

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 25-0729-TF

Tariff filing of the Town of Hardwick Electric Department for an overall rate increase of 13.24% effective with service rendered on or after June 1, 2025	
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Order entered: 05/29/2025

ORDER OPENING INVESTIGATION AND NOTICE OF SCHEDULING CONFERENCE

I. INTRODUCTION

This case involves a request for Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) approval of an increase in the Town of Hardwick Electric Department’s (“Hardwick Electric”) rates. In this order, we open an investigation into the justness and reasonableness of a 13.24% rate increase proposed by Hardwick Electric.

On April 16, 2025, Hardwick Electric filed revised rate schedules and tariff documents with the Commission reflecting a proposed 13.24% increase in its rates. The tariff changes are proposed to take effect on a service-rendered basis commencing June 1, 2025.

The Vermont Department of Public Service (“Department”) was notified of this tariff filing via the Commission’s electronic case management system, ePUC, at the time of the Company’s filing. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 225, the Department must investigate the justness and reasonableness of a proposed change to a rate schedule immediately upon receipt of notice of the change.

On May 16, 2025, the Department recommended that the Commission open an investigation into Hardwick Electric’s tariff filing.

II. DISCUSSION

The Commission must determine whether Hardwick Electric’s proposed change in rates is just and reasonable.

Section 225 of Title 30 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated requires the Commission to open an investigation into a tariff filing if the Department opposes the change in rates. In this

case, the Department has recommended that we open an investigation into Hardwick Electric's tariff filing. Accordingly, we hereby do so.

Section 226(b) of Title 30 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated provides that the Commission may not suspend the effectiveness of a tariff of a municipal or cooperative utility and that such a utility may implement a proposed rate increase pending a Commission investigation provided that the utility "refund revenues collected in excess of those which are finally determined to be just and reasonable." Section 226(b) further provides that "[a]ny increase in the rates of a municipality or cooperative shall be implemented by means of an identical percentage increase to each class or division of ratepayers." In light of this statutory language, Hardwick Electric may implement the tariff by means of an identical 13.24% surcharge to each class of ratepayers, subject to the requirement that it refund any amounts collected that are in excess of the amount finally determined to be just and reasonable by the Commission.

Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 20 and 21, Hardwick Electric will be responsible for court reporter costs incurred by the Commission during the course of this proceeding and billed back to Hardwick Electric.

III. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED by the Public Utility Commission ("Commission") of the State of Vermont that:

1. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 225 and 227(a), the Commission opens an investigation into the justness and reasonableness of the Town of Hardwick Electric Department's ("Hardwick Electric") proposed tariff revisions as filed with the Commission on April 16, 2025.

2. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. Section 226(b), until a final determination is made in this proceeding, increased rates shall be implemented by means of an identical 13.24% surcharge to each class of Hardwick Electric's ratepayers under the tariffs previously approved by the Commission. Any revenues collected in excess of those that are finally determined to be just and reasonable shall be refunded to Hardwick Electric's ratepayers.


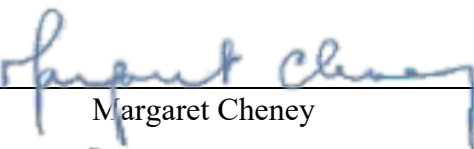
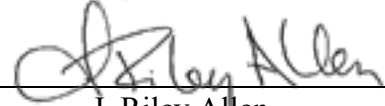
3. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 8, Jacob Davis is appointed to serve as the hearing officer to conduct the proceedings in this matter.

4. Pursuant to 30 V.S.A. §§ 10 and 11(a)(2), a scheduling conference will be held before the hearing officer on June 10, 2025, commencing at 11:00 A.M., via Go To Meeting videoconference. Participants and members of the public may access the scheduling conference online at <https://meet.goto.com/966865453>, or call in by telephone using the following information: phone number: +1 (646) 749-3129 access code: 966-865-453. Participants may wish to download the Go To Meeting software application in advance of the hearing at <https://meet.goto.com/install>. Guidance on how to join the meeting and system requirements may be found at <https://www.gotomeeting.com/online-meeting-support>.

5. Consistent with Commission Rule 2.225(A), the Vermont Department of Public Service and Hardwick Electric must jointly file a proposed procedural schedule for the investigation no later than three days before the scheduling conference.¹ If the parties are unable to stipulate to a procedural schedule, then the Commission requests that the parties file separate schedules.

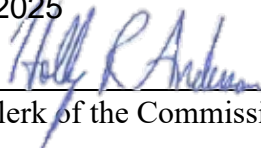
¹ 30 V.S.A. § 227(a) states: “Except when the company consents to waive the seven-month requirement, if the Commission fails to make its determination within the time periods set by this subsection, the charged rate schedules filed by the company shall become effective and final.” The hearing officer is directed to adhere to the seven-month requirement specified in the statute, as consistent with Commission precedent. Accordingly, if a proposed schedule extends beyond seven months from the date of today’s order, Hardwick Electric should be prepared to waive the seven-month requirement for a period of time that would accommodate the proposed schedule.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 29th day of May, 2025.

 _____)) PUBLIC UTILITY
Edward McNamara)	
 _____)) COMMISSION
Margaret Cheney)	
 _____)) OF VERMONT
J. Riley Allen)	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: May 29, 2025

Attest: 
_____)
Clerk of the Commission

Notice to Readers: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Commission (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: puc.clerk@vermont.gov)

PUC Case No. 25-0729-TF - SERVICE LIST

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