



*Established*  
*1996*

## **SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION**

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### **Minutes of Meeting**

**June 18, 2025**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on June 18, 2025, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM 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  
Jennifer Boulais, Director of Human Resources  
Ashley Demarey, Deputy Director of Field Services  
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance  
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering  
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations  
Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager/Secretary of the Commission

Participating Remotely  
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach Manager  
Steve Frederick, Director of Wastewater Operations  
Frank Zabaneh, Engineering Manager  
Kristen Monfette, Safety Manager  
Nicole Boland, Customer Service Manager  
Mike Olkin, Deputy Director of IT

### **Business Matters**

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 22, 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  
May 22, 2025.

**New Business**

2. Certification for Fiscal Year 2026: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported that he has reviewed the proposed Operating and Capital Projects budgets and the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, Charges, and Penalties as set forth in Chapter 5 of the Rules and Regulations for Fiscal Year 2026. Barring any significant amendment to these proposals, or any unanticipated events, there should be sufficient funds to satisfy the requirements of subsections 603(1) and 603(2) of the General Bond Resolution of the Commission.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the Certification for Fiscal Year  
2026.

3. Consideration of Proposed Revisions to the FY26 Commission Rules and Regulations Chapters 1-4: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that the proposed changes to the FY26 Rules and Regulations were discussed in April's Board meeting as well as presented at the June 4 public hearing for the FY 2026 budget and requested to approve the FY 2026 Rules and Regulations if there were no further questions or discussion.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY26 Rules and Regulations as  
presented.

4. Consideration of Proposed FY26 Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on the proposed FY26 Chapter 5 Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges that was discussed at prior Board meetings and presented to the public at a public hearing on June 4 and requested to approve the FY 2026 Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges if there were no further questions or discussion.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY26 Schedule of Fees, Rates and Charges, as presented.

5. Consideration of Proposed FY26 Capital Improvement Program Budget and Three-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2028: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on the one-year and three-year CIP for FY26-FY28, which was discussed at prior Board meetings and presented to the public at a public hearing on June 4 and requested to approve the FY 2026 Capital Improvement Program Budget and Three-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2028 if there were no further questions or discussion.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY26 one-year CIP and the three-year CIP for FY26-FY28.

6. Consideration of the Proposed FY26 O&M Budget: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Patrick Burns reported on the proposed FY26 budget, which provides the necessary funding to provide water and sewer services.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the FY26 O&M budget as presented.

7. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Burns presented the May financial report. There was an ending cash balance of \$139,248,780, resulting in a year-to-date positive cash flow of \$2.8 million.

There was a slight negative variance of \$50,442, reflecting a decrease in expected water/sewer usage. This variance will be absorbed by a surplus on the expenditure side.

The operating budget is projected to be 98% spent, with a balance of \$2,058,546 at the end of the fiscal year.

In the capital budget, \$66.9 million has been expended, with an expected expenditure of \$78.2 million. Construction at the water treatment plant is the main driver of capital expenditures.

There was \$139.2 million in cash, of which \$35 million was unrestricted, representing 25% of overall cash.

There was \$5.7 million in receivables, of which \$2.2 million was over 60 days old.

There was \$1.1 billion in assets, and \$796 million in liabilities, which include debt, pension and OPEB.

8. FY2025 O&M Transfer of Funds – Amendment #3: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Burns reported on a proposed transfer from unexpended funds in the biosolids account to fund OPEB liability. The net OPEB liability is \$22.3 million, and the OPEB trust has a \$8.3 million balance. This transfer will result in funding over 30% of the OPEB liability, which is important for rating agencies.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked what the OPEB funding target is. Mr. Burns responded that the pension liability must be funded by 2040 per state law. The strategy is to pay as much OPEB liability as possible before it becomes a mandate. The current target is \$500,000 per year, which is equal to the amount paid annually to the City of Springfield for Health Insurance coverage of current Water & Sewer Retirees.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz noted there is no legal requirement for this amount, but it projects stability to S&P. Mr. Schimmel asked if there is a recommended funding percentage. Atty. Guz responded that it is easier for smaller communities to pay it off, but the Commission is doing well for its size. The City is 2% funded. Mr. Burns added that there may be a requirement to fund the OPEB liability in the future,

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve FY2025 O&M Transfer of Funds –  
Amendment #3 as presented.

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

Mr. Pellegrino reported net billings of \$8.6 million, collections of \$8.6 million, for an accounts receivable balance of \$4.6 million.

There was 5,535 accounts with receivables over 60 days old, totaling \$1.6 million.

There were 96 credits issued totaling \$36,557.93.

Commission Rodriguez noted that almost half the credits issued were for the Customer Assistance Program.

**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 as presented.

10. Consideration of the 54th Supplemental Resolution for the financing of the Replacement of the West Parish Water Treatment Plant with the MA Clean Water Trust: Report by Commission Counsel.

Atty. Guz reported that the Commission received an additional commitment from the Clean Water Trust in the amount of \$65 million. Of that, \$15 million is a note issued in February. Once the \$65 million loan is closed, the \$15 million will be canceled out. The \$15 million is spent or almost spent.

The BAN note of \$65 million will be issued at 0% interest until permanent financing is closed at 2% interest.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the 54<sup>th</sup> Supplemental Resolution as presented.

11. Consideration of FY26 Construction Phase OPM Support Services for the West Parish Water Treatment Plant: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported on Task Order No. 58 with Kleinfelder for FY26 construction phase OPM support services for the West Parish Water Treatment Plant. The activities in this task order include support services to assist with various internal administrative, tracking, and coordination tasks, as well as full-time on-site owner's project manager services related to the West Parish Water Treatment Plant project. The task order value is \$964,230.

**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. 58 with Kleinfelder Northeast, Inc.

12. Consideration of Legal Services Agreement for FERC/Power Plant - Van Ness Feldman: Report by Director of Legal Affairs.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported on an engagement agreement with a law firm for FERC jurisdictional issues. These legal advisors will help answer questions pertaining to maintaining FERC exemption while the hydropower station is rehabilitated.

**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 the legal services agreement with Van Ness Feldman as presented.

13. Consideration of Grant Acceptance for META (Municipal Energy Technical Assistance): Report by Executive Director.

Asset & Maintenance Manager Patrick Karalekas reported on a potential municipal energy technical assistance grant awarded to the Commission by DOER that would support a technical study of solar and battery energy storage on Bondi's Island. The grant is a \$12,000 reimbursable grant. Weston & Sampson would conduct the study.

**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 accept and execute the DOER grant.

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

Mr. Burns reported on activities to close out the fiscal year.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported that auditors will start work in the middle of August. Customers at risk of shutoff for non-payment will now start receiving a notification email three days in advance.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported that he is assisting Engineering and Procurement staff on legal issues related to several projects.

Commissioner Otero asked why bidders and suppliers were not incorporating price increases into their bids. Mr. Schimmel responded that supply prices are volatile. Ms. Buttrick added that past bids are usually used to make estimates, but some projects have materials such as steel that are subject to volatile tariffs.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on CIP amendment 2025-11, which requests \$248,189.80 from the CIP reserve to meet the bids received for bridge repairs in the watershed.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve CIP amendment 2025-11.

Ms. Buttrick reported that on May 20th, the Commission received bids for the Borden Brook Reservoir Spillway and Sugar Creek Bridge Repairs project. The project includes site controls and water controls, concrete repairs to both bridges, and miscellaneous associated roadway improvements. Three bids were received ranging from \$654,950 to \$1,172,000. The engineer's estimate was \$540,000 not including contingency.

Our consulting engineer Tighe & Bond determined that the low-bidder's bid was non-responsive as the bidder did not demonstrate sufficient experience. The second lowest bid of \$927,983 was then reviewed, and it was determined that R. H. White Construction is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder. While the bid was approximately 70% higher than the engineer's estimate, they believe this is due to the complexities associated with the project as well as uncertainties and market fluctuations associated with material pricing. Tighe & Bond recommended 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 end of this year.

