



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

February 21, 2023

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a hybrid meeting on February 21, 2023 in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Secretary for the Commission Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

Daniel Rodriguez, Participating Remotely
Vanessa Otero, Present
Matthew Donnellan, Not Present

Also Present
Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Norman J. Guz, Commission Counsel
Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager/Secretary for the Commission
Anthony Basile, Comptroller
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Jacob Weinrich, Project Engineer

Participating Remotely
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Affairs/Chief Procurement Officer
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Frank Zabeneh, Senior Engineer
Steven Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager
Ryan Wingerter, Deputy Director of Field Services
Nicole Sanford, Water Resources Manager
Raemarie Walker, Assistant Procurement Officer
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach and Communications Specialist

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 25, 2023, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 25, 2023.

2. Approve the minutes of the executive session held on January 25, 2023, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the minutes of the executive session held on January 25, 2023.

3. Approve the minutes of the executive session held on February 8, 2023, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the minutes of the executive session held on February 8, 2023.

New Business

4. Financial Report: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Anthony Basile reported an ending cash balance of \$120.8 million at the end of January 2023, which represents a \$9 million increase at this point in the year. The total revenue is projected to be at \$99.8 million at years end. Settlement funds from the 42” insurance claim and investment interest earnings will offset decreased revenue in water and sewer sales due to usage coming in lower than anticipated. Overall the total revenue is anticipated to be consistent with the original revenue estimate.

The operating budget is expected to be expended at 97%. There is \$1 million of unexpended funds due to the financing of projects later than anticipated, so those funds will become part of the reserve requirement for the following year and will appear as an offset to the FY24 budget. This is due to the SRF loan closing later than anticipated.

There is \$52.6 million in capital expenditures through the end of January 2023, with expenditures estimated to reach \$83.6 million by years end. with four major projects underway.

There was 30% in unrestricted cash which is used for working capital, and 70% of the total cash balance restricted. There was just under \$6.1 million in total receivables, of which just over \$3.3 million is over 60 days old.

There was \$970.6 million in assets and \$738.6 million in liabilities, of which most is long-term debt.

5. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable for January 2023: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$6.9 million, collections and payments of \$7.1 million, and accounts receivable of \$5.2 million. This is slightly higher than in January 2020, with a better trend than the past two years.

The accounts receivable balance of \$5.2 million is 19% more than the three-year average, but about \$1 million improved than last year at the same time.

There were 7,778 accounts with receivables over 60 days totaling \$6.5 million. The number of over-60-day accounts is still elevated, though there has been a decline to 6,122 accounts since advisory letters were sent in January.

There were 534 credits issued in the amount of \$127,427.38.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve credits in the amount of \$127,427,38 as presented.

6. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2023-12: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment to accommodate approval of the grant from PVPC last month.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve CIP Amendment 2023-12.

7. Consideration of AECOM Amendment No. 1 to Work Order 2004-20A-17 for Phase 3 Engineering Services for Owner's Program Manager for Design Build of Backwash Pumping Station and Filtered Water Clearwell at West Parish Filters: Report by Director of Engineering.

Executive Director Josh Schimmel reported on an amendment to the AECOM contract to cover overages due to a contract time extension that was already approved, and to update the contract to cover that time extension.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve AECOM Amendment No. 1 to Work Order 2004-20A-17.

8. Consideration of Hazen Task Order No. R-21-01_H&S_08 for Engineering Services for Final Design and Bidding for the West Parish Water Treatment Plant Upgrade: Report by Director of Engineering.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a task order that will involve the completion of the water treatment plant design to 100%, including bidding.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve Hazen Task Order No. R-21-01_H&S_08.

9. Water and Sewer Updates: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a job description for an Environmental Analyst, specifically focusing on testing and coordinating testing of source water. Regular samplers are often pulled into source water sampling. This position will focus on source water testing and coordinating with labs, and provides a promotional opportunity for internal candidates such as lab technicians. This position would be voluntarily acceded to the Supervisors Union.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to temporarily recess at 9:25 AM.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to return to regular session at 9:32 AM.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the Environmental Analyst position as presented.

Director of Human Resources Jennifer Boulais reported on a proposed Cross Connection Control Program Coordinator position that can assist with scheduling and contributing to cross connection inspections, as well as coordination with other Field Services crews. The cross connection program has lost staff in recent years.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the Cross Connection Control Coordinator position as presented.

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir was close to full capacity.

Mr. Schimmel reported that staff met with MassDEP recently to provide an update on the progress of the new drinking water plant. Construction completion is now anticipated in July 2028.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that repairs are continuing on the rapid sand filters and installing new nozzles. Work also continues on hiring, budgeting, and capital projects.

Director of Legal Services Theo Theocles reported that current efforts are focusing on preparing for shutoff season and resolving accounts at housing court as necessary.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that staff were also preparing for the shutoff program. Demand notices are expected to be sent the first week in March, and shutoffs will begin towards the end of March if the weather is warm enough. Advisory letters have already generated 200 payment plans.

Commissioner Otero requested that based on her recent conversations with state representatives and mayoral candidates, customer service programs should be reviewed, including potentially expanding beyond LIHEAP eligibility. Atty. Norm Guz noted that the Board would need to determine how and by what amount to increase customer assistance programs using information provided by staff.

Educational Outreach Manager Katie Shea reported on progress developing the Pipeline Program with Springfield Public Schools. The application process will start March 8. Commissioner Otero recommended connecting with STCC about their summer programs.

Ms. Boulais reported that she is working with directors and managers to revisit and revise job descriptions as necessary.

Mr. Basile reported that he is continuing to work on the FY24 budget process and making adjustments as bids for projects come in.

Deputy Director of Field Services Ryan Wingenter reported that 652 galvanized service line replacements have taken place by February 3. There are still a few hundred unknown service lines to investigate. Atty. Guz asked about potential reimbursement funding. Mr. Schimmel responded that SRF funding for lead service line replacements is typically not retroactive or for work completed in-house.

Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that York Street Pump Station pipe work is complete, and remaining equipment in the river will be removed by March 15 for fish spawning season.

Work at the pump station includes painting, flooring and surfaces. At the treatment plant, baffle walls are being installed for the aeration basin, and diffusers are being replaced ahead of schedule due to favorable weather.

Safety Manager Kristin Monfette reported that work continues on the safety training program, including a Commission-wide hazard communication program, hazardous chemical inventory, and removal of surplus hazardous chemicals. A new-hire safety training initiative is also underway.

Voted to adjourn at 10:02 AM by unanimous consent.

The next meeting is March 23, 2023 at 9 AM.



Exhibits considered:

Draft January 25, 2023 Meeting and Executive Session Minutes
Draft February 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Monthly Financial Report
January Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable
CIP Amendment 2023-12
Amendment No. 1 AECOM WO 2004-20A-17 OPM BW Facility
PO 231312 Task Order R-21-01_HS_08 - West Parish WTP Upgrade
Cross Connection Control Coordinator Job Description
Environmental Analyst Job Description
Contracts signed by Joshua Schimmel
Cobble Mountain Reservoir capacity chart