,141 and proposed one change to the account.<sup>69</sup> This adjustment was to account for increased payroll taxes in the amount of \$2,017 due to the increased wages discussed above. Commission Staff recalculated the payroll tax amount at \$23,607<sup>70</sup> and added the PSC Assessment Fee, of \$2,289,<sup>71</sup> to reach a total Pro Forma amount of \$25,896. Commission Staff then determined an additional adjustment of \$1,738 to normalize the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> \$308,589 \* 7.65 % = \$23,607.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Application, Attachment 10 1, General Ledger, Account Number 40810.

test year to the Pro Forma amount would be appropriate. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept the Commission Staff's adjustment because the amounts are known and measurable.

The Commission finds Commission Staff's recommended adjustments are reasonable and should be accepted because the amounts are known and measurable.

Amortization Expense. North Nelson District reported a test year amount of \$0 and proposed one change to the account.<sup>72</sup> This adjustment was to amortize North Nelson District's Rate Case Expense of \$11,250 over three years for an annual amount of \$3,750. Commission Staff recommended the Commission accept the proposed adjustment because the amount is known and measurable.

The Commission finds North Nelson District's proposed adjustment is reasonable and should be accepted because the amount are known and measurable.

## OVERALL REVENUE REQUIREMENT

The Operating Ratio methodology<sup>73</sup> is used when there is no basis for a rate of return determination, the cost of the utility has fully or largely been funded through contributions, or there is little or no outstanding long-term debt. The Operating Ratio is a method to provide the utility with necessary working capital to operate effectively. North

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Application, Attachment 4, SAO.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Operating Ratio is defined as the ratio of expenses, including depreciation and taxes, to gross revenues. It is illustrated by the following equation:

Nelson District proposed to use an Operating Ratio of 88 percent in its application.<sup>74</sup> Commission Staff recommended that an operating ratio of 88 percent will allow North Nelson District necessary working capital and revenues to cover its reasonable operating expenses to operate and provide for reasonable equity growth. If the Commission used the Debt Service Recovery method, North Nelson District would not require any additional revenues compared to its operating expenses as it does not have any outstanding debt. Commission Staff is of the opinion that the rate increase from the Debt Service Recovery method would not produce enough revenues and working capital to keep North Nelson District financially stable and viable. Commission Staff recommended using the Operating Ratio method to calculate the revenue requirement for North Nelson District.

By applying the Operating Ratio method, Commission Staff found North Nelson District's Revenue Requirement from Rates to be \$1,846,659. A revenue increase of \$91,357, or 5.23 percent, is necessary to generate the Overall Revenue Requirement of \$2,028,926.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Application, Attachment #4, Revenue Requirements Chart.

| Description                             | orth Nelson<br>ater District | C  | Commission<br>Staff |
|---|------------------------------|----|---------------------|
| Pro Forma Operating Expenses            | \$<br>1,781,789              | \$ | 1,785,454           |
| Divided by: 88% Percent Operating Ratio | 88%                          |    | 88%                 |
| Subtotal                                | 2,024,761                    |    | 2,028,926           |
| Overall Revenue Requirement             | 2,024,761                    |    | 2,028,926           |
| Other Revenue ( )                       | (29,485)                     |    | (33,293)            |
| Interest Income ( )                     | (107,105)                    |    | (107,105)           |
| Non-Utility Income ( )                  | (41,869)                     |    | (41,869)            |
| Revenue Required from Rates             | 1,846,302                    |    | 1,846,659           |
| Revenue from Sales at Present Rates ( ) | (1,754,945)                  |    | (1,754,945)         |
| Required Revenue Increase / (Decrease)  | \$<br>91,357                 | \$ | 91,714              |
| Percentage Increase / (Decrease)        | 5.21%                        |    | 5.23%               |

#### RATE DESIGN

North Nelson District proposed to increase its monthly retail water service rates evenly across the board by approximately 5.21 percent.<sup>75</sup> North Nelson District has not performed a cost of service study (COSS).<sup>76</sup> North Nelson District stated that it did not complete a COSS because there had not been any material change in the water system to warrant a COSS.<sup>77</sup>

The Commission finds that the allocation of a revenue increase evenly across the board to a utility's rate design is appropriate when there has been no evidence entered into the record demonstrating that this method is unreasonable and in the absence of a COSS.<sup>78</sup> In the Commission's Staff Report, Commission Staff followed the method

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Application, Attachment 1, Customer Notice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 9a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> See Case No. 2017-00309, *Application of Cawood Water District for an Alternative Rate Adjustment* (Ky. PSC Dec. 14, 2017), final Order at 5.

proposed by North Nelson District and allocated Commission Staff's calculated revenue increase of approximately 5.23 percent across the board to North Nelson District's monthly retail water service rates.<sup>79</sup>

The rates set forth in Appendix B are based upon the revenue requirement the Commission has found to be fair, just, and reasonable, as calculated by Commission Staff, and will produce revenues from water sales to recover the \$1,846,659 Revenue Required from Rates, an approximate 5.23 percent increase. The monthly bill of a typical residential customer using 4,000 gallons of water will increase from \$26.07 to \$27.43, an increase of \$1.36, or 5.22 percent.

Non-recurring Charges. Following recent Commission decisions, <sup>80</sup> Commission Staff reviewed North Nelson District's Non-recurring Charges. As discussed above, because North Nelson District personnel are already compensated for labor performed during normal business hours, estimated labor costs performed during normal business hours and included in the proposed amount of Non-recurring Charges should be eliminated. <sup>81</sup> The labor performed during regular business hours is already recovered as a part of the revenue requirement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Commission Staff's Report at 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Case No. 2023-00299, Electronic Application of Magoffin County Water District for a Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC May 24, 2024); Case No. 2023-00284, Electronic Application of Montgomery County Water District No. 1 for a Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC Mar. 5, 2024); Case No. 2023-00258, Electronic Application of Kirksville Water Association, Inc. for a Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC May 3, 2024); and Case No. 2023-00220, Electronic Application of East Casey County Water District for a Rate Adjustment Pursuant to 807 KAR 5:076 (Ky. PSC May 21, 2024).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 19, Non-recurring Charge Cost Justification.

North Nelson District provided updated cost justification information for the Non-recurring Charges and Meter Tap charges.<sup>82</sup> North Nelson District also proposed to add two new Non-recurring charges to its tariff. The after-hours Service Call/Investigation Charge as well as the after-hours Reconnection Charge are both new charges proposed by North Nelson District. Commission Staff reviewed the cost justification information provided by North Nelson District and adjusted these charges by removing the Field Labor Costs and the Office/Clerical Labor Costs from those charges that occur during normal business hours. Commission Staff also removed the Office/Clerical Labor Costs from the After-Hours Reconnection Charge, as office labor is typically performed during normal business hours. The calculation of these adjustments to the Non-recurring Charges are included in a table provided in Appendix A. The adjustments to the Non-recurring Charges result in a net decrease in Other Operating Revenue of \$4,427 as discussed in the Other Water Revenues section above.

The Commission finds the adjustments regarding Non-recurring charges recommended in the Commission Staff's Report to be reasonable. These adjustments are also consistent with recent Commission decisions that labor expenses paid for work during normal business hours should not be recovered through Non-recurring charges. The Commission requires that charges be directly related to the actual cost incurred to provide the service. It is unreasonable to allocate an expense already incurred as a day-to-day cost of maintaining a system, such as the salary of a distribution operator, to a Non-recurring service such as the connection and reconnection of a meter during normal

 $^{82}$  North Nelson District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 20, Average Meter Connection Expense Cost Justification.

working hours without sufficient evidence to support such a finding. Only the marginal costs related to the service should be recovered through a special Non-recurring charge for service provided during normal working hours. In this case, North Nelson District did not provide sufficient evidence for the Commission to modify the fees. Thus, the Commission finds that the revised Non-recurring charges recommended by Commission Staff are reasonable and should be accepted.

In addition to its Non-recurring charges, North District provided updated cost justification sheets for its Meter Tap-On Fees for its 3/4 x 5/8-Inch meter sizes. The updated cost justification sheets support a tap-on fee of \$1,475, which is an increase from its current tap-on fee of \$1,000. Commission Staff reviewed the cost justification sheets<sup>83</sup> provided by North Nelson District and recommended the Commission adopt the proposed increase to the Meter Tap-On Fee to align with the principle of cost causation in that North Nelson District would not under recover approximately \$475 per installation.

The Commission finds that the increased tap-fee is reasonable and should be accepted because the proposed amount is supported by increased costs reflected in the record.

#### <u>SUMMARY</u>

After consideration of the evidence of record and being otherwise sufficiently advised, the Commission finds that the recommendations contained in the Commission Staff's Report are supported by the evidence of record and are reasonable. By applying the Operating Ratio (OR) method, requested by North Nelson District, and as accepted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> North District's Response to Staff's First Request, Item 15, Average Meter Connection Expense Cost Justification.

by the Commission, Commission Staff found that North Nelson District's required revenue from water sales is \$1,846,659 to meet the Overall Revenue Requirement of \$2,028,926, and that a \$91,714 revenue increase, or 5.23 percent, to pro forma present rate revenues is necessary to generate the Overall Revenue Requirement.

#### IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that:

- 1. The recommendations contained in the Commission Staff's Report are adopted and incorporated by reference into this Order as if fully set out herein.
  - 2. The water service rates proposed by North Nelson District are denied.
- 3. The water service rates set forth in Appendix B to this Order are approved for service rendered by North Nelson District on or after the date of service of this order.
- 4. Within 20 days of the date of service of this Order, North Nelson District shall file with this Commission, using the Commission's electronic Tariff Filing System, new tariff sheets setting forth the rates and charges approved herein and their effective date, and stating that the rates and charges were authorized by this Order.
  - 5. This case is closed and removed from the Commission's docket.

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION** 

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Commissioner

ATTEST:

**Executive Director** 

ENTERED

MAY 15 2025

AH

KENTUCKY PUBLIC
SERVICE COMMISSION

# APPENDIX A

# APPENDIX TO AN ORDER OF THE KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION IN CASE NO. 2024-00234 DATED MAY 15 2025

# \* Denotes Rounding

| Nonrecurring Charges Adjustments | stments | <b>Charges Ad</b> | Nonrecurring |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------|
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------|

| None                  | curring Charge   | es Aujustinents       | <u> </u> |               |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------|---------------|
|                       | Meter Re-Rea     | d Charge              |          |               |
|                       | Utility R        | Revised Charge        | Staff R  | evised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$               | -                     | \$       | -             |
| Field Labor           | \$               | 16.55                 | \$       | -             |
| Office Supplies       | \$               | 1.00                  | \$       | 1.00          |
| Office Labor          | \$               | 5.01                  | \$       | -             |
| Transportation        | \$               | 10.05                 | \$       | 10.05         |
| Misc.                 | \$               | -                     | \$       | -             |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$               | 32.61                 | \$       | 11.00         |
| Current Rate          | \$               | 25.00                 |          |               |
| S                     | Service Call/Inv | estigation estigation |          |               |
|                       | Utility F        | Revised Charge        | Staff R  | evised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$               | -                     | \$       | -             |
| Field Labor           | \$               | 16.55                 | \$       | -             |
| Office Supplies       | \$               | 1.00                  | \$       | 1.00          |
| Office Labor          | \$               | 5.01                  | \$       | -             |
| Transportation        | \$               | 10.05                 | \$       | 10.05         |
| Misc.                 | \$               | -                     | \$       | -             |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$               | 32.61                 | \$       | 11.00         |
| Current Rate          |                  | \$25.00               |          |               |
| Co                    | onnection/Turn   | -On Charge            |          | _             |
|                       | Utility R        | Revised Charge        | Staff R  | evised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$               | 14.56                 | \$       | 14.56         |
| Field Labor           | \$               | 16.55                 | \$       | -             |
| Office Supplies       | \$               | -                     | \$       | -             |
| Office Labor          | \$               | 5.01                  | \$       | -             |
| Transportation        | \$               | 10.05                 | \$       | 10.05         |
| Misc.                 | \$               | -                     | \$       | -             |
| Total Revised Charge  | \$               | 46.17                 | \$       | 25.00         |
| Current Rate          | \$               | 25.00                 |          |               |

|                       | leter Relocatio | n Chargo      |          |                |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------|----------------|
| ı                     |                 | evised Charge | Staff R  | Revised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$              | evised Charge | \$       | evised Charge  |
| Field Labor           | \$<br>\$        | _             | \$<br>\$ | _              |
| Office Supplies       | \$<br>\$        | _             | \$       | _              |
| Office Labor          | \$              | _             | \$       | _              |
| Transportation        | \$              | _             | \$       | _              |
| Misc. (Bank Charge)   | \$              | _             | \$       | _              |
| Total Revised Charge  | \$              | _             | Actual   | Cost           |
| Current Rate          | Actual C        | cost          |          | <u>-</u>       |
|                       | Returned Chec   | k Charge      |          |                |
|                       |                 | evised Charge | Staff R  | evised Charge  |
| Field Materials       | \$              | -             | \$       | -              |
| Field Labor           | \$              | -             | \$       | -              |
| Office Supplies       | \$              | 1.00          | \$       | 1.00           |
| Office Labor          | \$              | 15.04         | \$       | -              |
| Transportation        | \$              | -             | \$       | -              |
| Misc.                 | \$              | 7.50          | \$       | 7.50           |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$              | 23.54         | \$       | 8.50           |
| Current Rate          | \$              | 20.00         |          |                |
|                       | Reconnection    | Charge        |          |                |
|                       | Utility R       | evised Charge | Staff R  | Revised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$              | -             | \$       | -              |
| Field Labor           | \$              | 33.09         | \$       | -              |
| Office Supplies       | \$              | -             | \$       | -              |
| Office Labor          | \$              | 5.01          | \$       | -              |
| Transportation        | \$              | 20.10         | \$       | 20.10          |
| Misc.                 | \$              | -             | \$       | -              |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$              | 58.20         | \$       | 20.00          |
| Current Rate          |                 | \$50.00       |          |                |

