



*Established*

*1996*

## SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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### Minutes of Meeting

October 10, 2025

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on October 10, 2025, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025.

Chairwoman Otero called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Secretary for the Commission Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

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

#### Also Present

Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director  
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance  
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Services  
Norm Guz, Commission Counsel  
Patrick Burns, Comptroller  
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering  
Steve Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations  
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources  
Leah Keating, Communications Specialist  
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations  
Ryan Wingerter, Director of Field Services  
Rick Gomez, Director of IT  
Bruce Leiter, Attorney for the Commission

#### Participating Remotely

Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations  
Nicole Sanford, Water Resources Manager  
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance  
Frank Zabaneh, Engineering Manager  
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager  
Nicole Boland, Billing and Collections Manager  
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager

### **Business Matters**

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 19, 2025, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 19, 2025.

2. Approve the minutes of the executive session held on September 19, 2025, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the minutes of the executive session held on September 19, 2025.

3. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Patrick Burns reported on September financials. There was an ending cash balance of \$129 million, which represents a \$12 million negative cash flow.

There was a projected negative variance of \$2.6 million in projected revenues in FY26. This is due to a decrease in water/sewer usage from the original estimate.

The operating budget was projected to be 100% expended, with \$276,430 remaining at the end of the fiscal year. Expenditures include health insurance and are closely monitored throughout the fiscal year.

The capital budget has been expended in the amount of \$29.6 million, with water supply/transmission accounting for 79% of that due to the new treatment plant. It is projected that capital spending will total \$91.7 million by the end of the fiscal year.

There was \$129 million in cash at the end of September, of which \$19.6 million was unrestricted, representing 15% of overall cash. There was \$109.4 million (89% of overall cash) in restricted cash.

There was a receivables balance of \$8 million, of which \$1.7 million was over 60 days old.

There was \$1.1 billion in assets, and \$791.2 million in liabilities, which includes outstanding debt, pension, and OPEB liability.

The Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) will be presented at the next Board meeting. The final audit of the City's pension system is still outstanding, delaying the ACFR.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if there were any consequences of a delayed ACFR. Commission Counsel Norm Guz responded that there is a legitimate reason this year. If the Commission fails to file the ACFR with EMMA and its Trustee by December 31, it would be in violation of the Commission's Bond Resolution and disclosure requirements with bond holders.

4. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable September 2025: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$10 million, collections of \$10.2 million, for an accounts receivable balance of \$6.5 million.

There were 5,905 accounts with receivables over 60 days old, representing \$1.6 million.

There were 93 credits issued for a total of \$1,478,478.38, mostly for annual true-ups.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if this represents a larger true-up than in past years. Mr. Pellegrino responded that the amount reflects the true-up credits issued, but not what the total true-ups were. Other communities were adjusted for charges that were above their original billing. The credits also reflect the closing of four production lines at Solutia.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve credits in the amount of  
\$1,478,478.38.

5. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-06: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment to reduce available appropriations and close the Backwash Pump Station project account.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-06.

6. Consideration of Kleinfelder Task Order 62: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported Task Order 62 is a continuation of the annual asset management and cleaning system. Mr. Schimmel added this is the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the program, which forms the basis of capital work performed in the collection system.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve Kleinfelder Task Order 62.

7. Consideration of Engagement of Legal Services with Hirsch Roberts Weinstein LLP: Report by Commission Counsel.

Atty. Norm Guz reported that there is pending litigation by members of the union at Veolia regarding prevailing wage. The case went through Federal district court in Springfield, and then was appealed to the First Circuit Court of Appeals. The case was then sent to the state Superior Judicial Court for interpretation. Mr. Guz reported that it would be beneficial for the Commission to file an amicus brief as it has an interest in the matter. The contract with the legal firm that would do so on the Commission's behalf is for \$25,000.

Atty. Guz added that the Commission's interest is the additional time and energy it would take Veolia to track prevailing vs. regular wages, affecting the operation of the facility.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to execute the engagement agreement with Hirsch Roberts Weinstein LLP as presented.

8. Consideration of Engagement Letter for Smith Crawford – Regulatory Legal Assistance and Strategies: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a contract with Smith Crawford to provide regulatory and legal assistance related to West Parish Filters.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to execute the engagement agreement with Smith Crawford as presented.

9. Consideration of Engagement Agreement with Regina Ryan – HR Investigation Assistance of SWSC Employee: Report by Executive Director.

Director of Human Resources Jen Boulais reported that Atty. Ryan is an attorney experienced in harassment claims. This engagement agreement would be to investigate a recent allegation.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to execute the engagement letter with Regina Ryan.

10. Consideration of Engagement Agreement with Truf & Modugno – Contractual Assistance for SWSC WPFWTP: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported that this engagement agreement is to provide legal support and strategy for the new West Parish WTP construction contract.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to execute the engagement agreement with Truf & Modugno as presented.

11. Consideration of Engagement Letter- Shipman & Goodwin LLP – Environmental Compliance: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported that this engagement agreement would provide assistance and strategies on environmental compliance and reporting for the new West Parish WTP project.

**UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to execute the engagement letter with Shipman & Goodwin as presented.

12. Consideration of Proposed Changes to Rules and Regulations: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported on proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations to accommodate new state laws associated with Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). There is an additional minor change to the definition of “customer” as well. The changes would apply to both Springfield and Ludlow customers. Mr. Schimmel proposed holding a public hearing prior to the December Board meeting.

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

Mr. Burns reported on the IRS audit. There were currently two remaining document requests to which the Commission has responded. The government shutdown has resulted in the assigned IRS agent being furloughed, which will delay the outcome.

Ms. Boulais reported that the Commission is working with a broker to explore other health insurance options. A recent meeting with the Hampshire County Group Insurance Commission projected stability and that dissolution does not seem to be on the table.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Board will continue to be updated on PCB sampling results and strategy.

Mr. Schimmel reported that there has been no movement on House Bill 2330.

Mr. Schimmel reported that Comptroller Pat Burns has submitted his resignation and his last day will be November 7. Mr. Schimmel thanked Mr. Burns for his service to the Commission. Mr. Schimmel proposed conducting a search for a new Comptroller similar to the past one, but more accelerated.

Ms. Boulais reported that the Collins Center of UMass Boston will be engaged to assist with the Comptroller search.

Mr. Schimmel reported on the upcoming retirement of Commission Counsel Norm Guz. Mr. Schimmel proposed a search for a new general counsel similar to the one being conducted for the Comptroller. Ms. Boulais added that participation of a Board member is vital. Commissioner Donnellan volunteered to assist in the search.

Commissioner Rodriguez requested that the counsel candidate present to the Board on their background and experience. Mr. Schimmel responded that the hiring committee will interview for screening purposes, but that multiple candidates will be brought before the Board for interviews. Commissioner Rodriguez requested candidates that are willing to speak up but have enough diplomacy to let the Board lead, as well be residents of the Springfield area as much as possible. Mr. Schimmel added that Atty. Guz would be part of the screening process.

Mr. Schimmel reported that a quarterly HAA5 public notification went out last week.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that payments from WIFIA will still go through on October 15 despite the government shutdown.

Mr. Burns thanked the Board for the honor to serve as Comptroller.

Mr. Schimmel reported that he was hosting a call with members of the Water Management Act appeal. Six utilities have agreed to join the appeal so far.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir was at 81% capacity, which is within normal range. Staff at West Parish Filters are continuing to work with site coordinators for the construction project. There was a sanitary survey with MassDEP earlier in the week that went well.

Director of Field Services Ryan Wingerter reported on the completion of 1,500' of water main replacement in Ludlow. There were 60 leaks identified in the leak survey and all but 8 of them have been addressed.

Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that the wastewater plant was running well. The ICI project on the electrical system is nearing completion and will provide 2 sources of power when it is finished. Crews are working to finish concrete work on the grit removal project before winter. Mr. Schimmel added that there is a recent push in NPDES permits for generators to back up full operations, which is difficult to accomplish. The electrical upgrades and additional feed are improvements.

Director of IT Rick Gomez reported that a recent power outage at the wastewater plant did not affect information systems. Another firewall system is being explored.

Ms. Buttrick reported that tie-ins for the finished water distribution mains at West Parish are complete. Excavation of raw transmission mains are ongoing. Staff are working with consultants for PCB sampling at West Parish Filters. The roof of the 42" valve box was recently poured. The startup plan for the new

42” transmission main is now scheduled for January. The WTP lagoon cleaning project is moving slowly and will need a time extension through November. The Locust Street transfer project is now complete. The Birnie Avenue project is mobilized for test fittings. The sewer repair project at St. Michael’s Cemetery is progressing towards pipe lining. Tie-in and shutdown work is continuing at the X. The FY25 Sewer Improvements Project is ongoing with various spot repairs and lining work through winter. The water quality monitoring station project at Provin Mountain is mobilizing next week, with completion expected in June of next year. Design is continuing for the generator and electrical installation at Cobble Mountain Hydrostation.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the lawsuit for the 42” valve project has settled.

Commissioner Rodriguez noted that he was impressed with individuals and the Commission as a whole as it addressed the many ongoing projects and issues arising from them. Commissioner Rodriguez acknowledged that while times are challenging, he believed the right staff are in place and that they will look back at this time in their careers as meaningful.

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

None considered.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 14 at 10 AM.

**AT 11:06 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to adjourn.

Submitted By:

Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

Exhibits:

September 2025 Financial Report  
2025 September Finance Director Report  
CIP Amendment 2026-06 (Decrease 005-0076)  
TO 62 Project Summary  
TO 62 SWSC FY26 Cleaning and Assessment Program  
Draft Revisions to FY26 Rules and Regulations  
Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels  
Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel