



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

November 6, 2025

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on November 6, 2025, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025.

Chairwoman Otero called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM 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, Not 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
Ryan Wingerter, Director of Field Services
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations
Rick Gomez, Director of IT
Tanya Campbell, CBIZ

Participating Remotely

Nicole Sanford, Water Resources Manager
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager
Nicole Boland, Billing and Collections Manager
Frank Zabaneh, Senior Engineer
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on October 10, 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 OTERO

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

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

New Business

2. Presentation of FY25 Final Audit by CBIZ: Report by Comptroller.

Tanya Campbell of CBIZ reported on the FY25 audit. Ms. Campbell described the roles and responsibilities of the Board. The auditors are responsible for expressing an opinion on the financial statements and providing assurance that the statements are free from material misstatements. Commission management is responsible for financial statements, proper internal controls, and compliance with laws and regulations.

The FY25 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) is the thirteenth completed. All previous ACFRs have received recognition for excellence in financial reporting. It takes 6-9 months for GASB to review ACFRs.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if GASB offered guidance on OPEB contributions. Ms. Campbell responded that it does not, but that OPEB needs to be recognized as a liability. The actuary looks at retired employees, health insurance rates, etc., and makes adjustments to what was predicted. Comptroller Pat Burns noted that the present standard is to contribute what is being paid for current retirees.

Ms. Campbell continued that the audit checked that financial practices are in compliance with the Commission's financial policies, Chapter 40N, and the general bond resolution. The Commission operates on a cash basis, but the audit is required to be presented on an accrual basis. Ms. Campbell reported that the Commission's monthly financial reports are reliable for the Board's use in decision making. Deferred inflow/outflow is no longer being presented, resulting in a restatement in this year's ACFR.

Ms. Campbell reported that net position did not change much this year. Due to the government shutdown, OMB did not issue a final compliance supplement, which is used in a federal grant audit. The deadline is March 31, 2025 to complete the federal grant audit. Commissioner Rodriguez asked what happens if the audit is not completed on time. Ms. Campbell responded that the Commission would become a high-risk auditee, which means two federal audits per grant, but OMB will likely extend the deadline.

3. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Patrick Burns reported on October financials. There was an ending cash balance of \$149.9 million, which represents a \$8.9 million positive cash flow balance.

There was a projected negative revenue variance of \$3.1 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 \$466,000 remaining at the end of the fiscal year. This is a conservative estimate and is being closely monitored.

The capital budget has been expended in the amount of \$41.5 million, with water supply/transmission accounting for \$32.7 million, 39% of that due to the new treatment plant. It is projected that capital spending will total \$119.9 million by the end of the fiscal year.

There was \$149.9 million in cash at the end of October, of which \$40.8 million was unrestricted. There was \$109 million in restricted cash (73% of overall cash). Revenue from a legal settlement of \$9.9 million will become restricted cash.

There was a receivables balance of \$7.1 million, of which \$1.6 million was over 60 days old.

There was \$1.1 billion in assets, and \$792 million in liabilities, which includes outstanding debt, pension, and OPEB liability. There is \$10.6 million currently in the OPEB trust.

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

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$11.2 million and collections of \$11.7 million, for an accounts receivable balance of \$5.9 million.

There were 5,784 accounts with receivables over 60 days old, representing \$1.6 million.

There were 82 credits issued for a total of \$46,686.38, mostly for annual true-ups.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve credits in the amount of \$46,686.38.

5. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-07: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment related to litigation for the 42” pipeline. A total of \$15.3 million was received. The funds will be directed to the 42” pipeline project, which will free some WIFIA funds. The amendment is for \$3.4 million to establish a new CIP account for legal support for the new water plant project.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-07.

6. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-08: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment that will reduce and close out the 42” pipeline repair project, which was part of the 2019 series E bond. Only \$250,000 is needed for the last payment, so the amendment will be decreased by \$388,000.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-08.

7. Consideration of Contract to Employ Anthony J. Basile as Comptroller: Report by Commission Counsel.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz reported that this contract is to employ Interim Comptroller Anthony Basile's term beginning November 10 and terminating upon the new hire of a Comptroller, or June 30. It is anticipated Mr. Basile will work for approximately 20 hours/week, depending on the workload. He will be compensated for \$180/hour. There is a limit on how many hours Mr. Basile can work due to receiving his pension.

Mr. Schimmel added that a consulting contract with Mr. Basile is a possibility once a new comptroller is on board to assist in the transition.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the contract with Mr. Basile as presented.