|                       | Meter Test CI          | harge    |               |               |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------|---------------|
|                       | Utility Re             | Staff Re | evised Charge |               |
| Field Materials       | \$                     | -        | \$            | -             |
| Field Labor           | \$                     | 33.09    | \$            | -             |
| Office Supplies       | \$                     | -        | \$            | -             |
| Office Labor          | \$                     | -        | \$            | -             |
| Transportation        | \$                     | 20.10    | \$            | 20.10         |
| Misc.                 | \$                     | 50.00    | \$            | 50.00         |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$                     | 103.19   | \$            | 70.00         |
| Current Rate          | \$                     | 45.00    |               |               |
|                       | Field Collection       | Charge   |               |               |
|                       | Utility Revised Charge |          |               | evised Charge |

|                       | Field Collection C | harge                  |    |               |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----|---------------|
|                       | Utility Revi       | Utility Revised Charge |    | evised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$                 | -                      | \$ | -             |
| Field Labor           | \$                 | 16.55                  | \$ | -             |
| Office Supplies       | \$                 | 1.00                   | \$ | 1.00          |
| Office Labor          | \$                 | 5.01                   | \$ | -             |
| Transportation        | \$                 | 10.05                  | \$ | 10.05         |
| Misc.                 | \$                 | -                      | \$ |               |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$                 | 32.61                  | \$ | 11.00         |

Current Rate \$15.00

| Recoi                 | nection Charge | e (After Hours)        |    |               |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------|----|---------------|
|                       | Utility Re     | Utility Revised Charge |    | evised Charge |
| Field Materials       | \$             | -                      | \$ | -             |
| Field Labor           | \$             | 115.83                 | \$ | 115.83        |
| Office Supplies       | \$             | -                      | \$ | -             |
| Office Labor          | \$             | 5.01                   | \$ | -             |
| Transportation        | \$             | 20.10                  | \$ | 20.10         |
| Misc.                 | \$             | -                      | \$ | -             |
| Total Revised Charge* | \$             | 140.94                 | \$ | 136.00        |

N/A **Current Rate Service Call/Investigation (After Hours) Utility Revised Charge** Staff Revised Charge Field Materials \$ \$ 99.28 \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ 99.28 Field Labor \$ Office Supplies Office Labor 5.01 Transportation 10.05 10.05 Misc. \$ Total Revised Charge\* 114.34 109.00

Current Rate N/A

#### APPENDIX B

# APPENDIX TO AN ORDER OF THE KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION IN CASE NO. 2024-00234 DATED MAY 15 2025

The following rates and charges are prescribed for the customers in the area served by North Nelson County Water District. All other rates and charges not specifically mentioned herein shall remain the same as those in effect under the authority of the Commission prior to the effective date of this Order.

# **Monthly Water Rates**

| <u>5/8</u> | <u>3- x 3/4-Incl</u> | <u>n Meter</u> |         |                       |
|------------|----------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------|
|            | First                | 2,000          | gallons | \$ 17.06 Minimum bill |
|            | Next                 | 3,000          | gallons | 0.00519 per gallon    |
|            | Next                 | 5,000          | gallons | 0.00464 per gallon    |
|            | All Over             | 10,000         | gallons | 0.00427 per gallon    |
|            |                      |                |         |                       |

Bulk Rate \$ 0.00814 per gallon

# Non-recurring Charges

| Meter Re-Read Charge                     | \$11.00     |
|--|-------------|
| Service Call/Investigation               | \$11.00     |
| Connection/Turn-on Charge                | \$25.00     |
| Meter Relocation Charge                  | Actual Cost |
| Returned Check Charge                    | \$8.50      |
| Re-Connection Charge                     | \$20.00     |
| Field Collection Charge                  | \$11.00     |
| Meter Test Charge                        | \$70.00     |
| Reconnection Charge (After Hours)        | \$136.00    |
| Service Call/Investigation (After Hours) | \$109.00    |
|  |             |

Tap On Fee –  $3/4 \times 5/8$ -Inch Meter \$1,475.00

\*Colin Cissell General Manager North Nelson Water District 5555 Louisville Road P. O. Box 25 Cox's Creek, KY 40013

\*North Nelson Water District 5555 Louisville Road P. O. Box 25 Cox's Creek, KY 40013

\*Susy Duncan North Nelson Water District 5555 Louisville Road P. O. Box 25 Cox's Creek, KY 40013

\*Sam Reid 312 N. Jackson Street Perryville, KY 40468