

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)
ARTESIAN WATER COMPANY, INC., FOR A)
CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND)
NECESSITY TO PROVIDE WATER SERVICES TO) PSC DOCKET NO. 06-CPCN-15
EIGHT PARCELS OF LAND DISTRIBUTED) ("GORDY ROAD")
NORTH OF WHITESVILLE ROAD, SOUTHEAST)
OF LAUREL, SUSSEX COUNTY, DELAWARE)
(FILED FEBRUARY 28, 2006 AND AMENDED)
SEPTEMBER 5, 2006)

ORDER NO. 7055

**CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY
TO PROVIDE PUBLIC WATER UTILITY SERVICES**

This 31st day of October, 2006, the Commission finds, determines, and Orders the following:

I. BACKGROUND

1. Artesian Water Company, Inc. ("Artesian" or "Applicant"), is a water utility providing water services for public use that is subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of this Commission. On February 28, 2006 the Applicant filed an application ("Application") with the Commission seeking a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPCN") to expand its facilities and operations in order to provide water services to twenty-three parcels of land distributed north of Whitesville Road, southeast of Laurel, Sussex County, Delaware ("Proposed Service Area"). The basis for the Application is Artesian's possession of petitions requesting water services signed by a majority (in this case all) of the landowners in the Proposed Service Area as set forth in 26 Del. C. § 203C(e)(1)b.

2. Staff reviewed the Application in accordance with the rules adopted in PSC Regulation Docket No. 51, Order No. 5730, effective July 10, 2001, and found that six parcels of land are located within the certificated service territory of another utility, and that in the case of six parcels of land, there was a question as to whether the Commission-approved landowner notification letter was received by the property owners. On September 5, 2006, Artesian filed an amended parcel listing which removes from the Proposed Service Area these twelve parcels of land.

4. Staff has solicited comments from the Office of Drinking Water of the Department of Public Health, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the Division of Water Resources of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control ("DNREC"). All three agencies responded indicating that they have no issues relating to Artesian's ability to provide safe, adequate, and reliable water services to its existing customers.

3. In addition to the required landowner notifications sent by the Applicant, Staff has also directed Artesian to publish notice of the Application in two newspapers of general circulation, advising residents of the Application, that the Application may be reviewed at the Commission's office during normal business hours or the Commission's website, that a hearing in this matter would not be held unless a meritorious request for a hearing was received, and that property owners may object to, or "opt-out," of the proposed CPCN area. The Commission has received written correspondence from the owner of three parcels of land requesting to "opt-out" of the Proposed

Service Area. The amended parcel listing filed by Artesian on September 5, 2006 also removed these three parcels of land. No other comments on this Application have been received by the Commission.

II. SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

5. The record in this matter consists of the Application, including Applicant's request that the Commission proceed in this matter under the informal fact-finding procedures set forth in 29 Del. C. § 10123 (¶ 3). In addition, the Application includes:

- (i) petitions signed by a majority (in this case all) of the landowners in the Proposed Service Area, as amended;
- (ii) copies of the United States Postal Service's forms verifying that the Applicant sent, via certified mail, a Commission approved notice to the landowners in the Proposed Service Area, as amended;
- (iii) the County tax map parcel identification numbers of the properties in the Proposed Service Area, as amended;
- (iv) a listing of the landowners of record of each of the parcels included in the Proposed Service Area, as amended, and the associated tax maps; and
- (v) the Applicant's statement that its expansion of service to the parcels in the Proposed Service Area, as amended, will comply with the water pressure requirements of 26 Del. C. § 403(a)&(b), and is not barred by any of the restrictions set forth in 26 Del. C. § 403(c);

6. The record also contains:

- (i) affidavits of publication of the public notices of the Application in the Delaware State News and in The News Journal newspapers on September 8, 2006;

- (ii) correspondence from the Office of Drinking Water of the Division of Public Health (dated Mar. 21, 2006), from the Office of the State Fire Marshal (dated Mar. 22, 2006), and from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (printed e-mail dated Mar. 20, 2006) reporting that there are no outstanding issues with the Applicant that might preclude granting the requested CPCN;
- (iii) correspondence from the owner of Sussex County tax map parcels numbers 232-4.00-43.00, 332-4.00-44.00, and 332-8.00-14.00 requesting to "opt-opt" of Artesian's proposed service area;
- (iv) Staff's October 16, 2006 memorandum of its investigation and recommending the Commission approve the amended Application and grant the requested CPCN. Staff reports that, based upon its review, Artesian has complied with all the statutory and regulatory requirements necessary for granting the CPCN.

III. FINDINGS OF FACT & CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

7. The Commission has jurisdiction to grant a CPCN permitting a water utility to expand its operations and facilities, and the Applicant operates a water system for public use and, consequently, is a water utility.

8. First, the Applicant obtained the consent of a majority of the landowners of the property within the Proposed Service Area, as amended, in compliance of 26 Del. C. § 203C(e)(1)(b). Second, the Applicant sent by certified mail an approved notice of its Application to all owners of parcels of land within the Proposed Service Area, as amended. Third, the record reflects the Applicant's statement that the Applicant will continue to meet the water pressure requirements for its existing customers, and the Applicant's statement that it is

not subject to any regulatory Order or finding pertaining to the quality of its service to existing customers which would preclude it from expanding its operations or facilities.

9. The Commission's Staff has investigated the Applicant and has not discovered that the Applicant is currently subject to any Commission finding that the utility is unwilling or unable to provide adequate and reliable water service to its existing customers. The present record does not provide a basis for the Commission to believe further investigation into the Applicant's service quality is necessary in order to render a decision in this proceeding.

10. In summary, the Applicant has submitted the necessary proof required by the provisions of *26 Del. C. §§ 203C(e)(1), 203C(e)(1) b., & 203C(e)(3)*, which the Commission's Staff has reviewed and found to be accurate. The Commission also finds no reason that the Applicant is not entitled to a CPCN under the provisions of either *26 Del. C. §§ 203C(f) or 203C(i)*.

Now, therefore, **IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That, pursuant to *26 Del. C. § 203C(e)*, the application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, as filed in PSC Docket No. 06-CPCN-15 on February 28, 2006, and amended on September 5, 2006, is hereby approved to the extent it is consistent with this Order, and a CPCN is granted to Artesian Water Company, Inc., to serve the area identified by the Sussex County Tax Map Parcels Numbers 332-3.00-105.00, 332-3.00-106.00, 332-3.00-124.00, 332-4.00-18.00, 332-4.00-48.01, 332-8.00-21.00, 532-7.00-27.11, and 532-7.00-27.14.

2. That Artesian Water Company, Inc., shall comply with any and all federal, state, county, and local statutes, ordinances, orders, regulations, rules, and permit conditions that are applicable, or may become applicable, to any matter involving water utility services provided to the service territory granted by this Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

3. That the Commission reserves the jurisdiction and authority to enter such further Orders in this matter as may be deemed necessary or proper.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

/s/ Arnetta McRae
Chair

/s/ Joann T. Conaway
Commissioner

/s/ Jaymes B. Lester
Commissioner

/s/ Dallas Winslow
Commissioner

/s/ Jeffrey J. Clark
Commissioner

ATTEST:

/s/ Karen J. Nickerson
Secretary