8. WIFIA Quarterly Report Q3 2025: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported that \$339 million of the WIFIA program has been expended, and of that \$59.6 million is from the WIFIA loan. Commissioner Rodriguez commented that he was impressed with how much funding and effort has been expended so far, and commended Ms. Buttrick and Commission staff.

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

Mr. Schimmel recommended scheduling a public hearing for December 11, to present updates to the FY26 Rules and Regulations to accommodate accessory dwelling units.

10. Consideration of Aware of SWSC Contract No. 20260031 – JJSOC Structural Repair Project: Report by Chief Procurement Officer.

Chief Procurement Officer Ted Sweeny reported on the JJSOC structural repair project. Four bids were received, but the apparent low bidder did not demonstrate the required experience in steel and concrete work. The Commission's contracted engineer Fuss & O'Neil recommended awarding the contract to Structural Preservation Systems in the amount of \$455,935.00.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to authorize SWSC Contract No. 20260031.

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

Mr. Schimmel reported on the Town of Blandford's request to submit comments on a proposed commercial battery energy storage system. The Commission submitted comments on battery energy storage system siting in general to the state, but has the same concerns as Blandford about this particular project, particularly as it is located in Zone A in the watershed. Projects should be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The Commission plans to draft a response letter.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the federal government has not released LIHEAP funding to states, which inhibits issuing the Commission's CAP credits. Alternative strategies are being discussed internally if the funding is not released soon.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that staff are budgeting for FY26 and preparing estimated billing for wholesalers. Solutia's reduction of four production lines has reduced revenue on the wastewater side, not only flows but loadings.

Director of Human Resources Jennifer Boulais reported that the Commission has engaged UMass's Collins Center for the comptroller search. The posting will be public on Wednesday. Commissioner Donnellan contributed to the posting. Mr. Schimmel noted that the Collins Center could be used for the general counsel search as well. Commissioner Otero asked what the cost would be. Ms. Boulais responded the cost would be approximately \$10,000. The comptroller search would involve networking and advising on the process rather than screening.

Atty. Norm Guz advised hiring an attorney rather than a firm that has experience in municipal law. Commissioner Otero commented that she wished for the Commissioners and Atty. Guz to be involved in the screening process. Commissioner Rodriguez suggested that the discussion should continue with all three commissioners next month.

Director of IT Rick Gomez reported that the IT team was working on user account cleanup, system upgrades, and upgrading firewalls and email security.

Ms. Buttrick reported that work at the new water plant is continuing for raw water transmission main installations. Issues with PCBs continue to be addressed. Work is progressing on the inside of the 42" EDV tank, including electrical work and roof hatch installation. The project should go online in January. The lagoon cleaning project is nearly complete. The Birnie/Ave Riverside Road project mobilized on Monday, with a full shutdown of northern transmission mains. The cleaning and bypass of the North Branch sewer is complete and will be followed by lining. Water main work is winding down at the X for the winter. FY25 sewer improvement spot repairs are complete. The water quality monitoring station project at Provin Mountain has begun. Design for the Cobble Mountain Hydropower Station turbine and valve replacement is underway; there is a two-year lead time on valves.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported that he is helping Engineering and Water Operations through various contract issues, and helping support review and approval of connections to 43 residential units at Tinkham Woods. Automation of the engineering review and approval process is being explored. Housing court ends Friday.

Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that Eversource will finalize the final redundant electrical service next week. DOC reviewed the grit project pouring schedule and regained four

months in the project schedule. The biosolids contract has been finalized for another three years. Energy use is down due to the aeration project. Atty. Guz commended Mr. Frederick for his work negotiating the biosolids contract.

Director of Field Services Ryan Wingerter reported that the 300' water main replacement in Ludlow is nearing completion; field services staff are assisting Engineering with water main shutdowns; and valves are being inspected within easements.

Deputy Director of Water Operations Christina Jones reported that water quality and treatment is steady. Cobble Mountain Reservoir is at 79% capacity, which is typical. Staff are regularly involved in construction coordination. The sides of the Backwash Facility tanks are being isolated for connection to new transmission mains. The EDV project will provide more redundancy when it is back online in January. SOP manual for operations without SCADA was recently completed. Staff are transitioning from paper to digital rounds to improve efficiency.

Atty. Guz reported there will be a bond sale in February.

The next Board meeting will be December 11 at 9:45 AM, preceded by a public hearing at 9 AM.

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

None considered.

AT 3:34 PM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to adjourn.

Submitted By:

Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

Exhibits:

October 2025 Financial Report
2025 October Finance Director Report
CIP Amendment 2026-07
CIP Amendment 2026-08
WIFIA Quarterly Report Q3 2025
SWSC Contract No. 20260031
Draft Revisions to FY26 Rules and Regulations
Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels
Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel