

M A N I T O B A) Order No. 59/02
)
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD ACT) April 10, 2002

BEFORE: G. D. Forrest, Chairman
M. Girouard, Member
M. Santos, Member

**PROCEDURAL ORDER FOR A PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING
THE APPLICATION OF CENTRA GAS MANITOBA INC. FOR
APPROVAL OF 2002/2003 COST OF GAS AND CHANGES
TO RATES FOR SUPPLEMENTAL GAS, TRANSPORTATION
(TO CENTRA) AND DISTRIBUTION (TO CUSTOMER)**

The Public Utilities Board of Manitoba (the "Board") held a Pre-Hearing Conference ("PHC") at its offices in Winnipeg, Manitoba on Monday, April 8, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. to consider applications for intervenor status and a timetable for the orderly exchange of information leading to the public hearing of the Application of Centra Gas Manitoba Inc. ("Centra") for approval of its 2002/2003 Cost of Gas and changes to rates for supplemental gas, transportation (to Centra), and distribution (to customer) (the "Application").

A Notice of Public Hearing and PHC dated March 20, 2002, was issued by the Board and filed at the PHC as PUB Exhibit #1.

This Notice was published by Centra in daily and weekly newspapers and served on interested parties of past record.

APPLICATIONS FOR INTERVENOR STATUS

Parties wishing to obtain intervenor status were requested to address their respective applications in detail providing the reasons for requesting intervenor status, the areas of the Application they wished to examine and their intention with respect to intervenor costs.

The following applications for Intervenor status were considered at the Pre-Hearing Conference:

1. Consumers' Association of Canada (Manitoba) Inc./Manitoba Society of Seniors (CAC/MSOS). Intervenor Request Form submitted and received on April 8, 2002.

As set out in its application CAC/MSOS indicated that it was interested in full intervention on all issues of the application, that they intend to appear throughout the hearing, to participate in the production and testing of evidence and to present final argument. CAC/MSOS will be calling witnesses and will be applying for costs. Counsel for CAC/MSOS indicated his intention to call a Mr. Pringle as witness.

2. Gladstone Austin Natural Gas Co-op Ltd. (GANG) and the North Cypress Energy Co-op submitted its intervenor request form indicating specific interest in Centra's inter-utility rate study. GANG noted that it would only be participating in the testing of evidence and that it did not intend to call a witness. GANG also noted its intention to apply for costs and its desire to attend only those portions of the hearings dealing with the inter-utility rate study.
3. Municipal Gas - Intervenor Request Form was received on April 2, 2002.

As set out in its application Municipal Gas indicated its intention is to monitor the proceedings, appear throughout the hearing, not participate in the production and testing of evidence or to present final argument. Municipal does not intend to call any witnesses and it will not be applying for costs.

4. Energy Advantage Inc. did not attend the PHC but did submit a letter asking for registration as an intervenor.

Intervenor Request Forms received to date were forwarded to Centra.

BOARD FINDINGS

The Board notes all intervenors have a substantial interest in the outcome of the proceeding.

The Board considered these applications for intervenor status and is prepared to approve such requests except for that of Energy Advantage Inc. The Board will require Energy Advantage to submit a completed Intervenor Request Form and will determine the status of the Application after receiving Centra's comments on the Application.

In granting intervenor status, the Board encourages those parties with common interests to co-ordinate their interventions to achieve regulatory efficiencies, minimize costs and avoid duplication.

The Board also received a letter from a Mr. William Halton requesting certain information and indicating a desire to make a presentation to the Board. Mr. Halton will be advised, in writing, of his ability to make a presentation to the Board.

TIMETABLE

A draft timetable was circulated and discussed during the PHC.

Centra indicated its preference for the timetable as circulated with its Application. With reference to the alternative timetable circulated by Board Counsel, Centra indicated that if the

Board were to accept the suggestion of a Hearing commencing June 17th then it would ask for a period of three weeks by which to respond to intervenors questions.

CAC/MSOS indicated it had concerns about the timetable. A change in the timetable was sought with respect to the hearing date only. Specifically, it noted that the schedule did not recognize CAC/MSOS Counsel's letter of February 28, 2002 indicating that Counsel was not available for May hearings dates and suggesting the last two weeks of June. CAC/MSOS indicated that it had no concerns with the other dates referred to in the timetable.

BOARD FINDINGS

The Board has considered the submissions of the parties together with its own availability and has concluded the hearing should commence on a date which accommodates all parties. The Board will therefore approve the timetable as attached as Schedule "A" of this Order.

The Board will also require Centra to publish a public notice advertising the hearing date. The Notice should also include any revised impact of cost of gas changes on supplementary gas and transportation (to Centra) rates and distribution (to customer) rates.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

1. Intervenor status be awarded to:
 - a) Consumers' Association of Canada (Manitoba) Inc./Manitoba Society of Seniors;
 - b) Gladstone Austin Natural Gas Co-op Ltd.;
 - c) Municipal Gas;
2. The timetable attached hereto as Schedule "A" shall be the timetable for the orderly exchange of information by the participating parties.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

"G. D. FORREST"

Chairman

"H. M. SINGH"

Acting Secretary

Certified a true copy of Order
No. 59/02 issued by The Public
Utilities Board

Acting Secretary

SCHEDULE "A"

TIMETABLE

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DATE (all dates 2002)</u>
1. Centra to File Application	March 14
2. Centra to Publish Notice	
· Dailies	March 30
· Weeklies	Week of April 1 - 5
3. Pre-Hearing Conference	April 8
4. Centra to be in receipt of First Round Information Requests	April 15
5. Centra to file responses to First Round Information Requests	May 13
6. Centra to Publish Reminder Notice	To be determined
· Dailies	
· Weeklies	
7. All parties to be in receipt of Intervenor Evidence	May 21
8. All parties to file Information Requests of Intervenor Evidence	May 28
9. Intervenors to file responses to Information Requests	June 6
10. Centra to file Rebuttal Evidence	June 13
11. Hearing	June 17 (commencement date and continuing as necessary) *

*NOTE: The Board expects to be sitting full days on June 17, 18, 19; a.m. only on June 20; a full day on June 21; p.m. only on June 24 to hear Mr. Pringle's evidence and a full day on June 25th for closing submissions.