

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

June 10, 2025  
11 a.m.

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Via videoconference

Scheduling Conference held before the  
Vermont Public Utility Commission, via videoconference, on  
June 10, 2025, beginning at 11 a.m.

P R E S E N T

HEARING OFFICER: Jacob Davis, Utilities Analyst

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A P P E A R A N C E S

1  
2 ALEXANDER WING, ESQUIRE  
3        Appearing for the VT Department of Public Service  
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7 PRIMMER, PIPER, EGGLESTON & CRAMER  
8        Appearing for Town of Hardwick Electric Dept.  
9        P.O. Box 349  
10       Littleton, NH 03561  
11 BY: ELIJAH EMERSON, ESQUIRE  
12 eemerson@primmer.com

13 Also present: Sarah Braese, Hardwick Electric  
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1 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Good morning.  
2 This is a scheduling conference in Case No.  
3 25-0729-TF, which involves the tariff filing of the  
4 Town of Hardwick Electric Department requesting an  
5 overall rate increase of 13.24 percent, to be  
6 effective with service rendered on or after June 1,  
7 2025.

8 My name is Jacob Davis. I'm a  
9 utilities analyst with the commission, and I have  
10 been assigned as the hearing officer for this case.

11 I'll start by taking appearances.  
12 Starting with the Department of Public Service.

13 MR. WING: Good morning. Alex Wing on  
14 behalf of the Department of Public Service.

15 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Thanks. Next,  
16 the Town of Hardwick Electric Department.

17 MR. EMERSON: This is Eli Emerson from  
18 Primmer Piper Eggleston & Cramer on behalf of the  
19 Town of Hardwick Electric Department. And on the  
20 video today is Sarah Braese, the general manager of  
21 Hardwick Electric.

22 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Great.

23 MS. BRAESE: Morning.

24 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: So I saw the  
25 proposed schedule. I noticed that Hardwick Electric

1 is waiving the seven-month rule, and it looks like  
2 the case would end sometime in March or so, if the  
3 full litigation schedule went out.

4 I think everything looks good to me.  
5 The only thing that I wanted to note is that the  
6 public hearing, we will have to check on availability  
7 on our end to make sure that that week works. But I  
8 will do my best to fit that particular week.

9 Is there -- so I'm aware -- kind of a  
10 second day of the week that is -- works best, maybe  
11 the week before or the week after, for the Department  
12 and Hardwick? It's scheduled for the week of July  
13 21st, just to note that.

14 MR. EMERSON: Yup. The scheduling of  
15 the public hearing is always a little bit challenging  
16 because the expectation that notice of the public  
17 hearing go out in the customer bills. So you have to  
18 give enough time between, you know, when the clerk is  
19 able to set the actual public hearing date to get the  
20 notice to us, and then to get them into the bills.

21 So usually moving it up is not really  
22 possible in order to make sure that you hit the  
23 billing cycles. So I would imagine -- and if I also  
24 understand, I don't think the following week was a  
25 good week. So I guess we are a little -- at least

1 for Hardwick. So a little dependent on that week.  
2 Hopefully it works. I guess possibly later in the  
3 week, the earlier week, so the week of July 14th, I  
4 guess would be a possibility. But --

5 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Okay. And then  
6 if things had to be moved further, like the important  
7 thing is getting the notice and making sure everyone  
8 can be there. So would -- if the week of the 28th  
9 does not work, would the week of August 4th work for  
10 Hardwick and the Department?

11 MR. EMERSON: I'm personally on  
12 vacation that week. So that doesn't mean it couldn't  
13 work.

14 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Okay.

15 MR. EMERSON: Not like the attorney is  
16 critical for the public hearing.

17 MR. WING: Yeah. Alex for the  
18 Department. I might have a conflict then as well.  
19 And part of the, you know, the end of the week like  
20 the 31st and the 1st.

21 And another thing that I would talk  
22 about when looking at this public hearing date is I  
23 would note that it's kind of situated not just in a  
24 way for the utility to provide notice, but for  
25 customers to attend the public hearing and then

1 decide whether they want to intervene, and then have  
2 time to file discovery. And I mean we kind of  
3 tinkered with having a separate track in case there  
4 were interveners. But depending on when and if we  
5 move the public hearing, a lot about this schedule,  
6 at least as applies to interveners, would have to be  
7 rethought.

8 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Right. Yeah.

9 MR. WING: I think the Department could  
10 probably make the rest of it work regardless of when  
11 the hearing is. But I'm not sure about interveners.  
12 And that's important to consider in case there are  
13 any.

14 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Right.

