



**AltaLink Management Ltd.
Transmission Line 150L Rebuild**

Costs Award

May 5, 2023

Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 28063-D01-2023

AltaLink Management Ltd.

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Deuka Film Exchange Ltd.’s claim	1
3	Pinebrook Estates Homeowners’ Association’s claim	2
4	Pinebrook Golf and Country Club’s claim.....	3
5	Springbank Road Group’s claim.....	7
6	Order	8

Alberta Utilities Commission
Calgary, Alberta

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1 Introduction

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) considers applications by Deuka Film Exchange Ltd. (Deuka), Pinebrook Estates Homeowners' Association (PEHA), Pinebrook Golf and Country Club (PGCC) and the Springbank Road Group (SRG) for an award of costs for their participation in Proceeding 27523¹ (the original proceeding). For the reasons set out below, the Commission approves \$38,363.15 in costs for Deuka, \$98,029.40 for the PEHA, \$120,846.33 for PGCC and \$30,160.04 for the SRG.

2. The original proceeding was convened by the Commission to consider an application from AltaLink Management Ltd. for approval to rebuild a 27-kilometre-long portion of the 138-kilovolt Transmission Line 150L located within Rocky View County. The cost claimants listed above participated in the original proceeding and submitted their cost claims within the 30-day timeline permitted by Rule 009: *Rules on Local Intervener Costs*. The record for this costs proceeding closed on March 23, 2023, the date it was determined that no information requests were required.

2 Deuka Film Exchange Ltd.'s claim

3. Deuka owns land in the project area and submitted evidence and argument on topics including adequacy of consultation, property value impacts, safety, land use impacts, future development impacts, tree removal and visual impacts.

4. Deuka was granted standing in Proceeding 27523 and is eligible to claim costs in accordance with sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Rule 009. Deuka was awarded advance funding of \$27,775.00 in the original proceeding.

5. The following is a breakdown of the costs claimed by Deuka:

Claimant	Hours			Fees	Disbursements	GST	Total
	Preparation	Attendance	Argument				
Deuka							
Brander Law	61.50	28.10	9.00	\$34,510.00	\$6,071.21	\$2,029.06	\$42,610.27
Ground Cubed Consulting	23.50	5.50	7.50	\$6,570.00	\$0.00	\$328.50	\$6,898.50
George J. Reti & Co.	48.00	6.00	3.50	\$15,525.00	\$0.00	\$776.25	\$16,301.25
Monica Loewen Legal Research Services	0.00	0.00	2.50	\$312.50	\$0.00	\$15.63	\$328.13
Total	133.00	39.60	22.50	\$56,917.50	\$6,071.21	\$3,149.44	\$66,138.15
Less advance funding awarded							(\$27,775.00)
Net claimed							\$38,363.15

¹ Proceeding 27523, AltaLink Management Ltd. 150L Transmission Line Rebuild.

6. AltaLink had no comments on Deuka's costs claim application.

7. The Commission finds that Deuka acted responsibly in the original proceeding and contributed to the Commission's understanding of the relevant issues. The Commission is also satisfied that the costs claimed are generally consistent with the Scale of costs in Appendix A of Rule 009.

8. The Commission finds that the costs claimed for professional fees for Brander Law, Monica Loewen Legal Research Services, Ground Cubed Consulting and George J. Reti & Co. are reasonable and approves those costs in full. The Commission also finds the claim for disbursements for Brander Law of \$5,755.50 for transcripts and \$315.71 for photocopying are reasonable and are approved. Accordingly, the Commission approves Deuka's claim for recovery of costs in the total amount of \$66,138.15, consisting of legal fees of \$34,822.50, consulting fees of \$22,095.00, disbursements of \$6,071.21 and GST of \$3,149.44. The approved amount, less the \$27,775.00 awarded as advance funding in the Commission's ruling in Exhibit 27523-X0122,² results in a balance payable of \$38,363.15.

