

# THE BLADE

## Editorial: Keep asking questions even without answers

THE BLADE EDITORIAL BOARD

MAR 11, 2022

One striking characteristic of the FirstEnergy matter remains the failure to ask questions aiming to get at the truth of the bribery scandal.

There have been some questions, yet they've failed to probe the real deal. Who knew what and did what and when? Who profited? Those are the questions for which Ohioans need answers. Of course we know people profited, but the nature of the transactions remains a mystery.

Federal Judge John Adams asked one of those neglected questions in his Akron courtroom on Wednesday. Judge Adams is considering a settlement in a complex lawsuit involving an insurance payment of \$180 million to FirstEnergy.

The question was directed at an attorney for FirstEnergy.

“Who paid the bribe?”

Despite repeated attempts the judge couldn't get an answer. The attorney cited the pending settlement as reasons for declining to answer.

The judge became frustrated, just like many ratepayers.

“You are wasting my time,” Judge Adams said according to the Associated Press. “You are not here to answer my questions. You are here to duck and avoid. “

Then the judge ended the hearing.

The important point was that the question was asked. The venue where the question was asked isn't critical.

That question and many others must be answered before FirstEnergy walks off with another slap on the wrist in the civil cases still pending before different judges.

Pertinent questions about FirstEnergy are being asked by only the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel and Judge Adams.

Pretty much every other actor in this bribery investigation and the aftermath, seems to want to get it over with. Damn the ratepayers, just let First Energy get back to business as usual.

It doesn't take much to know how that business will operate under a Public Utilities Commission of Ohio that sees no evil, hears no evil, and speaks as little as possible about evil.

Luckily, the questions continue to be pursued outside PUCO.

Answers don't come unless questions are asked.

There haven't been enough questions and until the answers come, FirstEnergy shouldn't be allowed to continue business as usual.

*Reprinted with permission, The Blade Pages of Opinion, Toledo, Ohio, March 11, 2022.*