15 Understood. I'm not asking because I think that week  
16 of July 21st won't work. I just wanted to have a  
17 backup without anything to get everyone's input. But  
18 I'll do my best for the week of the 21st, and if  
19 something else is necessary, then we can go from  
20 there. But I'll do my best for that date.

21 Go ahead.

22 MR. WING: If you wanted to reach out  
23 to us, and you were thinking about alternatives, I'm  
24 sure the Department would be happy to talk to  
25 Hardwick and file a response if different options

1 were on the table.

2 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Okay. Yeah. I  
3 can definitely do that. The only other thing that I  
4 had to note was that there already seems to be a  
5 substantial amount of public interest in the case.  
6 And I was curious if Hardwick Electric already had  
7 kind of a mechanism for responding to public comments  
8 directly. Or if that is -- I don't know if this is a  
9 new kind of occurrence for Hardwick Electric in one  
10 of these cases, having a lot of public interest. So  
11 I know in the past sometimes the commission has asked  
12 the utilities to reach out to the customers and  
13 interact with them resulting from the public  
14 comments, and sometimes it's been more of a --  
15 filings in the case to interact with the public  
16 comments.

17 So I was just curious if there was  
18 something kind of proactively occurring in that  
19 regard already at this point.

20 MR. EMERSON: Well typically,  
21 historically, the Hardwick customers have been much  
22 more active in rate cases than at least the other  
23 municipal utilities. So not a huge surprise that you  
24 may have seen more public comments in this rate case  
25 than in others. We have always approached the public

1 comments as they are not really meant as something to  
2 respond to. They are meant to inform the PUC's and  
3 the Department's investigation into the rate case.

4 But, I mean, Sarah is here to discuss  
5 -- they also have, you know, electric commission  
6 meetings which are open meetings and open to the  
7 public. I'm sure that they hear on a consistent  
8 basis both the perceived good things and the  
9 perceived bad things.

10 I don't think it was our intent to  
11 respond to them specifically as public comments filed  
12 in the docket. But I would imagine that Hardwick is  
13 consistently, you know, addressing concerns of its  
14 customers outside of this particular docket. I don't  
15 know, Sarah, if you felt like you wanted to add  
16 anything.

17 MS. BRAESE: I would just say that we  
18 are working to be much more engaged with the public,  
19 and our customers overall broadly, and have  
20 maintained a more consistent presence on various  
21 social media channels, and trying to make sure that  
22 announcements are made ahead of time encouraging  
23 folks to attend commission meetings like you had  
24 mentioned. And, you know, I can certainly  
25 incorporate more things if that is something that the

1 PUC or the Department feels would be best. But from  
2 my understanding that has not been done historically,  
3 as Eli mentioned.

4 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Yeah. I think  
5 that's something done or more something that some  
6 utilities actively do, but not set as a requirement  
7 or anything like that. And so I will monitor the  
8 public comments, and if there is something I feel  
9 should be directly responded to, I'll try to make  
10 that clear with ample time. So that works.

11 And then I think just the last thing,  
12 Sarah, you mentioned social media and other outreach  
13 channels. I'm hoping that in addition to the bill  
14 notices for the public hearing, once that is sent,  
15 those channels could also be used to provide notice  
16 to customers. Does that seem possible?

17 MS. BRAESE: Yes. Absolutely.

18 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Okay. Great.  
19 Well other than that then, I think that is all I had.  
20 So any other questions or comments or issues from the  
21 parties?

22 MR. EMERSON: Not from me.

23 MR. WING: Nothing for the Department  
24 at this time.

25 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Okay. Great.

1 Well thank you all very much. I will adjourn the  
2 meeting there then, and I will get a scheduling order  
3 out in ePUC once I know the date of the public  
4 hearing.

5 MR. WING: One last point. Am I to  
6 presume that the public hearing would have the  
7 traditional Department information session with the  
8 utility beforehand?

9 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Yeah. Yeah.  
10 That's standard practice. So that would be the hope.

11 MR. WING: Part of why I ask, I believe  
12 a few years ago the Hardwick rate case I think the  
13 info session ate into when the hearing would have  
14 been otherwise. So I just want to make sure that we  
15 have that understood ahead of time. So thank you.

16 HEARING OFFICER DAVIS: Okay. Yeah.  
17 Gotcha. That makes sense.

18 All right. Awesome. Well thank you  
19 all very much, and have a great rest of your day.

20 (Whereupon, the proceeding was  
21 adjourned at 11:12 a.m.)  
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24  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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2  
3 I, Kim U. Sears, do hereby certify that I  
4 recorded by stenographic means the Scheduling Conference  
5 re: Case No. 25-0729-TF, via videoconference, on June 10,  
6 2025, beginning at 11 a.m.

7 I further certify that the foregoing  
8 testimony was taken by me stenographically and thereafter  
9 reduced to typewriting and the foregoing 10 pages are a  
10 transcript of the stenograph notes taken by me of the  
11 evidence and the proceedings to the best of my ability.

12 I further certify that I am not related to  
13 any of the parties thereto or their counsel, and I am in  
14 no way interested in the outcome of said cause.

15 Dated at Williston, Vermont, this 12th day  
16 of June, 2025.

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18  
19  Kim U. Sears  
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22  
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>O</b></p> <p>03561 - 2:7 05402-0329 - 1:22 05620-2601 - 2:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p>1 [2] 1:5, 3:6 10 [4] 1:6, 1:11, 11:5, 11:9 11 [3] 1:7, 1:11, 11:6 112 - 2:3 11:12 - 10:21 12th - 11:15 13.24 [2] 1:5, 3:5 14th - 5:3 1st - 5:20</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p>2025 [6] 1:5, 1:6, 1:11, 3:7, 11:6, 11:16 21st [3] 4:13, 6:16, 6:18 25-0729-TF [3] 1:2, 3:3, 11:5 28th - 5:8</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <p>31st - 5:20 329 - 1:21 349 - 2:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p>4th - 5:9</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A</b></p> <p>a.m [4] 1:7, 1:11, 10:21, 11:6 ability - 11:11 able - 4:19 Absolutely - 9:17 active - 7:22 actively - 9:6 actual - 4:19 add - 8:15 addition - 9:13 addressing - 8:13 adjourn - 10:1 adjourned - 10:21 ahead [3] 6:21, 8:22, 10:15 Alex [2] 3:13, 5:17 ALEXANDER - 2:2 Alexander.wing@v - 2:4 already [3] 7:4, 7:6, 7:19 alternatives - 6:23 amount - 7:5 ample - 9:10</p>	<p>analyst [2] 1:13, 3:9 announcements - 8:22 appearances - 3:11 Appearing [2] 2:3, 2:6 applies - 6:6 approached - 7:25 asking - 6:15 assigned - 3:10 ate - 10:13 attend [2] 5:25, 8:23 attorney - 5:15 August - 5:9 availability - 4:6 Awesome - 10:18</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b></p> <p>backup - 6:17 bad - 8:9 beforehand - 10:8 beginning [2] 1:11, 11:6 behalf [2] 3:14, 3:18 best [6] 4:8, 4:10, 6:18, 6:20, 9:1, 11:11 bill - 9:13 billing - 4:23 bills [2] 4:17, 4:20 bit - 4:15 Box [2] 1:21, 2:6 Braese [5] 2:9, 3:20, 3:23, 8:17, 9:17 broadly - 8:19 BURLINGTON - 1:22</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>C</b></p> <p>CAPITOL - 1:21 case [12] 1:2, 3:2, 3:10, 4:2, 6:3, 6:12, 7:5, 7:15, 7:24, 8:3, 10:12, 11:5 cases [2] 7:10, 7:22 cause - 11:14 certainly - 8:24 certify [3] 11:3, 11:7, 11:12 challenging - 4:15 channels [3] 8:21, 9:13, 9:15 check - 4:6 clear - 9:10 clerk - 4:18 comments [8] 7:7, 7:14, 7:16, 7:24, 8:1, 8:11, 9:8, 9:20 commission [6] 1:1, 1:10, 3:9,</p>	<p>7:11, 8:5, 8:23 concerns - 8:13 conference [3] 1:10, 3:2, 11:4 conflict - 5:18 consider - 6:12 consistent [2] 8:7, 8:20 consistently - 8:13 couldn't - 5:12 counsel - 11:13 COURT - 1:21 Cramer [2] 2:5, 3:18 critical - 5:16 curious [2] 7:6, 7:17 customer - 4:17 customers [6] 5:25, 7:12, 7:21, 8:14, 8:19, 9:16 cycles - 4:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>D</b></p> <p>date [4] 4:19, 5:22, 6:20, 10:3 Dated - 11:15 Davis [16] 1:13, 3:1, 3:8, 3:15, 3:22, 3:24, 5:5, 5:14, 6:8, 6:14, 7:2, 9:4, 9:18, 9:25, 10:9, 10:16 decide - 6:1 definitely - 7:3 Department [15] 1:4, 2:3, 3:4, 3:12, 3:14, 3:16, 3:19, 4:11, 5:10, 5:18, 6:9, 6:24, 9:1, 9:23, 10:7 Department's - 8:3 dependent - 5:1 depending - 6:4 Dept - 2:6 directly [2] 7:8, 9:9 discovery - 6:2 discuss - 8:4 docket [2] 8:12, 8:14</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>E</b></p> <p>earlier - 5:3 eemerson@primmer - 2:8 effective [2] 1:5, 3:6 Eggleston [2] 2:5, 3:18 electric [11] 1:4, 2:6, 2:9, 3:4, 3:16, 3:19, 3:21, 3:25, 7:6, 7:9, 8:5 Eli [2] 3:17, 9:3 ELIJAH - 2:7</p>	<p>EMAIL - 1:22 Emerson [8] 2:7, 3:17, 3:17, 4:14, 5:11, 5:15, 7:20, 9:22 encouraging - 8:22 engaged - 8:18 ePUC - 10:3 ESQUIRE [2] 2:2, 2:7 everyone - 5:7 everyone's - 6:17 everything - 4:4 evidence - 11:11 expectation - 4:16</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>F</b></p> <p>feel - 9:8 feels - 9:1 felt - 8:15 file [2] 6:2, 6:25 filed - 8:11 filing [2] 1:4, 3:3 filings - 7:15 fit - 4:8 folks - 8:23 foregoing [2] 11:7, 11:9 full - 4:3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>G</b></p> <p>general - 3:20 Gotcha - 10:17 guess [3] 4:25, 5:2, 5:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>H</b></p> <p>happy - 6:24 Hardwick [17] 1:4, 2:6, 2:9, 3:4, 3:16, 3:19, 3:21, 3:25, 4:12, 5:1, 5:10, 6:25, 7:6, 7:9, 7:21, 8:12, 10:12 having [2] 6:3, 7:10 hear - 8:7 hearing [29] 1:13, 3:1, 3:10, 3:15, 3:22, 3:24, 4:6, 4:15, 4:17, 4:19, 5:5, 5:14, 5:16, 5:22, 5:25, 6:5, 6:8, 6:11, 6:14, 7:2, 9:4, 9:14, 9:18, 9:25, 10:4, 10:6, 10:9, 10:13, 10:16 held - 1:10 hereby - 11:3 historically [2] 7:21, 9:2 hit - 4:22 hope - 10:10 Hopefully - 5:2 hoping - 9:13</p>	<p>huge - 7:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>I</b></p> <p>imagine [2] 4:23, 8:12 incorporate - 8:25 increase [2] 1:4, 3:5 info - 10:13 info@capitolcour - 1:22 inform - 8:2 information - 10:7 input - 6:17 intent - 8:10 interact [2] 7:13, 7:15 interest [2] 7:5, 7:10 interested - 11:14 intervene - 6:1 interveners [3] 6:4, 6:6, 6:11 investigation - 8:3 involves - 3:3 issues - 9:20</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>J</b></p> <p>Jacob [2] 1:13, 3:8 July [3] 4:12, 5:3, 6:16 June [6] 1:5, 1:6, 1:11, 3:6, 11:5, 11:16</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>K</b></p> <p>Kim - 11:3</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>L</b></p> <p>later - 5:2 least [3] 4:25, 6:6, 7:22 litigation - 4:3 Littleton - 2:7 looking - 5:22 looks [2] 4:1, 4:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>M</b></p> <p>maintained - 8:20 makes - 10:17 making - 5:7 manager - 3:20 March - 4:2 maybe - 4:10 means - 11:4 meant [2] 8:1, 8:2 mechanism - 7:7 media [2] 8:21, 9:12 meeting - 10:2 meetings [3] 8:6, 8:6, 8:23 mentioned [3] 8:24, 9:3, 9:12</p>	<p>monitor - 9:7 Montpellier - 2:4 morning [3] 3:1, 3:13, 3:23 move - 6:5 moved - 5:6 moving - 4:21 municipal - 7:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>N</b></p> <p>necessary - 6:19 NH - 2:7 note [4] 4:5, 4:13, 5:23, 7:4 notes - 11:10 Nothing - 9:23 notice [5] 4:16, 4:20, 5:7, 5:24, 9:15 noticed - 3:25 notices - 9:14</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>O</b></p> <p>occurrence - 7:9 occurring - 7:18 officer [16] 1:13, 3:1, 3:10, 3:15, 3:22, 3:24, 5:5, 5:14, 6:8, 6:14, 7:2, 9:4, 9:18, 9:25, 10:9, 10:16 open [2] 8:6, 8:6 options - 6:25 order [2] 4:22, 10:2 others - 7:25 otherwise - 10:14 outcome - 11:14 outreach - 9:12 outside - 8:14 overall [3] 1:4, 3:5, 8:19</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>P</b></p> <p>P.O [2] 1:21, 2:6 pages - 11:9 particular [2] 4:8, 8:14 parties [2] 9:21, 11:13 past - 7:11 perceived [2] 8:8, 8:9 percent - 3:5 personally - 5:11 Piper [2] 2:5, 3:18 point [2] 7:19, 10:5 possibility - 5:4 possible [2] 4:22, 9:16 possibly - 5:2 practice - 10:10 presence - 8:20 present - 2:9 presume - 10:6</p>
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<p>Primmer [2] 2:5, 3:18  proactively - 7:18  probably - 6:10  proceeding - 10:20  proceedings - 11:11  proposed - 3:25  provide [2] 5:24, 9:15  public [27] 1:1, 1:10, 2:3, 3:12, 3:14, 4:6, 4:15, 4:16, 4:19, 5:16, 5:22, 5:25, 6:5, 7:5, 7:7, 7:10, 7:13, 7:15, 7:24, 7:25, 8:7, 8:11, 8:18, 9:8, 9:14, 10:3, 10:6  PUC - 9:1  PUC's - 8:2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>R</b></p> <hr/> <p>rate [6] 1:4, 3:5, 7:22, 7:24, 8:3, 10:12  re - 11:5  reach [2] 6:22, 7:12  really [2] 4:21, 8:1  recorded - 11:4  reduced - 11:9  regard - 7:19  regardless - 6:10  related - 11:12  rendered [2] 1:5, 3:6  REPORTERS - 1:21  requesting - 3:4  requirement - 9:6  respond [2] 8:2, 8:11  responded - 9:9  responding - 7:7  response - 6:25  rest [2] 6:10, 10:19  resulting - 7:13  rethought - 6:7  rule - 4:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>S</b></p> <hr/> <p>Sarah [5] 2:9, 3:20, 8:4, 8:15, 9:12  schedule [3] 3:25, 4:3, 6:5  scheduled - 4:12  scheduling [5] 1:10, 3:2, 4:14, 10:2, 11:4  Sears - 11:3  seem - 9:16  seems - 7:4  sense - 10:17</p>	<p>sent - 9:14  separate - 6:3  service [5] 1:5, 2:3, 3:6, 3:12, 3:14  session [2] 10:7, 10:13  seven-month - 4:1  situated - 5:23  social [2] 8:21, 9:12  sometime - 4:2  specifically - 8:11  standard - 10:10  start - 3:11  Starting - 3:12  State [2] 1:1, 2:3  stenograph - 11:10  stenographic - 11:4  stenographically - 11:8  Street - 2:3  substantial - 7:5  surprise - 7:23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>T</b></p> <hr/> <p>table - 7:1  taken [2] 11:8, 11:10  taking - 3:11  tariff [2] 1:4, 3:3  testimony - 11:8  thank [3] 10:1, 10:15, 10:18  Thanks - 3:15  thereafter - 11:8  thereto - 11:13  thing [5] 4:5, 5:7, 5:21, 7:3, 9:11  thinking - 6:23  tinkered - 6:3  today - 3:20  Town [5] 1:4, 2:6, 3:4, 3:16, 3:19  track - 6:3  traditional - 10:7  transcript - 11:10  typewriting - 11:9  typically - 7:20</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>U</b></p> <hr/> <p>understand - 4:24  understanding - 9:2  understood [2] 6:15, 10:15  usually - 4:21  utilities [5] 1:13, 3:9, 7:12, 7:23, 9:6  utility [4] 1:1, 1:10, 5:24, 10:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>V</b></p> <hr/> <p>vacation - 5:12  various - 8:20</p>	<p>Vermont [4] 1:1, 1:10, 1:22, 11:15  via [3] 1:8, 1:10, 11:5  video - 3:20  videoconference [3] 1:8, 1:10, 11:5  VT [2] 2:3, 2:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>W</b></p> <hr/> <p>waiving - 4:1  wanted [4] 4:5, 6:16, 6:22, 8:15  week [18] 4:7, 4:8, 4:10, 4:11, 4:11, 4:12, 4:24, 4:25, 5:1, 5:3, 5:3, 5:3, 5:8, 5:9, 5:12, 5:19, 6:15, 6:18  Whereupon - 10:20  whether - 6:1  Williston - 11:15  Wing [9] 2:2, 3:13, 3:13, 5:17, 6:9, 6:22, 9:23, 10:5, 10:11  won't - 6:16  works [4] 4:7, 4:10, 5:2, 9:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Y</b></p> <hr/> <p>Yeah [7] 5:17, 6:8, 7:2, 9:4, 10:9, 10:9, 10:16  Yup - 4:14</p>			
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