3 Pinebrook Estates Homeowners' Association's claim

9. The PEHA consisted of over 70 individuals who own or occupy lands in the project area. The group submitted evidence and argument on topics including adequacy of consultation, routing and siting, visual impacts, property value impacts, expanded easements, interference with land use, health impacts and construction disturbances.

10. The PEHA and its members were granted standing in Proceeding 27523 and are eligible to claim costs in accordance with sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Rule 009.

11. The following is a breakdown of the costs claimed by the PEHA:

Claimant	Hours			Fees	Disbursements	GST	Total
	Preparation	Attendance	Argument				
PEHA							
McLennan Ross LLP	264.90	35.30	6.00	\$87,132.50	\$5,342.55	\$4,623.77	\$97,098.82
Intervener honoraria and disbursements	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$900.00	\$30.58	\$0.00	\$930.58
Total	264.90	35.30	6.00	\$88,032.50	\$5,373.13	\$4,623.77	\$98,029.40

12. AltaLink had no comments on the PEHA's costs claim application.

13. The Commission finds that the PEHA acted responsibly in the original proceeding and contributed to the Commission's understanding of the relevant issues. The Commission is also satisfied that the costs claimed are generally consistent with the Scale of costs in Appendix A of Rule 009.

14. The Commission finds that the costs claimed for legal fees for McLennan Ross LLP are reasonable and approves those costs in full. The Commission also finds the claims for

² Exhibit 27523-X0122, AUC letter – Ruling on Deuka Film Exchange Ltd. request for advance funding.

disbursements of \$5,005.50 for transcripts, \$215.05 for photocopying and \$122.00 for land titles searches are reasonable and are approved in full. Accordingly, the Commission approves the PEHA's claim for McLennan Ross for legal fees in the amount of \$87,132.50, disbursements of \$5,342.55 and GST of \$4,623.77 for a total of \$97,098.82.

15. The PEHA claimed a total of \$900.00 for attendance honoraria for eight of its members and claimed \$30.58 for parking. The Commission finds these claims are reasonable in the circumstances and approves them. While the Scale of costs allows attendance honoraria to be claimed by up to six individuals of a large intervener group, in exceptional circumstances, additional honoraria may be claimed. In this case, attendance honoraria for eight members is justified on the basis that each of these individuals appeared as a witness during the virtual hearing and represented a fraction of the larger group. Their testimony also contributed to the Commission's understanding of the issues in the original proceeding.

16. For the reasons provided above, the Commission approves the PEHA's claim for recovery of costs in the total amount of \$98,029.40, consisting of legal fees of \$87,132.50, disbursements of \$5,373.13, honoraria of \$900.00 and GST of \$4,623.77.

4 Pinebrook Golf and Country Club's claim

17. PGCC owns land and operates a golf course through which the preferred route of Transmission Line 150L would bisect. PGCC submitted evidence and argument on topics including adequacy of consultation, routing and siting, visual impacts, property value impacts, expanded easements, interference with land use and construction disturbances.

18. PGCC was granted standing in Proceeding 27523 and is eligible to claim costs in accordance with sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Rule 009.

19. The following is a breakdown of the costs claimed by PGCC:

Claimant	Hours			Fees	Disbursements	GST	Total
	Preparation	Attendance	Argument				
PGCC							
Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP	223.90	0.00	0.00	\$58,025.00	\$0.00	\$2,901.25	\$60,926.25
Bennett Jones LLP	255.50	51.50	27.00	\$98,469.00	\$5,005.50	\$5,173.73	\$108,648.23
Clean Energy Consulting Inc.	103.00	19.00	0.00	\$20,448.75	\$1,572.13	\$1,101.05	\$23,121.93
HarrisonBowker Valuation Group	118.75	17.00	0.00	\$32,207.50	\$312.00	\$1,710.31	\$34,229.81
Ryan Woods (Honorarium)	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$50.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50.00
Total	701.15	87.50	27.00	\$209,200.25	\$6,889.63	\$10,886.34	\$226,976.22

20. AltaLink took issue with the legal fees claimed by PGCC on the basis they were 1.8 times higher than the amount claimed by McLennan Ross LLP for representing the PEHA group, which it expected would have incurred more legal fees than PGCC. AltaLink stated that substantial fees were incurred prior to the filing of the application which it submitted include matters outside the scope of the original proceeding. It also considered some costs claimed to be unrelated to the Commission's consideration of the application. AltaLink submitted that while

PGCC indicated there was coordination between the PEHA and PGCC as it relates to experts, a significant portion of the expert costs, in particular HarrisonBowker Valuation Group, were incurred prior to the filing of AltaLink's application.

21. In response, PGCC stated it had no further reply.

22. The Commission finds that PGCC generally acted responsibly in the original proceeding and contributed somewhat to the Commission's understanding of the relevant issues. The Commission is also satisfied that the costs claimed are generally consistent with the Scale of costs in Appendix A of Rule 009.

23. PGCC claimed an attendance honorarium of \$50.00 for Ryan Woods. The Commission finds the claim is reasonable and approves it.

24. The Commission is unable to approve the full amount of the costs claimed in respect of the services performed by Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP, Bennett Jones LLP, Clean Energy Consulting Inc. and HarrisonBowker Valuation Group for the reasons set out below.

Legal fees and disbursements

25. The Commission finds that the legal fees claimed by Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt and Bennett Jones were excessive and others were not incurred in accordance with Rule 009.

Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP

26. Regarding the claim for legal services by Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt, PGCC claimed a significant amount of time (estimated at approximately 196.8 hours³) for legal services performed prior to the commencement of the original proceeding, in some cases dating back well over a year before AltaLink's application was filed. The Commission finds that such services were not "incurred in a hearing or other proceeding" as contemplated by Section 5.1 of Rule 009. The Commission interprets this phrase to mean that generally, eligible costs for recovery must be incurred after an AUC proceeding commences or application is filed. The specific details of an application are not known until it is filed and no decision on standing is made before this occurs. Costs incurred prior to an application being filed may be irrelevant if specific details of the application are unknown. Further, the Commission's cost recovery regime is not intended to provide full indemnity for cost claimants in all circumstances. Accordingly, the Commission has reduced the claim for legal services by \$43,918.00.⁴

³ AltaLink's Application 27523-A001 was registered in the eFiling System on July 15, 2022. In Exhibit 28063-X0012, Pinebrook Golf and Country Club, Costs claim application, PDF pages 15-60, time entries for legal services for March 18, 2021, to July 6, 2022, inclusive, are estimated by the Commission to sum to 197.1 hours. Because it appears that a time entry on the statement of account for December 17, 2021, for 0.30 hours for Andrea Whyte was not included in the Form U2, the Commission subtracts this from the total, to arrive at an estimate of 196.8 hours claimed for pre-application work. This estimate includes 63.2 hours for M. Ignasiak, 91.7 hours for J. Baker, 2.1 hours for J. Gormley, 16.6 hours for M. O'Neill, 16.0 hours for L. Rodriguez and 7.2 hours for A. Bhawani.

⁴ In calculating the total reduction for pre-application work, two adjustments to the pre-application hours noted in Footnote 3, were made: Because M. Ignasiak claimed 65.9 hours on the Form U2, but the hours in the statements of account sum to 78.5 hours (63.2 for pre-application work and 15.3 for post-application work), the

27. Further, there were approximately 9.9 hours⁵ claimed for Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt with respect to researching and preparing a motion for summary judgement in relation to AltaLink's application.⁶ The Commission finds this work is not directly and necessarily related to the original proceeding and the associated fees are denied. Accordingly, the Commission reduces the claim for legal services by an additional \$2,486.00.⁷

28. Accordingly, the Commission approves PGCC's claim for legal fees for Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt in the amount of \$11,621.00⁸ and GST of \$581.05 for a total of \$12,202.05.

Bennett Jones LLP

29. Regarding the claim for legal services by Bennett Jones, there were 8.5 hours⁹ claimed in connection with preparing a costs claim. The Commission does not permit the recovery of costs incurred in the preparation of costs claims because these costs do not contribute to a better understanding of the issues before the Commission in the original proceeding. These hours are therefore denied, resulting in a reduction to legal fees of \$2,128.00.¹⁰ The remaining legal fees eligible for cost recovery are \$96,341.00.

