



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

December 13, 2024

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on December 13, 2024, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Acting Secretary for the Commission Katie Shea called the attendance roll:

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

Also Present
Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Anthony Basile, Comptroller
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Services and Procurement
Norm Guz, Commission Counsel
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Steve Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations
Rick Gomez, Director of IT
Patrick Burns, Comptroller
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager/Acting Secretary for the Commission

Participating Remotely
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager
Nicole Boland, Billing and Collections Manager

Business Matters

(non-agenda item)

Commissioners agreed to appoint Katie Shea as Acting Secretary of the Commission for the meeting held on December 13, 2024.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve Katie Shea as acting secretary of the Commission for the meeting held on December 13, 2024.

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on November 21, 2024, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve minutes of the meeting held on November 21st, 2024.

New Business

2. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Anthony Basile reported an ending cash balance of \$134.5 million, which represents an approximate \$1.8 million decrease in cash flows. This will fluctuate over the year.

There is a projected negative revenue variance of \$2.1 million, reflecting a decrease in water and sewer usage from what was estimated.

The budget is projected to be spent at 98% with a balance of approximately \$2 million in unexpended operational funds. This will be managed throughout the fiscal year.

Mr. Basile noted that the budget includes a \$500,000 contribution toward the Commission's OPEB fund, however that payment will not be made until later in the fiscal year.

Mr. Basile reported that approximately \$20 million has been spent from the capital budget so far in FY25, with a projected total expenditure of \$119.5 million.

Mr. Basile reported there was \$134.5 million in total cash, \$30.6 million of which was unrestricted representing approximately 22% of overall cash, with 78% restricted.

There was \$8.6 million in receivables of which \$1.8 million was over 60 days old.

There was over \$1 billion in assets and \$730 million in liabilities, including outstanding debt, and pension and OPEB liabilities.

Mr. Basile introduced new Comptroller Patrick Burns.

3. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable October 2024: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$9.5 million, collections of \$6.4 million, with a resulting accounts receivable balance of \$7.59 million.

There were 6,239 accounts receivable over 60 days old totaling \$1.85 million.

There were 39 credits issued totaling \$7,650.34.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve credits in the amount of \$7,650.34 as presented.

4. Consideration of CIP Amendment No. 2025-07: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on CIP Amendment No. 2025-07 to move \$14,241.00 from the CIP Reserve fund to the Ludlow Reservoir Culvert Replacement account for design services for a culvert replacement project.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve CIP Amendment No. 2025-07.

5. Consideration of CIP Amendment No. 2025-08: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment related to a \$100,000 State Grant Award authorized by Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022 Economic Development Bill and accepted by the Board in 2023. Now that construction of the new West Parish Water Treatment Plant has started this CIP amendment would move the grant funds to the CIP account.

Mr. Schimmel added that State Representative Ramos had helped secure these grant funds for the construction of the new plant.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve CIP Amendment No. 2025-08.

6. Consideration of Authorization for Deputy Director of Finance to Authorize Banking Transactions with US Bank: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that currently he and Mr. Schimmel have all financial institution signing authority for the Commission. This authorization would allow Deputy Director of Finance Raemarie Walker to also authorize banking transactions with US Bank on behalf of the Commission.

Commissioner Otero asked about checks and balances for authorizing transfers and other banking matters.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that transactions are authorized or directed by the Comptroller's Office and the Finance Department executes the transactions.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

To authorize Raemarie Walker, the Deputy Director of Finance, of the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (the "Commission") to act on behalf of the Commission related to transfers, withdrawals, deposits, and to take any other action on behalf of the Commission in relation to the Commission's Accounts with U.S. Bank Trust Company, National Association.

7. Consideration of Authorization for Deputy Director of Finance to Authorize Banking Transactions with Wilmington Trust: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that this authorization would allow Deputy Director of Finance Raemarie Walker to authorize banking transactions with Wilmington Trust, which includes the required transfers for bond resolutions.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

To authorize Raemarie Walker, the Deputy Director of Finance, of the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (the "Commission") to act on behalf of the Commission related to transfers, withdrawals, deposits, and to take any other action on behalf of the Commission in

relation to the Commission's Investment accounts with Wilmington Trust.

8. Consideration of the 52nd Supplemental Resolution for the Issuance by the Commission of the Series 2025 General Revenue Bonds - A, B, C and D to the MA Clean Water Trust: Report by Commission Counsel.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz reported on the 52nd Supplemental Resolution for the issuance of general revenue bonds for funding of capital projects including the York Street Pump Station and Connecticut River Crossing Project, Locust Street Project, and the new West Parish Water Treatment Plant project.