**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. 20250074 with R. H. White Construction, pending receipt of acceptable bonds and insurance.

Ms. Buttrick reported that on June 10th, the Commission received bids for the Provin Mountain Reservoir Water Quality Monitoring Station Project. The project includes construction of a masonry building to house analyzers, analyzer discharge recycle system, and associated site/civil, electrical, and HVAC work, and the construction of three instrumentation vaults to install flow meters on the three existing water transmission mains. Two bids were received at \$2,096,714.85 and \$2,292,550. The engineer's estimate was \$1,954,000, not including contingency. Consulting engineer Tighe & Bond determined that Associated Construction Company is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder, pending receipt of acceptable bonds and insurance certificates. Construction will begin in the fall with completion in approximately one year.

**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 Contract No. 20250076 with The Associated Construction Company, pending receipt of acceptable bonds and insurance

Ms. Buttrick reported that at West Parish Filters, installing tie-ins continues and abatement work has begun in preparation for demolition of existing structures. Work continues on the 42" transmission main project, with EDV chamber walls and interior piping under construction. Ms. Buttrick reported that she had received notification from the general contractor that there will be a tariff charge on the energy dissipation valves that are set to ship this month.

Atty. Guz asked whether a change order is allowed for tariff costs. Mr. Theocles responded that it would have to be documented as an unanticipated cost with justification. For projects funded by WIFIA/SRF, American steel is required, so increased competition is driving up prices, not tariffs. Commissioner Otero asked if more change orders should be anticipated due to cost variability. Mr. Schimmel responded yes, though the West Parish WTP project will remain on schedule.

Ms. Buttrick continued that residuals removal has begun in the lagoons and will continue into August. At the Locust Street project, work related to a change order continues along with restoration and weather-dependent testing. Work on Birnie Avenue will begin in the fall. There are continued issues with settlement on Riverside Drive that requires continued coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City.

Mr. Schimmel noted that work was behind schedule on the tie-ins, which could create water production issues during hot weather since the slow sand filters are offline. Staff are meeting to prepare. Commissioner Donnellan asked about the reason for the delay of the tie-in work. Ms. Buttrick replied that old records were inaccurate. In addition, rain has necessitated dewatering of trenches and removal of silt.

Deputy Director of Water Operations Christina Jones reported that water demands are historically low, and water quality is improved because rain has been steadier and slower, limiting the amount of dissolved organics in the water. Cobble Mountain Reservoir is at 97% capacity. Flow meters are being installed in the transmission mains at the Connecticut River crossings.

Director of Human Resources Jennifer Boulais reported that onboarding of the Pipeline interns is ongoing, and communications with applicants and new employees is a current focus.

Director of Field Services Ryan Wingerter reported that water main is being replaced in Ludlow and there has been an uptick in sewer main collapses. Customer service is also focused on proactive outreach to customers about potential leaks.

Deputy Director of IT Mike Olkin reported that the Business Intelligence unit is working on resolving some metering issues with Field Services and has coordinated with Customer Service to implement the email notification about shutoffs.

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

The next Board meeting will be on July 16, 2025, at 1 PM.



**AT 10:17 AM, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN AND  
SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to enter into Executive Session to discuss a  
workers compensation claim for Mr. Daniel  
DiRienzo. It was announced that open session  
will not resume after Executive Session.

Submitted By:



Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

Exhibits:

May 2025 Financial Report

2025 May Finance Director Report

Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels

Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel

Proposed FY26 O&M Budget

FY25 O&M Transfer of Funds Amendment #3

KLF TO No. 58 – FY26 Construction Phase OPM Services for West Parish WTP

54<sup>th</sup> Supplemental Resolution

Legal Services Agreement with Van Ness Feldman

Contract No. 20250076 with The Associated Construction Company

Contract with R.H. White (bid #25-21)

CIP Amendment 2025-11

META Grant Agreement