



Established
1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

May 22, 2025

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on May 22, 2025, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Secretary for the Commission Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

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

Also Present
Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Services and Procurement
Norm Guz, Commission Counsel
Patrick Burns, Comptroller
Ryan Wingerter, Director of Field Service
Steve Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources
Rick Gomez, Director of IT
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations
Ashley Demarey, Deputy Director of Field Services

Participating Remotely
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations
Frank Zabaneh, Engineering Manager
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Kristen Monfette, Safety Manager
Nicole Boland, Customer Service Manager

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on April 17, 2025, 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 the minutes of the meeting held on April 17, 2025.

2. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on April 24, 2025, 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 the minutes of the meeting held on April 24, 2025, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

New Business

3. Consideration of Appeal by Owner of 38 Pennsylvania Ave: Report by Director of Legal Affairs.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported that the owner of 38 Pennsylvania Avenue is a disabled WWII Veteran who was committed to the VA hospital from February to April of this year. A toilet flapper malfunction while he was hospitalized resulted in an approximately \$1,800 bill. The Appeals Committee granted the owner a \$500 non-beneficial use agreement, which is the maximum the Appeals Committee can provide. The owner is requesting consideration by the Board for relief for the remainder of the bill. Chairman Rodriguez expressed respect for the military service of this customer and all Veterans.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the waiver of the remainder of the bill for non-beneficial usage from February to April 2025 for the owner of 38 Pennsylvania Ave.

4. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Patrick Burns reported a \$132.2 million cash balance at the end of April. This represents a negative \$4.2 million year-to-date cash flow balance.

A negative revenue variance of \$349,279 is projected, reflecting decrease in water/sewer usage from estimates. This shortfall will be absorbed by a \$1.9 million surplus on the expenditure side of the budget.

The O&M budget is projected to be 98% expended at year end, with \$1.9 million in unexpended O&M funds remaining.

There is a small deficit of \$135,110 in the Supplies and Materials line item, which will be covered by a proposed transfer from Purchase of Services line item.

The capital budget is projected to expend \$80.9 million, with \$59.5 million spent year to date. The main driver of spending is the construction of the new water treatment plant.

There was \$132.2 million in cash, of which \$28.2 million was restricted, representing 20% of overall cash.

There was a receivables balance of \$5.8 million, with \$1.9 million over 60 days old.

There was \$1 million in assets, and \$745 million in liabilities, including outstanding debt, pension, and OPEB liability.

5. Consideration of FY25 O&M Transfer of Funds – Amendment #2: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Burns reported on a projected shortfall in the budget for supplies related to service line materials, repair parts, paint, and other miscellaneous materials, and requested a transfer from a projected surplus on the biosolids line item.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve FY25 O&M Transfer of Funds – Amendment #2.

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

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$7.8 million, collections of \$8.9 million, for an accounts receivable balance of \$4.5 million.

There were 6,000 accounts with receivables over 60 days old, totaling \$1.9 million.

There were 128 credits issued in the amount of \$23,435.83.

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 \$23,435.83 as presented.

7. Consideration of Solutia Wastewater Contract Extension: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on an extension of the Solutia contract by 10 years to 2035. Limits in the contract reflect a reduction in average daily flows, TSS, and BOD, but otherwise includes the same terms as the current contract. Commission Counsel Norm Guz noted that the contract extension is advantageous for meeting with S&P Rating Agency this fall.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve the Solutia Wastewater Contract Extension.

8. Consideration of Longmeadow Water Contract Extension Seventh Amendment: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on an extension of the Longmeadow Water Contract for one additional year. The remaining discussion involves how to respond to emergencies when it comes to assets. Some of Longmeadow and the Commission's assets are within each others' municipal boundaries. Executive Director Josh Schimmel noted that all border accounts have been resolved.

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 7th amendment to the Longmeadow Water Contract as presented.

9. WIFIA Quarterly Report Q1 2025: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported on the WIFIA Program Quarterly Status Report for the first quarter of 2025. As of March 31st, \$290.3 million of the total WIFIA program has been expended, and of that approximately \$38.5 million is of the WIFIA loan.

