



**Ontario Energy Board
Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario**

**OEB STAFF SUMMARY OF
COMMUNITY MEETING**

EB-2016-0096

**Northern Ontario Wires Inc.
Application for 2017 Rates**

January 13, 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2	THE PROCESS	3
3	SUMMARY OF THE MEETING	4
	SCHEDULE A.....	6
	SCHEDULE B.....	7

1 INTRODUCTION

Northern Ontario Wires Inc. (NOW) filed a cost of service application with the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) on September 16, 2016 seeking approval for changes to the rates that NOW charges for electricity distribution, to be effective May 1, 2017.

A Notice of Hearing was issued on October 20, 2016.

Further to the Notice of Hearing, the OEB hosted two community meetings on November 2, 2016 in Kapuskasing and Cochrane, Ontario regarding NOW's 2017 application.

This is an OEB staff report summarizing the outcomes of these community meetings. This report will be placed on the public record of the OEB hearing of this application along with copies of any written presentations made at the meeting. This report includes a summary of comments, questions and concerns raised during the community meeting by customers who attended the meeting. This summary is intended to capture the range of perspectives that were shared, rather than to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting.

Customers are also able to submit individual written letters of comment with the OEB, either during a community meeting or any other time during the course of the OEB's review of an application. The OEB places written letters of comment on the public record of the specific proceeding. All comments must be submitted to the OEB before the decision-makers in that case begin to consider their decision on the application. In making its decision, the OEB considers everything on the public record, including all comments when determining whether to grant the requests made by NOW in this application.

2 THE PROCESS

The OEB convenes community meetings in the service territories of local distribution companies that have applied to the OEB to change their rates through a cost of service proceeding.

Community meetings are part of the OEB's process of reviewing a rate application. The OEB has established a [Consumer Engagement Framework](#) to ensure that the perspectives of customers served by rate-regulated entities are considered in the OEB's decision-making process.

Community meetings are hosted by OEB staff who inform customers about the role of the OEB in rate-setting and the processes involved. OEB representatives explain the various ways that customers can become involved in the adjudicative process. A copy of OEB staff's presentation is attached to this report as Schedule A.

To assist customers in better understanding the application, the utility makes a presentation explaining its proposals for capital, operations and other spending that result in the requested rate change. A copy of NOW's presentation is attached to this report as Schedule B.

Customers and municipal officials are also invited to make presentations outlining their thoughts on the utility's proposals.

Following the presentations, customers have the opportunity to ask questions of the OEB and the utility about the application and the regulatory process. The issues raised by customers in the community meetings are documented and used by OEB staff in reviewing the application, asking interrogatories and making submissions to the OEB panel hearing and deciding the application. Any verbal comments provided to OEB staff at the community meeting are summarized in this report with no attribution.

In addition to providing verbal comments to OEB staff, customers attending the meetings may express their concerns directly to the OEB by providing individual comments (with attribution) through an online form on the computers provided or by filling in a hard copy comment form, which is then submitted to the OEB by OEB staff.

3 SUMMARY OF THE MEETINGS

The NOW meetings were held at the Civic Centre Auditorium in Kapuskasing, Ontario from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm and at the Tim Horton Events Centre in Cochrane from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm on November 2, 2016. Approximately 20 customers attended the meeting in Kapuskasing and 15 in Cochrane to hear presentations from OEB staff and NOW. Prior to the presentations, OEB staff and NOW staff were available to informally talk to attendees and answer questions. OEB and NOW representatives responded to questions from attendees during and following the presentations.

The following OEB staff and NOW representatives attended the meeting:

OEB Staff

Kristi Sebalj, Registrar
Colin Schuch, Project Advisor
Sylvia Kovesfalvi, Manager
Andrew Bodrug, Senior Advisor

NOW

Dan Boucher, General Manager
Geoffrey Sutton, Chief Financial Officer, FIT and microFIT
Sandra Schroeder, Customer Service Manager
Roxanne Genier, Executive Assistant, Conservation and Safety Co-ordinator

The OEB and NOW presented at the meeting. There were no customer presentations at the meeting.

Meeting participants had questions related to NOW's application and why rates were increasing. There were also general questions around the OEB's role, smart meters and Time of Use pricing.

Specific Concerns Raised

- NOW's application – questions regarding the process, who the application affects, how long the rate increase is in effect
- Specific aspects of NOW's operations; e.g. tree trimming, use of cement poles, number of customers, service territory, dividends
- Electricity prices – general concerns regarding affordability,

- The OEB scorecard for utilities and the process for updating
- Extent of OEB oversight of increases in the cost of power, the regulated price plan, time of use rates, and distribution costs
- Questions about the number of customers with smart meters, TOU rates

SCHEDULE A
ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD PRESENTATION
NORTHERN ONTARIO WIRES INC.
EB-2016-0096
JANUARY 13, 2017

SCHEDULE B
NOW PRESENTATION
NORTHERN ONTARIO WIRES INC.
EB-2016-0096
JANUARY 13, 2017