



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

June 15, 2023

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on June 15, 2023, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Secretary for the Commission Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

Daniel Rodriguez, Present
Vanessa Otero, Present
Matthew Donnellan, Present

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

Also Participating Remotely
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Steven Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources
Rick Gomez, Director of Engineering
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on June 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 meeting held on June 8, 2023.

New Business

2. Certification for Fiscal Year 2024: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported on the certification for Fiscal Year 2024 that has determined there will be sufficient funds to satisfy the general bond resolution.

3. Consideration of Proposed Revisions to the Commission Rules and Regulations: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on the proposed change to the FY24 Commission Rules and Regulations, excluding Chapter 5 (Schedule of Fees, Rates, and Charges), which were shared with the Board in April.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve the FY24 Commission Rules and Regulations as presented.

4. Consideration of Proposed Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on proposed revisions to Chapter 5 (Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges). Mr. Pellegrino reported the revisions include a 6.5% increase of water rates; a 10-cent increase in monthly service charges; a \$1.50 increase in program discounts; an increase of the non-beneficial use allowance of 6.5%; a \$25 per half day increase in police officer charges (per contracts); and a 6.5% increase in residential sewer rates.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve the FY24 Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges as presented.

5. Consideration of Proposed FY24 Capital Improvement Program Budget and Three Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2026: Report by Director of Finance

Mr. Pellegrino reported on the proposed 3-year CIP funding including the 1-year capital budget of \$208,784,220 which includes \$13.3 million in revenue funded projects and \$195 million in bond funded

projects for FY24. Two projects make up the bond spending, the water plant and the hydropower station, which are both part of the WIFIA portfolio.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN: to approve 3 year CIP for FY24 as presented.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN: to approve 1 year CIP for FY24 as presented.

6. Consideration of the Proposed FY24 O&M Budget: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Tony Basile reported on the proposed FY24 O&M budget of \$93,527,821, which includes annual debt service of just under \$25 million, 261 positions, contractual increases to the wastewater service contract, and increases for chemical costs.

Mr. Schimmel thanked staff for their work on the budget, which began in December. Commissioner Otero asked about whether the loan service charge would increase. Mr. Basile responded that loan service charges are dictated by SRF and the dates of loan closings.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN: to approve the FY24 O&M Budget as presented.

7. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Tony Basile reported an ending cash balance of \$122.1 million, which is a \$10.3 million cumulative increase. The cash flows are sustaining what is being dispersed for SRF projects.

There was \$101.4 million in total revenues, which is a \$1.7 million positive variance. This is attributed to interest earnings and insurance settlement money.

Financing that has not yet occurred will be rolled into the FY24 operating budget. The FY23 operating budget is projected to be spent out at 97%.

There has been \$74 million in capital spending in FY23, mainly on 4 major projects.

There is a \$122.1 million cash balance. Of that, \$35 million is unrestricted.

There was just over \$5 million in total receivables, and \$1.5 million in balances over 60 days.

There was \$981 million in total assets, and \$736 million in total liabilities.

8. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable May 2023: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported there was \$7.7 million in net billings, and \$9.3 million in payments, for a balance of \$4.2 million. These numbers are in line with pre-pandemic levels.

There were 5,411 accounts over 60 days for a total of \$1.5 million. There were 102 credits issued in the amount of \$33,466.81.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN: to approve credits in amount \$33,466.81 as presented.

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

Executive Director Josh Schimmel reported on contracts signed in the previous month,

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir is full.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a visit to Cobble Mountain Road with Sen. Paul Mark, and a visit with City Councilors Allen and Walsh to West Parish Filters.

Mr. Schimmel reported that a grant for the hydropower station will be submitted to FERC next week.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a progress meeting on the new water treatment plant with MassDEP. The need for quick review was communicated.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported that the water treatment plant was nearing 90% design, and a planning and zoning submission will be made in August. MassDEP is providing a 60% design review soon. The 90% design for the EDV is expected in the next two weeks.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that Water Operations staff are working closely with Engineering on the new plant design. The new nozzles in the rapid sand filters have all been replaced. Staff also participated in a regional hazard materials training event for chlorine release with multiple communities, and participated in three community workshops for dam emergency action plans.

Director of IT Rick Gomez reported that his team is busy setting up new employees and interns, and installing wireless connectivity for the entire Commission.

Director of Human Resources Jennifer Boulais reported that 10 full-time employees, 9 interns, and the Pipeline Program students will be starting soon. Staff are working on improving the onboarding process, CheckWriters, and online efficiencies for applicants.

Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that the ICIs are progressing. The grit project loan is set and the project will kick off in July. Issues with the new influent structure are being addressed. The wastewater plant is at 135 MGD capacity with one aeration basin down, while the new York Street Pump Station is faster, so there is balancing going on.

Mr. Basile reported that he is closing out the fiscal year and getting the new budget up and running.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that staff are coordinating with VOC for the new year of CAP.

Safety Manager Kristin Monfette reported that safety training of new staff and Pipeline interns was taking place, as well as at the Provin Mountain chambers. Work is ongoing on follow up to the emergency response side of the chlorine leak exercise, the dam exercise, and the emergency response plan.

Outreach Manager Katie Shea reported that 40 staff members were meeting to review schedules, programming, and expectations for the Pipeline Program, and that onboarding of the interns was going smoothly.

The next meeting will be July 27 at 9 AM.

10. Consideration and/or action on any other matters that may come before the Commission at this meeting.

None considered.

Adjourned by unanimous vote at 9:43 AM.

Submitted By:



Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

Exhibits considered:

Finance Director Funding Letter

DRAFT Rules and Regulations FY2024 – Summary & Ch.5

Budget CIP - Proposed FY2024

2023 May Finance Director Report

Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel

Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity

Comptroller's Financial Report

Proposed FY24 O&M Budget