



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

February 19, 2026

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on February 19, 2026, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025.

Chairwoman Otero called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Secretary for the Commission Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

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

Also Present

Norm Guz, Commission Counsel
Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Services
Christopher Gaugherty, Comptroller
Anthony Basile, Consulting Comptroller
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Steve Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources
Ryan Wingerter, Director of Field Services
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Rick Gomez, Director of IT
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations
Nicole Sanford, Water Supply Manager
Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager
Jim Kinney, Member of the Press

Participating Remotely

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

Commissioner Donnellan served as chairperson as the only Commissioner present in-person.

Executive Session

1. Discussion of Litigation Concerning Retired Employee Anthony Johnson: Report by Executive Director.

AT 9:02 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to enter into executive session to discuss a litigation concerning retired employee Anthony Johnson. It was determined that discussion of such matters would have a detrimental effect on the litigation position of the Commission and that the Commission would come back into regular session in approximately 15 minutes.

AT 9:20 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to adjourn executive session.

AT 9:24 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to re-enter open session.

Old Business

2. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 17, 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 DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ:**

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 17, 2025.

ABSTAIN –

COMMISSIONER OTERO

Business Matters

3. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 15, 2026, 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 DONNELLAN

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ abstain
COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 15, 2026.

4. Approve the minutes of the executive session held on January 15, 2026, 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 DONNELLAN

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER OTERO:

to approve the minutes of the executive session held on January 15, 2026.

ABSTAIN –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

New Business

5. Financial Update: Report by Interim Comptroller.

Interim Comptroller Anthony Basile reported on January financials. There was an ending cash balance of \$144.7 million, which represents a \$3.7 million positive cash flow balance.

There was a projected negative revenue variance of \$3.8 million in FY26. This is due to a 2-3% decrease in water/sewer usage from the original estimate. It is anticipated that 97% of projected revenue will be collected, and shortfalls will be made up with unexpended operating funds.

The operating budget was projected to be 97% expended by year-end. There is \$3.4 million excess appropriation that will help offset the revenue shortfall. It is recommended to postpone OPEB contributions. A hiring freeze is currently in place with some exceptions. A balanced budget is anticipated by June.

The capital budget has been expended in the amount of \$62.8 million, with water supply/transmission accounting for \$47.4 million due to the new treatment plant. There is \$442 million of capital projects in the books.

There was \$144.7 million in cash at the end of December, of which \$27 million (19%) was unrestricted. There was 80% in restricted cash.

There was a receivables balance of \$8.3 million, of which \$3.8 million was over 60 days old.

There was \$1.1 billion in assets, and \$780 million in liabilities, which includes outstanding debt, pension, and OPEB liability.

6. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable January 2026: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported net billings of \$8.8 million, payments of \$7.6 million, for an accounts receivable balance of \$7.4 million.

There were 7,886 accounts with balances over 60 days old totaling \$2.7 million. There were 150 active payment plans, 124 defaulted payment plans, and 166 invalid payment plans (offered but never signed).

There were 128 credits issued for a total of \$24,966.97.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to approve credits in the amount of \$24,966.97.

7. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-11: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment that would close out completed CIP projects and transfer remaining balances to the CIP reserve account.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-11.

8. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-12: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a CIP amendment to transfer unneeded funding from support services for the 42" pipeline project to the account for legal support for the water treatment plant.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-12.

9. Consideration of Acceptance of 2026 Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grant: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a \$47,694 grant from MassDEP that will be used to purchase iHydrant kits to detect leaks on transmission mains, which provides data about system water pressure during incidents such as main breaks.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to accept \$47,694 for the 2026 Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grant.

10. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-13: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that this CIP amendment appropriates funds for the MassDEP grant.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-13.

11. WIFIA Quarterly Report: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported that as of December 31st, \$359 million of the total WIFIA program had been expended, and of that approximately \$68 million was from the WIFIA loan itself.

Ms. Buttrick reported that the WIFIA Quarterly Report includes progress on the most significant projects, including at the water treatment plant. Two projects also reached substantial completion during the reporting period, including the Lagoon Cleaning project and the North Branch Sewer Interceptor Rehabilitation project.

12. Consideration of Agreement for Legal Services for Claims Related to the Commission's Operation of Water and Sewer Services: Report by Commission Counsel.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz reported that Attorney John Liebel recently passed away, and his service to the Commission for over 15 years was valued and will be missed.

Atty. Guz reported on a contract with Atty. Stewart to provide legal services for claims not to exceed \$40,000. Atty. Stewart shared offices with Atty. Liebel and had already been substituting.

Commissioner Rodriguez recognized Atty. Liebel's many years of service to the Commission.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Atty. Stewart for legal support for claims not to exceed \$40,000 through June 30, 2026.

13. Consideration of Consulting Contract with Anthony Basile: Report by Director of Legal Affairs.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported on a temporary consulting agreement with Tony Basile to assist the current comptroller with the transition through December 31, 2026.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to approve the Consulting Contract with Anthony Basile through December 31, 2026.

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

Mr. Schimmel reported that the hydropower station has been running profitably during recent cold weather due to a scarcity of energy.

Director of Human Resources Jen Boulais reported that three candidates have been screened for the general counsel position. Commissioner Donnellan represented the Board on the screening committee. The screening committee recommends meeting with all three candidates, including Attorney Jim Chadwell, Attorney Dan Finnegan, and Attorney Anthony Wilson.

Mr. Schimmel reported that progress was being towards a plan for addressing PCBs at the new water treatment plant construction site. A report was submitted to EPA three weeks ago. Approval is needed from EPA and MassDEP on sampling plans to identify the scope of the issue before moving forward.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Commission and WIFIA co-hosted a virtual workshop with other Massachusetts communities on how WIFIA works. The Commission intends to submit a Letter of Intent for another WIFIA loan in the future.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that three SRF loans were closed, and the budget for FY27 is being prepared.

Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that the ICI projects are nearing the finish line with the final programming of the switch gear. The grit project is continuing, and the two new grit tanks are being tested. Mr. Frederick noted that a recent tour by students of Transitions Academy was very meaningful.

Comptroller Chris Geraghty introduced himself to the Board, and reported that he was working on budget preparations, policies and procedures, and accounts payable.

Ms. Boulais reported that she was working on the staffing section of the budget and organizational charts.

Ms. Buttrick reported that Walsh continues to install raw water transmission mains at the new water treatment plant. Dry testing for the 42" EDV valves and other equipment is ongoing, along with electrical and instrumentation work, final inspections, and startup preparations. Electrical work is ongoing at the Provin water quality monitoring station and spring work will start in a few weeks. The Birnie Ave/Riverside Road project will be completed in June. The North Branch sewer project at St. Michael's Cemetery is complete. The FY25 sewer improvements projects are complete, with restoration in the spring. The valve replacements for the hydropower station are out to bid, the crane/penstocks will go out to bid soon, and the generator replacement design is at 60% complete. Bidding is ongoing for FY26 water/sewer replacement projects.

Commissioner Otero asked about a target date for the EDV startup. Ms. Buttrick replied that the final equipment should be in place for a startup in May.

Director of Field Services Ryan Wingerter reported that it was a busy winter for water main breaks, with 43 in the winter compared to 40 in all of last year. Staff have worked hard to notify customers of 75 potential leaks. Planning is underway for water main replacement projects.

Educational Outreach Manager Katie Shea reported that applications for the Pipeline Program were open and preparations for the summer were underway.

Mr. Theocles reported that he is working on cases in housing court and supporting procurement on an engineering on-call contract that is out to bid. The Department of Labor reviewed the Commission's safety and trench program and found it to be in good standing. Work is ongoing with IT to develop an online solution to streamline the engineering/permitting process for development.

The interviews for Commission counsel will be on March 20 at 9 AM. The next Board meeting will be on March 26 at 9 AM.

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

None considered.

Executive Session

AT 10:01 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER OTERO AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to enter into executive session to discuss a potential land acquisition on Julius Hall Road in Blandford. It was determined that discussion of such matters would have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Commission and that the Commission would not come back into public session.

16. Discussion of Land Acquisition on Julius Hall Road, Blandford: Report by Water Supply Manager.

Addressed in executive session.

Submitted By:



Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

Exhibits

January Financial Report FY26

2026 January Finance Director Report

Amendment 2026-11 (Trans from 130-0006, 004-0036, 080-0023, 080-0019 to 090-1000)

Amendment 2026-12 (Trans from 005-0077 to 005-0102)

Amendment 2026-13 (Incr 12B-0036)

WIFIA Quarterly Status Report Q4_2025

Agreement for Legal Services in Relation to Claims Made against or for the Commission

Executed Contracts Under Threshold Monthly Report 01-07-2026 to 02-12-2026

Cobble Mountain Reservoir levels

Acquisition Memo, Map A and two appraisal reports for land and easement (executive session)