



**MINUTES OF THE
OFFICE OF THE OHIO CONSUMERS' COUNSEL GOVERNING BOARD**

Meeting of July 22, 2026

The members present were:

Ms. Cheryl Grossman, Chair
Ms. Connie Skinner, Vice Chair
Mr. Randy Brown
Mr. Dorsey Hager
Mr. Bruce Lackey
Mr. Michael Watkins

CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIR:

Chair Grossman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed the guests in attendance. She asked the guests to introduce themselves. Matt Corlett, Board Secretary, called the roll. The members answering as present are shown above.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Chair Grossman asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 2026 Board meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Skinner to approve the minutes as written. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. Mr. Corlett called the roll. The motion was approved unanimously by the members present.

CONSUMERS' COUNSEL'S REPORT:

Consumers' Counsel Willis began her report by noting that OCC will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary with an event following the Governing Board meeting on September 15, 2026. Next, she discussed submetering, including the ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court that Nationwide Energy Partners and other submetering companies are public utilities under Ohio law, the rapid passage by the legislature of HB 173 which sets light regulation on submetering companies, and Governor DeWine's veto of HB 173 at the request of OCC and other stakeholders. She added that it is now with PUCO to carry out the court's ruling and that one key aspect is that Ohio law allows only one electric distribution utility to provide service within a certified territory. Chair Grossman asked Ms. Willis to share how

long this has been an issue. Ms. Willis said that OCC has been trying to get legislative protections for consumers for 15 years and it gained prominence with a 2013 investigative reporting article in the Columbus Dispatch. Chair Grossman expressed her appreciation to Ms. Willis and the OCC staff for their work on this important issue.

Ms. Willis next discussed data center issues and shared an interview with ABC5 TV in Cleveland. She noted that OCC has received many requests for information and interviews on this topic and that OCC's message is that data centers need to pay their fair share, and their fair share is the full share of their usage plus contributing to the system. She noted ongoing efforts with the legislature and before FERC and PJM regarding transparency and accuracy of forecasting.

Ms. Willis next shared a news article and quotes about the affordability crisis and a Citizens Utility Board study that documented how uneconomic coal plant operations increased costs to consumers. She discussed OCC's consumer advocacy efforts at the PUCO, including FirstEnergy's request to lower reliability standards and the AES refund order which was considerably less than the amount advocated by OCC. She reviewed pending rate cases at the PUCO and showed the cumulative effect on consumers from the three-year rate case proposed by AES.

Ms. Willis next discussed two rate cases that are resolved, Christi Water and Aqua Ohio. In both cases, OCC is not satisfied with the PUCO's rulings. OCC is appealing the Christi Water decision to the Ohio Supreme Court and filing a request for rehearing in the Aqua Ohio case.

Ms. Willis provided updates typically given by the Deputy Consumers' Counsel, due to the Deputy attending an out-of-state conference. She discussed federal advocacy efforts, starting with the recent PJM capacity auction that saw prices hit the cap of \$325 per megawatt day, but also came in 6.8 gigawatts below PJM's reliability requirements. She highlighted a couple of FERC cases related to data center costs and discussed FERC's review of the application by Grid Growth, an AEP-FirstEnergy joint venture, noting that FERC listened to OCC's concerns and is requiring Grid Growth to justify its proposed charges. She further noted that OCC has filed comments in several PJM transmission projects.

Ms. Willis next provided an update on OCC's win last year at the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals regarding the RTO adder. She noted that AEP has issued its refunds and that Duke and FirstEnergy still need to issue theirs. She further noted that several states are looking to mandate participation in RTOs so that utilities would no longer be eligible to collect the FERC adder.

Ms. Willis next discussed OCC's work before the Ohio Supreme Court, including the aforementioned appeal of the PUCO's Christi Water rate case. In addition, she discussed the court upholding the PUCO's decision in the Duke Energy gas rate case (propane caverns) and the court's pending decision in Duke's case seeking an additional \$14 million from consumers due to an accounting error by Duke.

Ms. Willis concluded her report by providing a legislative update. She discussed a new bill, HB 457, The Electricity Forecast Transparency Act, and emphasized the importance of accurate forecasting because consumers end up paying the costs when utilities get it wrong. She also discussed Governor DeWine's veto of HB 173 on submetering.

FISCAL INFORMATION:

Matt Corlett, Operations Director, spoke next about fiscal and personnel matters. He highlighted OCC's final budget figures for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2026, and noted the budget amount for the current fiscal year, FY 2027. He reviewed the current staffing level and shared that OCC has made selections for a senior regulatory analyst and a part-time web developer. He introduced Legal Intern Oakley Lorson to the board. Mr. Corlett concluded his report by sharing that Alex Hickey was OCC's employee of the quarter for the second quarter of 2026.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT:

Merrilee Embs, Public Affairs Director, gave the Board an update on OCC's outreach, education, and media engagement, including social media and website updates. She also provided statistics on recent outreach events, media releases, and mentions of OCC in the news.

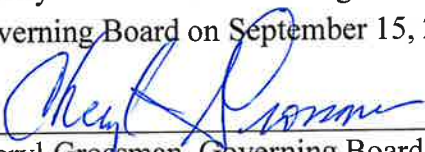
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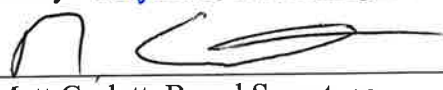
Chair Grossman asked for a motion to go into executive session to consider the compensation of public employees. Ms. Skinner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lackey. Mr. Corlett called the roll. The motion was approved unanimously by the members present. The Board went into executive session at 11:00 a.m. The Board returned from executive session at 11:10 a.m.

Chair Grossman asked if anyone had any final questions or comments. Gene Freeman asked a few questions about the Christi water case, which Ms. Willis answered.

Chair Grossman asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Hager. Mr. Corlett called the roll. The motion was approved unanimously by the members present. The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.

I verify that the above meeting minutes have been approved and ratified by the Consumers' Counsel Governing Board on September 15, 2026.


Cheryl Grossman, Governing Board Chair


Matt Corlett, Board Secretary
Ohio Consumers' Counsel Governing Board