Ms. Buttrick reported on the new Workforce Participation section for the West Parish WTP project in the quarterly update. The summary includes participation for this quarter, as well as overall project participation to date. To date, Walsh has made good progress towards meeting participation goals, and has completed numerous outreach efforts to raise awareness and participation for the project. Because the project is still in pre-demolition and pre-construction phases, some goals are tracking behind, however these are anticipated to improve as building demolition and construction work begins in late 2026. This will bring in more trades and more opportunity for apprenticeship work.

At West Parish for this quarter, Walsh continued work on the transmission main relocations that are necessary prior to beginning demolition activities. Walsh also began excavation work to prepare for demolition activities that are anticipated to begin in the next quarter.

Ms. Buttrick reported that work on the 42" transmission main and energy dissipation valve project continued, with foundation work completed and work on the walls begun. In addition, installation of new pipe sections and manhole sections began on the transmission main.

The West Parish Lagoon Cleaning contract was awarded in this quarter, and work is anticipated to begin in the next quarter.

Ms. Buttrick continued that work is ongoing on the grit project, with the basin walls and tops poured. The contractor has begun forming the inlet channels and connections to existing channels.

In the distribution and collection system, the Locust Street project has reached substantial completion, with change order and punch list work remaining for completion of the project.

For the Birnie Avenue project, the Riverside Road repair work began in this quarter, and completion of this work will be reflected in the next quarter. The work at Birnie Avenue is on track to begin in the fourth quarter of 2025.

Commissioner Otero asked which trades are tracking apprenticeships. Mr. Schimmel noted that many trades are not working on the West Parish project yet, and will not be for another year.

10. Consideration of Amendment #1 to Kleinfelder/Stantec Task Order 18 Under Contract R-21-01:
Report by Director of Engineering.

Ms. Buttrick reported that Amendment No. 1 to Task Order No. 18 with Kleinfelder Northeast, Inc. is for engineering support for the Locust Transfer and Flow Optimization Project construction phase services. The activities in this task order amendment include additional efforts necessary to provide engineering services through the projected completion period of August 2025, which is an additional 18 months beyond the original anticipated construction duration. The efforts include 4 additional project meetings, 4 additional construction meetings, additional pay requests, and additional work associated with additional repairs that were not originally included in the contract including associated onsite observation. The amendment value is \$166,167.71, for a total revised task order value of \$2,791,541.87.

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 execute Amendment No. 1 to Task Order 18 with Kleinfelder Northeast, Inc.

11. Consideration of Atty. Services Contracts with Atty. Leibel, Atty. Chadwell, Atty. Leiter, Atty. Dupere, and Murphy McCoubrey: Report by Commission Counsel.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz reported on contracts for various legal services. All contracts have the same cost limits, rates, and terms. Atty. Liebel provides legal services related to claims either brought by

or against the Commission and other matters involving litigation. Atty. Chadwell provides workers compensation legal services. Atty. Leiter provides legal services related to bid protests, contracts, public construction, and litigation related to the 42" transmission main. Atty. Dupere provides legal services related to labor and employee relations. Murphy McCoubrey provides general legal counsel.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve contracts for legal services with Attys. Chadwell, Leiter, Dupere, and Murphy McCoubrey, as presented.

12. Consideration of Professional Service Contract with Peter Karalekas: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a contract renewal for Peter Karalekas, who provides advisory services for water operations, including on sanitary surveys and feedback on the new water treatment plant.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve the professional service contract with Peter Karalekas.

13. Consideration of Authorization of the Commission to Borrow from the MA Clean Water Trust the sum of \$65,000,000 for the Replacement of the West Parish Water Treatment Plant Project: Report by Commission Counsel

Commission Counsel Norm Guz reported that the Clean Water Trust has been approved for a loan in the amount of \$65,000,000, and allowed to issue a BAN at 0% interest, for the new West Parish Water Treatment Plant. The loan term will be 20 years at 2% interest. Included in the \$65,000,000 is \$15,000,000, for which the Commission issued a BAN on March 11, 2025. The Clean Water Trust will return the March 11, 2025, note to make the obligation \$65,000,000.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

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 \$65,000,000 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.

15. Consideration and/or action on any other matters that may come before the Commission at this meeting. (Taken out of order.)