30. Notwithstanding the pre-application hours disallowed in relation to the legal services performed by Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt, the Commission considers the fees claimed for legal services performed by Bennett Jones to be excessive. Bennett Jones claimed a total of 334 hours for representing PGCC which the Commission finds to be unreasonable in light of the issues before it in the original proceeding and the scope of legal counsel's representation of PGCC.

31. The Commission also considers the time claimed by Bennett Jones is disproportionately high to that claimed by other intervener counsel in this proceeding with a similar or higher level of intervention. The PGCC panel was comprised of one company representative and two consultant witnesses. By comparison, the PEHA sat a landowner panel of eight individuals during the virtual oral hearing, and although it did not retain consultant witnesses, its representative McLennan Ross LLP claimed a total of 306.2 hours and represented PEHA from the time the application was filed. The Commission notes that Bennett Jones' representation of PGCC began in October 2022, approximately two and a half months after AltaLink's application was filed. The Commission has accordingly reduced the remaining legal fees eligible for costs recovery by 25 per cent.

Commission adjusts the pre-application hours to 50.6 hours (which is 65.9 – 15.3). For L. Rodriguez, 2.6 hours were claimed on the Form U2, but the hours in the statements of account sum to 16.0 hours (all for pre-application work) – 2.6 hours is used in the following calculation. The reduction is calculated as: (50.6 hrs * \$350 M. Ignasiak) + (91.7 hrs * \$240 J. Baker) + (2.10 hrs * \$240 J. Gormley) + (16.6 hrs * \$140 M. O'Neill) + (2.6 hrs * \$140 L. Rodriguez) + (7.2 hrs * \$140 A. Bhawani) = \$43,918.00.

⁵ Exhibit 28063-X0012, PDF pages 63-65, show 1.0 hour for M. Ignasiak and 8.9 hrs for J. Baker for activities related to the motion for summary judgement. The hours for Tyler Warchola were excluded as there were no hours on the Form U2 for T. Warchola.

⁶ The descriptions associated with these time entries also include activities other than those referenced, making it unclear how much time was precisely spent on each specific task based on the information provided.

⁷ The reduction is calculated as (1.0 hour * \$350 M. Ignasiak) + (8.9 hrs * \$240 J. Baker) = \$2,486.00.

⁸ \$58,025.00 – (\$43,918.00 + \$2,486.00) = \$11,621.00.

⁹ Exhibit 28063-X0012, PDF pages 90-91, time claimed for Niall Fink for 06/02/23 to 28/02/23, inclusive, sums to 7.7 hrs; and time for M. Ignasiak on 09/02/23 and 12/02/23 sums to 0.8 hrs.

¹⁰ (7.7 hrs * \$240 N. Fink) + (0.8 * \$350 M. Ignasiak) = \$2,128.00.

32. PGCC claimed a disbursement for Bennett Jones of \$5,005.50 for transcripts. The Commission finds the claim is reasonable and approves it. Accordingly, the Commission approves PGCC's claim for legal fees for Bennett Jones LLP in the amount of \$72,255.75,¹¹ a disbursement of \$5,005.50 for transcripts and GST of \$3,863.06 for a total of \$81,124.31.

Clean Energy Consulting Inc.

33. Clean Energy Consulting Inc. reviewed the application and provided comments on the proposed transmission line from a transmission line engineer perspective. It prepared a report commenting on the footprint of the proposed transmission line and its impact on PGCC in addition to the ring road routes as they relate to PGCC.

34. PGCC claimed an estimated \$4,812.50 in fees¹² and associated disbursements¹³ for consulting services performed by Clean Energy Consulting before AltaLink filed its application in the original proceeding. The Commission finds that such services and disbursements were not "incurred in a hearing or other proceeding" as contemplated by Section 5.1 of Rule 009 and are therefore denied. This results in a total of \$15,636.25 in consulting fees remaining eligible for cost recovery.

