



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

June 13, 2024

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

Chairwoman Otero called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM. and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Acting Secretary for the Commission Katie Shea called the attendance roll:

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

Also Present

Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Anthony Basile, Comptroller
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Services
Steve Fredrick, Director of Wastewater Operations
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager/Acting Secretary to the Commission

Also Participating Remotely

Norm Guz, Commission Counsel
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations
Ashley Demarey, Field Services Manager
Rick Gomez, Director of IT
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance
Frank Zabaneh, Engineering Manager
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager
Ryan Wingerter, Deputy Director of Field Services
Nicole Sanford, Water Resources Manager
Nicole Boland, Collections Manager
Sara Tetrault, Procurement Specialist/ Payroll Specialist

Business Matters

(non-agenda item)

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

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

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

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 16, 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 RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve minutes of the meeting held on May 16, 2024.

2. Approve the minutes of the executive session on May 16, 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 RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve minutes of the executive session held on May 16, 2024.

3. Approve the minutes of the executive session on May 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 RODRIGUEZ

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve minutes of the executive session held on May 21, 2024.

New Business

4. Certification for Fiscal Year 2025: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported on the certification for Fiscal Year 2025 and has determined there will be sufficient funds for the general bond resolution.

5. Consideration of Proposed Revisions to the Commission Rules and Regulations Chapters 1-4: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on proposed changes to the Commission Rules and Regulations Chapters 1-4 which were shared with the Board in April.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY25 Commission Rules and Regulations as presented.

6. Consideration of Proposed Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on proposed revisions to Chapter 5 (Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges) which were shared with the Board in April and reviewed during the Commission's Annual Budget Hearing in May. The revisions include an 8.5% increase of water rates; a 4.5% increase in sewer rates; an increase in the monthly service charge including an increase to \$3.42 for 1/2 and 5/8 meters, and a proportional increase for larger meters; an increase of the non-beneficial use allowance by 6.3%; an increase of the allowable discounts for senior, disabled, and disabled veteran homeowners to \$9.00 per month.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY25 Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges as presented.

7. Consideration of Proposed FY25 Capital Improvement Program Budget and Three-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2025-2027: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on the proposed 3-year Capital Improvement Plan including the 1-year capital budget of \$12.4 million for FY25.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the 3-year CIP as presented.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY25 capital budget as presented.

8. Consideration of the Proposed FY25 O&M Budget: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Tony Basile reported on the proposed FY25 O&M budget of \$99,017,543. This budget includes necessary funding to provide water and sewer services to customers.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY25 O&M budget as presented.

9. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Basile reported an ending cash balance of \$126.6 million which is an \$8.4 million cumulative increase.

There was \$97.1 million in total revenues, and the revenue budget through the end of FY24 is projected at \$105.6 million which is a \$427,180 variance. The FY24 operating budget is projected to be spent out at 97%.

There has been \$65.3 million in capital spending in FY24. The primary projects are the water treatment plant, the backwash facility project, and the ICIs at the wastewater treatment plant.

Commissioner Rodriguez commented on the hard work required by staff to put together and manage the capital budget, noting that the Commission has expanded the capital program over the years to fund necessary projects to continue to reliably serve our customers.

There is a \$126.6 million cash balance. Of that, \$26 million is unrestricted.

There was \$6.3 million in total receivables, and \$1.7 million in balances over 60 days.

There was \$990 million in total assets, and \$712 million in total liabilities.

10. Consideration of FY24 O&M Budget Amendment # 4: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Basile reported that this transfer request is to move funds from the Personal Service account to the OPEB trust account. This contribution to the OPEB trust account is an addition to the previously allocated \$500,000 annual contribution.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve Budget Amendment #4 as presented.

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

Mr. Pellegrino reported there was \$7.8 million in net billings, and \$7.09 million in payments, for a balance of \$5.3 million.

There were 5,489 accounts over 60 days for a total of \$1.7 million. There were 86 credits issued in the amount of \$12,939.02.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve credits in the amount of \$12,939.02 as presented.

12. Consideration of East Longmeadow Water Contract Amendment: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on the Water Contract Amendment with the Town of East Longmeadow. The agreement is a five-year contract that will extend to 2029 and includes updates to section 201D.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the East Longmeadow Water Contract Amendment as presented.