Atty. Guz reported on an easement agreement with a landowner of property off Granville Road in Granville. The property owner had brought a land court case against the Commission to retain the right to cross the transmission main per a 1928 deed that allowed crossing the transmission line at any location to access their parcel until an easement was determined by the two parties. The parcel ownership has since changed and the current owner wishes to build a dwelling unit on the other side of the transmission line. The agreement sets forth an easement to establish the location, requirements, and length/width of the easement, along with necessary insurance. Finalizing the agreement would avoid further litigation. The property owner wishes to file the agreement next week, which did not leave enough time for posting to the agenda.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if the property owner is satisfied with the conditions. Atty. Guz replied that both attorneys have signed off on the final agreement. Commissioner Otero asked if agreeing opened up the Commission to more requests. Atty. Guz replied that the Commission negotiates with landowners when it appears they have rights, but the Commission always maintains rights to make sure the pipeline is protected. The Commission will monitor any construction related to the easement, including protection of the Commission transmission line, as stated in the terms of the easement.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve the agreement with the landowner for an easement on Granville Road.

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

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir is at 94% capacity.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the WIFIA inspection was last Friday. The inspection included the aeration project, grit chamber, 42" pipeline, new West Parish Water Treatment Plant, and the Backwash Facility.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a grant award to look at alternative revenue possibilities from the state Department of Energy. There is also a \$200,000 line item added to the state budget to be used as seed money for an eventual environmental bond bill appropriation.

Mr. Schimmel reported the Infrastructure Renewal Charge was based on changes to the financing schedule. The Commission was very fortunate to receive \$65 million from the SRF in light of the proposed 90% reduction in SRF funding.

Mr. Schimmel reported on the Work for Water Collaborative for NEWWA. The Commission has been asked to become a charter member, along with Hartford MDC and Upper Blackstone. The Collaborative would create a clearing house for workforce development and job training for water. The suggested contribution is \$15,000 based on utility population served.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve a \$15,000 contribution to the Work for Water Collaborative.

Mr. Schimmel requested Board support for utilizing scholarship funds to assist scholarship recipients who have successfully completed the treatment and distribution courses in taking their licensure exams. The Board supported the request.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported on a contract for the North Branch Sewer Rehabilitation project in St. Michael's cemetery that arrived yesterday. Ms. Buttrick reported the project includes lining of approximately 3000 linear feet of 36 and 39-inch clay tile pipe starting at Wilbraham Road and passing through Saint Michaels Cemetery. Two bids were received at \$2,370,244 and 2,435,168, with National Water Main Cleaning Company as the apparent low bidder. The engineer's estimate was \$3,715,970 for the work.

Ms. Buttrick continued that consulting engineer Kleinfelder determined that National Water Main is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, and determined that the bids, while approximately 30% lower than the engineer's estimate, were within reason with no mathematical errors or other significant issues. Overall, Kleinfelder recommends award of the Contract pending receipt of acceptable bonds and insurance certificates. Construction is anticipated to begin in the summer, and completion of the project by the spring of 2026.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the execution of Contract No. 20250069 with National Water Main Cleaning Company, pending receipt of acceptable bonds and insurance.

Ms. Buttrick reported on Task Order No. 57 with Kleinfelder Northeast for construction phase engineering services for the North Branch Sewer Interceptor Rehabilitation Project. The activities in this task order include construction administration, full time construction observation, and closeout activities. The task order value is \$384,248.00.

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 execute Task Order No. 57 with Kleinfelder.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that the rapid sand filters are running smoothly. Water production is at lower levels due to rain. Operations staff are supporting the water treatment plant construction and dredging project.

Ms. Buttrick reported that tie-in work is going well at the water plant. The final tie-in will be complete in early June, followed by commencement of demolition. Work on the chamber structure in the 42" is continuing, with interior work on the pipeline to begin soon. Residuals will be removed from the lagoons next week. Work on the pipeline in Riverside Road was completed, and the Birnie Avenue project will start this fall. The sewer rehabilitation work in St. Michael's Cemetery will start this summer, with completion early next year. Bidding documents are going out for the Cobble Mountain Hydroplant project.