35. Further, while the Clean Energy Consulting report provided some useful information comparing the existing transmission line to the proposed line and ring road routes, in general, the report largely repeats information contained in AltaLink's application and as a result did not effectively contribute to the Commission's understanding of the issues in this proceeding. The Commission has therefore reduced the fees remaining eligible for cost recovery by 10 per cent.

36. Accordingly, the Commission approves PGCC's claim for consulting fees for Clean Energy Consulting in the amount of \$14,072.63¹⁴ and GST of \$703.63 for a total of \$14,776.26.

HarrisonBowker Valuation Group

37. Regarding the services performed by HarrisonBowker, the Commission finds that in some cases, the fees claimed for these services related to matters that did not contribute to the Commission's understanding of the issues in the original proceeding. A significant portion of the consulting fees claimed also related to pre-application activities.

38. PGCC claimed an estimated \$18,775.00 in fees¹⁵ and associated mileage¹⁶ for consulting services performed by HarrisonBowker before AltaLink's application was filed. These hours were not "incurred in a hearing or other proceeding" as contemplated by Section 5.1 of Rule 009

¹¹ $\$96,341.00 \times 0.75 = \$72,255.75$.

¹² Exhibit 28063-X0012, PDF pages 100-118 shows a total of \$4,812.50 in consulting fees claimed for pre-application work, and includes the fees from invoices dated February 28, 2022 (\$350.00), April 28, 2022 (\$3,850.00) and April 30, 2022 (\$612.50).

¹³ Disbursements were claimed for travel expenses on March 8, and March 9, 2022, in the total amount of \$1,572.13. Exhibit 28063-X0012, PDF pages 98 and 102, this included claims for airfare \$1,236.93, meals \$9.13, taxi \$63.71 and car rental \$262.36.

¹⁴ $\$15,636.25 \times 0.90 = \$14,072.63$.

¹⁵ Exhibit 28063-X0012, PDF pages 126-128. This estimate includes hours from June 28, 2021, to April 25, 2022, inclusive, and reflects the hourly rates claimed on the Form U2, calculated as (71 hrs * \$250 P. Woodlock) + (4.5 hrs * \$90 J. Oswald) + (1.0 hrs * \$45 A. Ram) + (2.5 hrs * \$230 B. Chisholm) = \$18,775.00.

¹⁶ \$312.00 was claimed for mileage.

and are accordingly denied. This results in a total of \$13,432.50 in consulting fees remaining eligible for cost recovery.

39. Further, while the HarrisonBowker report contributed somewhat to the Commission's understanding of the potential property value impacts facing PGCC, in Decision 27523-D01-2023, the Commission placed limited weight on certain aspects of the HarrisonBowker report.¹⁷ In light of this, the Commission has applied a 10 per cent reduction to the consulting fees remaining eligible for cost recovery for HarrisonBowker.

40. Accordingly, the Commission approves PGCC's claim for consulting fees for HarrisonBowker Valuation Group in the amount of \$12,089.25¹⁸ and GST of \$604.46 for a total of \$12,693.71.

41. For the reasons provided above, the Commission approves PGCC's claim for recovery of costs in the total amount of \$120,846.33, consisting of legal fees of \$83,876.75, consulting fees of \$26,161.88, disbursements of \$5,005.50, honorarium of \$50.00 and GST of \$5,752.20.

5 Springbank Road Group's claim

42. The SRG consisted of six individuals who own or occupy lands in the project area. The group submitted evidence and argument on topics including adequacy of consultation, routing and siting, visual impacts, property value impacts, development impacts, interference with existing land use, health impacts and construction disturbances.

43. The SRG and five of its members were granted standing in Proceeding 27523 and are eligible to claim costs in accordance with sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Rule 009.

44. The following is a breakdown of the costs claimed by the SRG:

Claimant	Hours			Fees	Disbursements	GST	Total
	Preparation	Attendance	Argument				
SRG							
Carscallen LLP	106.50	31.30	7.10	\$29,127.00	\$41.37	\$1,457.42	\$30,625.79
Intervener honoraria	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$600.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$600.00
Total	106.50	31.30	7.10	\$29,727.00	\$41.37	\$1,457.42	\$31,225.79

45. AltaLink submitted that there were minor fees incurred prior to the filing of the facility application. In response, the SRG noted that the fees incurred were directly and necessarily related to Proceeding 27523, and were based on knowledge that the application was forthcoming.

46. The Commission finds that the SRG acted responsibly in the original proceeding and contributed to the Commission's understanding of the relevant issues. The Commission is also satisfied that the costs claimed are consistent with the Scale of costs in Appendix A of Rule 009.

¹⁷ Decision 27523-D01-2023: AltaLink Management Ltd. Transmission Line 150L Rebuild, Proceeding 27523, April 28, 2023, para 126 -127.

¹⁸ \$13,432.50 * 0.9 = \$12,089.25.

47. While the Commission finds that the legal fees claimed for Carscallen LLP are generally reasonable and related to the original proceeding, the SRG claimed 2.9 hours¹⁹ for legal fees prior to the filing of AltaLink's application. Such services were not "incurred in a hearing or other proceeding" as contemplated by Section 5.1 of Rule 009. These hours are accordingly denied.

48. The Commission also finds the claims for disbursements of \$21.37 for courier fees and \$20.00 for land title searches are reasonable and are approved. Accordingly, the Commission approves the SRG's claim for legal fees in the amount of \$28,112.00,²⁰ disbursements of \$41.37 and GST of \$1,406.67 for a total of \$29,560.04.

49. The SRG claimed a total of \$600.00 for honoraria, including forming a group honorarium for Leonard Zuczek (\$500.00), attendance honorarium for Leonard Zuczek (\$50.00) and attendance honorarium for Kendra O'Hara on behalf of John Paasche (\$50.00). The Commission finds these claims are reasonable and are approved.

50. For the reasons provided above, the Commission approves the SRG's claim for recovery of costs in the total amount of \$30,160.04, consisting of legal fees of \$28,112.00, disbursements of \$41.37, honoraria of \$600.00 and GST of \$1,406.67.

6 Order

51. The Commission approves applications 28063-A001, 28063-A002, 28063-A003 and 28063-A004 pursuant to sections 21 and 22 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act* and Rule 009, and orders as follows:

- (1) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall pay intervener costs to Deuka Film Exchange Ltd. in the total amount of \$38,363.15 within 30 days of this Order. Payment shall be made to Brander Law on behalf of Deuka Film Exchange Ltd.
- (2) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall record in its Commission Expenses (Hearing Costs) account approved intervener costs in the amount of \$38,363.15.
- (3) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall pay intervener costs to the Pinebrook Estates Homeowners' Association in the total amount of \$98,029.40 within 30 days of this Order. Payment shall be made to McLennan Ross LLP on behalf of the Pinebrook Estates Homeowners' Association.
- (4) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall record in its Commission Expenses (Hearing Costs) account approved intervener costs in the amount of \$98,029.40.
- (5) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall pay intervener costs to Pinebrook Golf and Country Club in the total amount of \$120,846.33 within 30 days of this Order.

¹⁹ Exhibit 28063-X0003, Springbank Road Group, Costs claim application, PDF page 7. This estimate includes hours from March 18, 2022, to May 4, 2022, inclusive.

²⁰ \$29,127.00 – (2.9 hrs * \$350 M. Niven) = \$28,112.00.

Payment shall be made to Bennett Jones LLP on behalf of Pinebrook Golf and Country Club.

- (6) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall record in its Commission Expenses (Hearing Costs) account approved intervener costs in the amount of \$120,846.33.
- (7) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall pay intervener costs to the Springbank Road Group in the total amount of \$30,160.04 within 30 days of this Order. Payment shall be made to Carscallen LLP on behalf of the Springbank Road Group.
- (8) AltaLink Management Ltd. shall record in its Commission Expenses (Hearing Costs) account approved intervener costs in the amount of \$30,160.04.

Dated on May 5, 2023.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Douglas A. Larder, KC
Vice-Chair