13. Consideration of AECOM Task Order No. 21-01_AECOM_23 for Construction Phase Support Services for the 42-inch Raw Water Pipeline Rehabilitation and EDV Chamber: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported on a task order with AECOM for construction phase engineering services for the 42-inch Raw Water Pipeline Rehabilitation and EDV Chamber project. The task order includes administration, observation, coordination, permit oversight, and project close out. The cost is \$3.9 million.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to authorize the Executive Director to execute Task Order No. 21-01_AECOM_23 as presented.

14. Consideration of SWSC Contract No. 20240076, COS Paving Alternate No. 1: Report by Director of Legal Services/CPO.

Director of Legal Affairs and Chief Procurement Officer Attorney Theo Theocles reported that this paving contract is a bid-alternate as part of the City of Springfield's annual roadway paving contract. The contract is with Palmer Paving for \$565,207.00 and will support roadway paving for some water and sewer pipe repair projects.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:

to approve SWSC Contract No. 20240076 as presented.

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

Executive Director Josh Schimmel reported on contracts signed in the previous month.

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir is approximately 95% full.

Mr. Schimmel reported that Commission staff would be presenting at the Springfield City Council Health and Human Services Sub-committee meeting later in the evening. Agenda items for the meeting include disinfection byproducts, water/sewer rates, and an update on construction of the new West Parish Water Treatment plant.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Commission has been working on the water contract for the Town of Longmeadow.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Commission is hosting an Apprenticeship Fair on June 27th that will include representatives from various trades and construction groups to highlight the many rewarding career and apprenticeship opportunities arising from construction of the new West Parish Water Treatment Plant. The fair will be held at the UMass Center at Springfield, located in Tower Square. The Commission is currently working on outreach and promotion of the event.

Chairwomen Otero commented that she has reached out to community members regarding the Apprenticeship Fair and response is positive.

Director of Human Resources Jennifer Boulais provided an update on the Comptroller search process. The search committee is comprised of a pre-screening subcommittee including Jennifer, current Comptroller Tony Basile, and Commissioner Donnellan as the Board's representative. The committee has established a screening process based on the job requirements. The subcommittee will review applicants and those that meet the job requirements as outlined will advance to a virtual interview; from the virtual interview candidates will be selected for an in-person interview with the committee; at the end of the process the final group of candidates will be presented to the Board. The Board can determine how to best move forward and the process for final in-person interviews with the Board.

Chairwoman Otero asked if the Board will be updated on the application and candidate screening process including the names of all applicants, and list of advancement to each round in the screening process.

Ms. Boulais responded that the search committee will provide updates to the Board throughout the process. The updates will include the list of candidates. The list of candidates provided to the Board will not be made public; only the final candidates that interview with the full Board will be public.

Commission Counsel Attorney Norm Guz asked if as part of the process the Board would like to request the search committee to narrow the pool down to a certain number of candidates.

Chairwoman Otero, Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Donnellan agreed that at this time final interviews will be based on qualified candidates and the search process; it may be decided later to narrow the field to a specific number for final interviews.

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

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the search process for Comptroller as presented with the addendum that the Board will be presented with the list of applicants for each step in the search process.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 10 at 1:30 PM.

AT 10:45 AM UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN

VOTED YES –

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to enter into executive session to discuss litigation strategy related to Wayne J. Griffin Electric, Inc. et. al. v Springfield Water and Sewer Commission and to also discuss the St. Michael's Cemetery Sewer Easement. It was determined that public session would have a detrimental effect on the Commission's position in the litigation. It was announced that public session will not resume at the end of executive session.

Submitted By:

Katie Shea, Acting Secretary

Exhibits considered:

May 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2024 Executive Session Minutes
May 21, 2024 Executive Session Minutes
Finance Director Funding Letter
DRAFT FY2025 Rules and Regulations Chapters 1-4
DRAFT FY2025 Rules and Regulations Chapter 5
Proposed FY25 CIP Budget and Three-Year CIP FY25-27
Proposed FY25 O&M Budget
Monthly Financial Report
O&M Amendment #4
2024 May Finance Director Report
East Longmeadow Water Contract Amendment
AECOM Task Order No. 21-01_AECOM_23
SWSC Contract No. 20240076
Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel
Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity