



Agenda Date: 2/23/22
Agenda Item: 7A

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
Board of Public Utilities
44 South Clinton Avenue, 1st Floor
Post Office Box 350
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0350
www.nj.gov/bpu/

CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF SOUTH)	ORDER OF APPROVAL
JERSEY GAS COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF THE)	
CLOSURE OF ITS OFFICE LOCATED AT 111 NORTH)	
FRANKLIN BOULEVARD, PLEASANTVILLE, NEW)	
JERSEY PURSUANT TO N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e))	DOCKET NO. GO21101159

Parties of Record:

Debra M. Franco, Esq., on behalf of South Jersey Gas Company
Brian O. Lipman, Esq., Director, New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel

BY THE BOARD:

On October 11, 2021, South Jersey Gas Company ("Petitioner" or "Company") filed a petition pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1 to close its customer service center at 111 North Franklin Boulevard in Pleasantville ("Office") ("Petition"). The Office has been closed for in-person customer payments since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. The Petitioner has complied with N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(c) and (e), including mailing copies of the Petition to the Clerk of the affected municipality, as well as to the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel ("Rate Counsel").

In the Petition, the Company explains that it has seen a customer usage decline at the Office by 57% between 2019 and 2020 and a further decline of approximately 70% from 2020-2021. The Petition further stated that the Office can be closed because it will have minimal impact to customers because, in addition to the decline in the number of transactions at the Office, it still operates a nearby in-person Customer Service Center at the Company's headquarters in Atlantic City, which is approximately five (5) miles away and close to public transportation. Lastly, the Company stated that it will continue to facilitate the use of a drop box at the Office location for customers to drop off payment and correspondence and that the other utility operations at the location would not be impacted. The Company also expects a savings of approximately \$172,000 in annual operations and maintenance savings on a going forward basis because of the proposed Office closure.

On January 11, 2022, Rate Counsel submitted its comments concerning this matter. In its comments, Rate Counsel neither supported nor opposed the Company's request to close the Office. Further, Rate Counsel stated that it reserves its right to review the prudence, recoverability, and rate impacts of any costs incurred to close the Office.

Lastly, the Board did not receive any complaints regarding the closure of the Office.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

After review of the entire record in this matter, including the comments filed by Rate Counsel, the Board **HEREBY FINDS**:

1. On October 11, 2021, the Company filed a Petition, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1, to close the Office.
2. Petitioner has complied with N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1, including the relevant notice requirements.
3. No objections to this closure have been received by the Board.
4. The closure of the payment window located at the Office is not unreasonable and will not unduly prejudice the public interest.

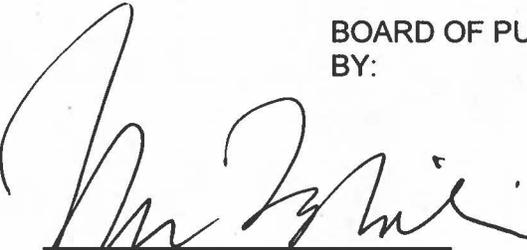
Therefore, based on the foregoing, the Board **HEREBY APPROVES** the closure of the Office, subject to the following conditions:

1. This Order shall not be construed as directly or indirectly fixing for any purposes whatsoever the value of any tangible or intangible assets now owned or hereafter to be owned by the Company; and
2. This Order shall not affect nor in any way limit the exercise of the authority of this Board or of this State, in any future petition or in any proceedings with respect to rates, franchises, service, financing, accounting, capitalization, depreciation or any other matter affecting the Company, including any request that may be made to recover costs associated with this closure.

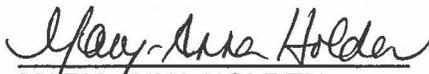
This order shall be effective March 2, 2022.

DATED: February 23, 2022

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:



JOSEPH L. FIORDALISO
PRESIDENT



MARY-ANNA HOLDEN
COMMISSIONER



DIANNE SOLOMON
COMMISSIONER



UPENDRA J. CHIVUKULA
COMMISSIONER



ROBERT M. GORDON
COMMISSIONER

ATTEST: 

AIDA CAMACHO-WELCH
SECRETARY

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF SOUTH JERSEY GAS COMPANY FOR APPROVAL
OF THE CLOSURE OF ITS OFFICE LOCATED AT 111 NORTH FRANKLIN BOULEVARD,
PLEASANTVILLE, NEW JERSEY PURSUANT TO N.J.A.C. 14:3-5.1(e)

BPU DOCKET NO. GO21101159

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