Atty. Guz noted that there was an update to the Series D general revenue bond, originally planned for \$15 million, but due to loan forgiveness that was recently announced from the SRF the bond will be issued for \$10.53 million.

Mr. Schimmel added the Commission was pleased to receive notice from the SRF regarding the loan forgiveness. The loan forgiveness is 29.8% of the \$15,000,000 loan, which represents a higher percentage than previous loan forgiveness awarded to the Commission from the SRF. The loan forgiveness will be awarded upon completion of the project in 2028.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to issue 2025 Series A, B, C, and D General Revenue Bonds to the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust.

9. Consideration of Authorization of the Commission to Borrow from the MA Clean Water Trust the sum of \$15,000,000 for Replacement of the West Parish Water Treatment Plant Project: Report by Commission Counsel.

Atty. Guz reported that the Commission was selected to borrow \$15 million from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for construction of the new West Parish Water Treatment Plant (DW-24-68). This is the second DWSRF loan the Commission has been authorized to borrow for the new water treatment plant. As part of the loan financing process the Commission would issue a bond at a rate of 0% and then move to permanent financing.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize that \$363,731,170 has been appropriated for the purpose of financing the West Parish Water Treatment Plant

(“Replacement of West Parish Water Treatment Plant Project”) including without limitation all costs thereof as defined in Section 1 of Chapter 29C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth, as amended; that to meet this appropriation the Executive Director is authorized to borrow \$15,000,000 and issue bonds or notes therefore under Chapter 40N of the General Laws, that the Executive Director is authorized to borrow all or a portion of such amount from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust established pursuant to Chapter 29C, as amended and pursuant to the provision of the Massachusetts Clean Waters Act Chapter 21 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth , as amended; and in connection therewith to enter into a loan agreement and/or a security agreement with the Trust and otherwise to contract with the Trust and the Department of Environmental Protection with respect to such loan and for any federal or state aid available for the project or for the financing thereof; that the Executive Director is authorized to enter into a project regulatory agreement with the Department of Environmental Protection, to expend all funds available for the project and to take any other action necessary to carry out the project.

10. Consideration of South Street IGA Agreement: Report by Director of Legal Services.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported on an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Blandford for maintenance and logging along South Street. This is an amendment to the initial agreement that would extend the IGA to April 2026 to allow for additional logging and maintenance activities in that area of the watershed.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to authorize the Executive Director to sign the amendment to the Blandford South Street IGA.

11. Consideration of Blandford Cemetery IGA: Report by Director of Legal Services.

Mr. Theocles reported on an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Blandford that would grant permission for access to watershed property to the town's Cemetery Commission to allow for care and maintenance of grave sites located in old cemeteries that are on Commission watershed property. As part of the agreement the Cemetery Commission and caretakers will have to coordinate all access with Commission watershed staff.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Blandford Cemetery IGA.

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

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir levels are in normal ranges for this time of year.

The Commission recently conducted quarterly disinfection byproduct sampling and based on results will be issuing a Public Notice regarding an exceedance for the MCL for HAA5 in January.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Commission is working on establishing an MOU with Holyoke Gas and Electric for design and repairs at the hydro station.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a sewer failure in the area of St. Michael's Cemetery/Wilbraham Road that occurred on Wednesday, December 11. The Commission issued a SSO notification due to the discharge into the nearby waterway, Watershop's Pond. Commission crews responded to the break immediately and were able to isolate the break and stop flow by Wednesday evening. Commission crews have been working on clean up utilizing vac trucks and other equipment, and signage has been posted in the area advising the public to avoid contact with the waterbody for 48 hours. The Commission's Engineering and Procurement departments have also assisted in the response and contractors will be completing a temporary repair next week until a more permanent repair can be completed. A DCAMM emergency waiver and emergency contract is pending.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a planned reorganization of the Legal Affairs and Procurement departments. As part of the new structure Procurement will be part of the Finance Department, allowing the Director of Legal Affairs position to focus more on legal matters including contracts such as the wastewater contract with Veolia as well as a greater role in the day-to-day functions of the Commission. The Commission will be seeking to hire a dedicated Chief Procurement Officer in the near future.

Chairman Rodriguez, Commissioner Otero and Commissioner Donnellan agreed there were no objections to the proposed reorganization.

