



## *OCC Staff Biographies*

### **Victoria P. Hackett** **Staff Attorney 3**

Victoria Hackett joined the OCC as an attorney in 2006. Vicki's practice areas at OCC include electric, gas, and water regulation, and she appears frequently before PURA, in court, and at the Legislature on behalf of OCC. Vicki has been lead attorney on a variety of utility rate cases, led the OCC's efforts on the review of utility response to the two significant storms of 2011, and is actively involved at the policy and regulatory levels in integrated resource planning and energy efficiency program analysis. Prior to joining OCC, Vicki was engaged in commercial and general litigation in private practice for four years. Vicki graduated from the University Of Virginia School of Law, where she was awarded the Bracewell and Patterson Oral Advocacy Award, and received her B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology, *magna cum laude*, from Western Connecticut State University, where she was named Alumnus of the Year in 2011. When not at work Vicki prefers to be outdoors, and enjoys hiking, kayaking, whitewater canoeing, and cross-country skiing.

### **Lauren Henault Bidra** **Staff Attorney 2**

Lauren Henault Bidra joined the OCC as a Staff Attorney 2 in August 2012. Lauren focuses mainly on electricity and gas issues, and her practice includes appearances before the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), the Siting Council, and various Connecticut courts. Lauren has practiced as an attorney in both the private and public sectors. Before joining OCC, Lauren practiced at a law firm in Hartford where she primarily litigated but also represented clients in business matters. Lauren also has served as an Assistant Chief Counsel for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in San Antonio, Texas. After graduating from law school, Lauren served in the U.S. Department of Justice Attorney General's Honors Program as a Judicial Law Clerk at the Houston Immigration Court. Lauren received her B.A. from Fairfield University *magna cum laude* and her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law *cum laude*.



## *OCC Staff Biographies*

### **Sharon H. Johnson** **Administrative Hearings Specialist**

Sharon Johnson joined the OCC in 2006 as an Administrative Hearings Specialist, providing paralegal and administrative support to staff in dockets and court cases. Sharon also handles records retention issues for OCC as its designated Records Management Liaison Officer. Before joining the OCC, she served for 17 years as a Paralegal Specialist at the Office of the Attorney General, in the Health & Education and Consumer Protection Departments. Her previous state service included positions as a Human Services Advocate, Publicist and Communications Officer at the State Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities. Sharon is a graduate of the University of Connecticut with a B.A. in Psychology and M.A. in English Literature *cum laude*.

### **Melody Mendez** **Secretary 2**

Melody Mendez joined the OCC in 1998 and provides secretarial and administrative support to both technical and legal staff. Her experience in handling the numerous details of state government business procedures and getting results keeps OCC running smoothly and efficiently.

### **Taren M. O'Connor** **Rate Specialist**

Taren O'Connor joined the OCC in 2008 as the agency's Consumer Information Representative, and now serves as a Rate Specialist. Taren serves as Vice Chair and OCC's designee and voting member of the State's Energy Efficiency Board, as well as designee to the Low Income Energy Advisory Board. She conducts legislative research and participates in legislative initiatives. She coordinates and manages communication, public information, and outreach efforts, including press and media relations and OCC's website. Before joining OCC, Taren worked at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce as Director of Public and Media Relations and Government Affairs. Taren received her B.A. from Fairfield University.



## ***OCC Staff Biographies***

### **Joseph A. Rosenthal Principal Attorney**

Joe Rosenthal has been a lawyer with OCC for over nine years, focusing primarily on electricity and gas issues. His practice includes frequent appearances before PURA (formerly known as DPUC) and Connecticut courts, and he has been heavily involved in numerous FERC proceedings and regional electricity matters. Joe has worked closely with Connecticut legislators, has testified many times before the Energy & Technology Committee, and has frequently been a guest speaker at various utility conferences. Prior to joining OCC, Joe was for seven years a lawyer at Updike, Kelly, & Spellacy, primarily involved in environmental matters. Joe graduated in 1996 from Boston College Law School, *magna cum laude*, and prior to that received Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Mathematics from SUNY-Binghamton.

### **Peter G. Shanley Utility Finance Specialist**

Peter joined the OCC in October 2006 and works on the technical portions of rate cases for electric, gas, and water utilities. His specialty is finance, but he also works on accounting and engineering issues. With over 20 years of utility experience, he is well-versed in most areas of the utility business. Peter started his career at Northeast Utilities, where he worked in several areas of the company. Initially he was involved with the engineering and constructing of nuclear and fossil fueled power plants for many years. Later he joined the department responsible for performing economic studies of the need for future power plants. Peter's last position at Northeast Utilities was in the Financial Planning department, where he supported the Chief Financial Officer at rate cases and conducted financial studies requested by the company's top executives. In 1989, Peter went with Yankee Gas when it spun off from Northeast Utilities to be a senior member of its treasury department. Peter graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and received a M.B.A. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

### **Richard E. Sobolewski Supervisor of Utility Financial Analysis**

Rich joined the OCC in 1986. He has served in a number of accounting, financial and analytical positions within the OCC, holding his current position since 2002. Rich oversees OCC's technical staff and outside consultants. Rich has participated in over 150 utility rate proceedings involving Connecticut's water, electric, and natural gas and telecommunications companies. Under his leadership, the Office of Consumer Counsel has entered into a number of negotiated rate settlements with Connecticut's utility companies. Sobolewski has lead the OCC's efforts on



### ***OCC Staff Biographies***

many issues impacting ratepayers, including decoupling, utility mergers and acquisitions, performance based ratemaking plans, utility company land sales and a uniform rate of return methodology. Rich has served on staff-assisted rate case teams where he has been instrumental in preparing rate applications for Connecticut's smaller water companies. Rich has been an active participant in the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates' (NASUCA) gas, water and tax and accounting committees and has served on NARUC's Rate School faculty. Rich is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University.

#### **Dave L Thompson Utilities Examiner I**

Dave L. Thompson joined the OCC in 2006 as a Utilities Examiner I, bringing almost twenty years of accounting and financial analysis experience from the private sector to our office. Dave has worked in all utility sectors at the OCC, including electric, gas, telecommunications, and water regulation, and appears frequently before PURA (formerly known as the DPUC). Dave represented the OCC in the creation of the current Electricity Procurement Process for the state of Connecticut, and continues to work on the administration of the process. Dave has served as the lead technical analyst on many utility rate cases on behalf of the OCC. Dave has worked in both the service and manufacturing industries for both global and entrepreneurial entities. Dave began studies for his undergraduate degree in Canada, and graduated from the University of Hartford with both a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and a M.B.A. in Accounting and Finance.

#### **William Vallée Broadband Policy & Programs Coordinator and Principal Attorney**

Bill Vallée joined OCC as an attorney in 1993. His telecommunications regulatory work on behalf of OCC began with negotiations at the General Assembly among the telephone local exchange carriers and a host of parties that resulted in the alternative regulatory legislation, Public Act 94-83, a precursor to the federal Telecom Act of 1996. Bill has represented utility consumers before administrative utility regulatory bodies such as the CT PURA and the Federal

Communications Commission, and has argued telecommunications cases before state and federal courts, including the state Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. Several years ago, Bill was tapped by former Governor Rell's office to represent Connecticut on broadband technology issues (high speed Internet access services) and is responsible for drafting and negotiating the state's various applications for federal stimulus funding to enhance broadband services. As Broadband Coordinator, Bill is working with UConn, the Connecticut Education Network, and



### ***OCC Staff Biographies***

the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to bring the national Gig.U ultra-high-speed broadband initiative to UCONN, a project which will enable Connecticut communities and businesses to compete globally. Prior to joining the OCC, Bill practiced law on Wall Street (Hawkins, Delafield & Wood) and in Hartford (Halloran & Sage). Bill holds a B.A. *cum laude* in English from Union College and a J.D. from Fordham University School of Law, where he was Writing and Research Editor on the *Urban Law Journal*.