Mr. Schimmel noted that the Riverside Road project will cost more money in the future, as loss of material under the road is continuing. There are concerns about movement of the flood wall, and it will need to be proven that it is not due to the Commission's infrastructure, which is the deepest. Mr. Schimmel reported that USACE is requiring monitoring for longer due to the perceived movement. But equipment has been vandalized, which might be the reason the wall is showing movement. The Commission will monitor the wall differently due to the vandalization. Commissioner Otero asked who else is monitoring the wall. Mr. Schimmel responded the Commission is coordinating with the City. Commissioner Otero expressed concern that if the Commission is solely responsible for monitoring, it may be held responsible for any detection of movement of the wall.

Deputy Director of Field Services Ashley Demarey reported an upcoming 5-year IPP audit with EPA, which will take place over 2-3 days. Service replacements due to leak detections are ongoing.

Director of Human Resources Jen Boulais reported on preparations for summer workers and Pipeline Program interns.

Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that electrical components for the electrical upgrades at the wastewater plant are being certified to accept electricity. There have also been several tours of the plant in recent weeks.

Director of IT Rick Gomez reported on ongoing network and server redundancy work, and weekly drone flights. The new business intelligence unit remains popular with requests for dashboards and data analytics.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on managing working capital for projects and the closing of the fiscal year.

Mr. Burns reported preparations for the budget presentation, closing of the fiscal year, and upcoming audit.

Mr. Theocles reported on the upcoming WIFIA inspection and Davis Bacon audit, and on managing legal issues with various projects.

Educational Outreach Manager Katie Shea reported there were 100 applicants for the Pipeline Program, with 35 interviews conducted. Applicants were from 8 different high schools in Springfield. The first day of the Pipeline Program is June 30. The SPS Family Expo in early June closes out this school year's school-based outreach.

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

The next Board meeting will be on June 18, 2025, at 9 AM.

After an announced 5-minute break, the Board reconvened at 3:03 PM with all three Board members, Atty. Guz, and Mr. Schimmel present.

Mr. Schimmel reported he is seeking clarification of next steps after completion of his self-assessment, and how goals for next year will be discussed and approved.

Atty. Guz responded that the next step would be an evaluation of the Executive Director as an agenda item to discuss the self-evaluation and address questions related to professional competence and goals. If there were to be topics of discussion related to reputation, character, or mental health they would need to be discussed in an executive session.

There was a discussion regarding the Boards review of the self-assessment. It was agreed that assessment will be discussed by the Board in open session, voted upon by the Board, and signed off by the Chairperson pursuant to the Contract.

Commissioner Otero asked if the assessment was about overall work performance or reaching goals. Atty. Guz responded the self-assessment was about how goals were reached, and the Board is to evaluate whether it agrees and to determine goals for next year. Commissioner Otero noted the distinction between accomplishing regular job duties and goals.

Mr. Schimmel requested that in the future pushing the goals and self assessment to January each year instead of the end of the fiscal year may make more sense due to the work related to the budgeting process. Atty. Guz responded that such a request would have to be a written request submitted to the Board for review. Mr. Schimmel noted that any salary adjustment would need to be considered based on the timing of the review, and the Fiscal Year budgeting process.

Chairman Rodriguez responded that goals should be presented and the Board would vote to approve them. Attorney Guz noted that this would be in open session as well. Commissioner Otero clarified that

goals should be about leadership and steering the organization, not organizational maintenance. Mr. Schimmel responded he would send goals by June 1, and it was further agreed that the self-assessment, goals, and any salary adjustments would be considered and addressed in a future Board Meeting.

**AT 3:28 PM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN AND
SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OTERO**

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN: to adjourn.

Submitted By:

Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

Exhibits:

April 2025 Financial Report

2025 April Finance Director Report

Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels

Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel

FY25 O&M Budget Amendment #2

Kleinfelder Task Order 57

Appeal Letter from Owner of 38 Pennsylvania Ave.

Minutes of April 17 and April 24, 2025 Board meetings

WIFIA Quarterly Update

Contract No. 20250069 with National Water Main Cleaning Company

Professional Service Contract with Peter Karalekas

Legal Service Contracts with Atty. Leiter, Atty. Liebel, Atty. Dupere, and Murphy McCoubrey

Amendment No. 1 to Task Order 18 with Kleinfelder Northeast, Inc.

Solutia Contract Extension

7th Amendment to Longmeadow Water Contract