Mr. Basile reported that the Commission has started working on the budget process for FY26.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that the Finance Department continues to work on billing and collections and supporting the Comptroller's Office with the FY26 budget process.

Director of Wastewater Steve Fredrick reported that the ICI projects at the wastewater treatment plant are moving forward through winter including the electrical upgrade project and the grit project. The new

York Street Pump Station has been performing well including during high flow events such as the bypass to YSPS as part of the completion of the Locust Street project.

Director of IT Rick Gomez reported that the IT Department continued to implement upgrades, cyber security controls, physical security, and system maintenance during calendar year 2024.

Deputy Director of Water Operations Christina Jones reported on watershed operations. In 2024 the watershed team monitored 4,000 acres of Commission property and 1,500 acres of public access property, including monitoring for invasive species. The team also completed required watershed and source water reporting.

Ms. Jones also reported on Water Operations noting that with recent rain events, levels at Cobble Mountain Reservoir have increased. The recent rain is beneficial in reducing the risk of wildfires in the watershed. The Water Operations team continues to complete rapid sand filter upgrades, including nozzle replacement, to keep filters running well in advance of the new plant construction. The Commission also hosted a meeting with water wholesalers to discuss treatment plant capacity during construction.

Mr. Schimmel added that the Commission recently met with the water departments of the wholesale communities as well as emergency managers for Springfield and Ludlow to discuss the possibility of capacity issues during peak demands or other situations related to weather or plant failures during construction of the new treatment plant.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported that Walsh Construction is mobilized at West Parish. Current construction work includes rehabbing bridges to allow for transport on site and test pits of the tie-ins. The tie-ins are a significant piece of the construction. Work on the 42-inch EDV project also continues with rock excavation and structure work. The Backwash Project is complete, and the Engineering Department is working on addressing warranty issues related to some of the materials and equipment. Currently out to bid is the lagoon project. Recently contractors completed successful tie-ins on the Locust Street project. Planning for the Riverside Road project is also underway with work expected to start in the spring pending receipt of the final approval notice from the Army Corps. Engineering is also working with HG&E on the updates at the hydro station.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Commission is still working with the Department of Energy regarding the grant for the hydro station project. The grant is not yet signed and executed.

Comptroller Patrick Burns, who recently started at the Commission, greeted the Commissioners and stated that it has been great working with the team so far.

Mr. Theocles reported that the Commission is currently accepting bids for automated billing and payment services and a lagoon cleaning project at West Parish. The recent Watershop's Pond sewer failure also required emergency procurement.

Mr. Theocles also provided an update from the Human Resources Department stating that the Commission is currently working on an MOA with SACE to modify the hearing process.

Mr. Schimmel stated that the MOA addresses the disciplinary hearing process for SACE employees. Under the MOA employees facing discipline will have a labor management meeting, rather than the current process of a hearing, which requires a hearing officer and court reporters. During the labor management meeting the proposed discipline will be reviewed and determined if appropriate. Following the labor management meeting the next step would be arbitration. This process would be piloted during the latest Supervisor's contract, and if successful, will potentially be bargained for in the next contract. The Board authorized the Executive Director to sign the MOA on behalf of the Board.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to sign the Labor Management Meeting MOA with SACE as presented.

Educational Outreach Manager Katie Shea reported that the communications team has been working with a videographer to produce a new video about water careers. The new treatment plant website newwestparish.com continues to be updated with highlights from the groundbreaking and construction mobilization, and the public is invited to sign up for our newsletter on the site. The Commission has also been planning with Springfield Public Schools on the Pipeline Program for summer 2025 and applications will be available in January. Communications staff and Pipeline Program Ambassadors have participated in several Career Fairs and related events at various high schools in Springfield.

Mr. Schimmel thanked the Commissioners, Atty. Guz, and Commission staff and wished everyone happy holidays.

The next Board meeting will be January 16 at 1pm.

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

None considered.

AT 10:55 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to adjourn.

Submitted By:



Katie Shea, Acting Secretary

Exhibits:

November 2024 Financial Report
2024 November Finance Director Report
Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels
Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel
Amendment 2025-07 (Tnfs 090-1000 to 004-0040)

Amendment 2025-08 (Inc 005-0101)
52nd Supplemental Resolution
South Street IGA (K#20240041 Amendment No. 1)
Blandford Cemetery IGA (Draft SWSC IGA No. 20250035)