



*Established*  
*1996*

## SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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### Minutes of Meeting

**July 16, 2025**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a public meeting on July 16, 2025, in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Acting Secretary for the Commission Katie Shea called the attendance roll:

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

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

Participating Remotely  
Ryan Wingerter, Director of Field Service  
Raemarie Walker, Deputy Director of Finance  
Frank Zabaneh, Engineering Manager  
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 July 16, 2025.

**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 July 16, 2025.

1. Consideration of Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for FY26: Report by Commission Counsel.

Commissioner Rodriguez recommended Commissioner Otero as Chair for FY26.

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN  
COMMISSIONER OTERO:**

to appoint Commissioner Otero as Chair for FY26.

Commissioner Otero recommended Commissioner Donnellan as Vice-Chair for FY26.

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to appoint Commissioner Donnellan as Vice-Chair for FY 26.

2. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on June 18, 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 RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on June 18, 2025.

3. Approve the executive session minutes of the meeting held on June 18, 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 RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the executive session minutes of the meeting held on June 18, 2025.

**New Business**

4. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Patrick Burns reported on the June 2025 financial report. There was an ending cash balance of \$141 million, with an approximate \$4.5 million positive cash flow.

There was a positive revenue variance of \$139,000.00 reflecting bank interest and small grants. Retail water and sewer had a negative variance.

The operating budget was spent at 96%. Budget surplus drivers included personnel service, workers comp, health insurance, electricity, natural gas, biosolids, wastewater contract, insurance proceeds, and debt interest.

There was \$77.3 million in capital spending in FY25.

Mr. Burns reported that there was \$141 million in total cash, \$36.8 million of which was unrestricted, representing approximately 26% of overall cash, with 74% in restricted cash.

There was \$7.1 million in receivables of which approximately \$2.2 million was over 60 days old at end of June.

There was over \$1.1 billion in assets and \$796 million in liabilities at end of FY25, including outstanding debt, pension, and OPEB liabilities.

5. Comptroller's Report FY25: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Burns provided the Comptroller's Report for FY25 and reported that transaction testing including inventory, payroll, disbursements, procurement, and fuel management, was completed on July 7, 2025, with no findings.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that the report should include a conclusion or summary to state that there were no findings.

The Comptroller's Report for FY25 will be amended to include that there were no findings at the conclusion of the report.

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

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$8.5 million, collections of \$7.1 million, with a resulting accounts receivable balance of \$6 million.

There were under 5,200 accounts with receivables over 60 days, for a total of \$1.5 million.

There were 67 credits issued totaling \$19,196.61.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz asked if the Customer Service Department has been receiving inquiries regarding the Infrastructure Renewal Charge (IRC) that was approved in June for FY26 and first included on customer bills in July.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that the Customer Service Department has received some inquiries and has been responding accordingly.

Executive Director Josh Schimmel stated that Commission prepared in advance of the new IRC to provide Customer Service staff with resources and training to address IRC inquiries and help customers understand the new billing structure. Additionally, the Commission reached out to customers in advance with a bill stuffer in July bills, an email to e-billing customers, and created a dedicated webpage with more information.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve credits in the amount of \$19,196.61 as presented.

**7. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2026-01: Report by Director of Finance.**

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a transfer of \$166,673.14 from the Provin Mountain Tanks 3 and 4 Improvements Project, which has been completed, to the Transmission System Rehab Project. The Transmission System Rehab Project includes completion of the service line removal project on the transmission main from West Parish Filters to Provin Mountain and work related to the Riverside Road project.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2026-01.

**8. Consideration of Appeal by 1023 Parker Street: Report by Director of Legal Services.**

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported on an appeal from St. Catherine of Siena Parish located at 1023 Parker Street, Springfield. There was a broken pipe and subsequent water leak in the property's buried meter pit. The Appeals Committee reviewed their appeal and approved the removal of a portion of the sewer charges after review and in recognition that the water did not enter the sewer collection system for treatment.

Due to the Commission's Rules and Regulations, the Appeals Committee did not have any other authority to grant an abatement or waive any further fees. This property is classified as a commercial property, and per the Rules and Regulations, the non-beneficial use allowance is for residential properties only.

St. Catherine of Siena Parish submitted in writing their request to the Board to provide a one-time allowance for a \$500 non-beneficial use abatement to the commercial property as the large bill was a financial hardship for the parish.

Commissioner Otero asked for clarification on the property classifications.

Atty. Theocles stated that properties up to three-family units are classified as residential. The church is classified as a commercial property and there is no designation on accounts for non-profit status. Per the Rules and Regulations, to receive a non-beneficial use allowance, the property must be a residential dwelling with no more than three units.

No motion was taken.

9. Consideration of General Consulting Agreement with Tony Basile: Report by Director of Legal Affairs.

Atty. Theocles reported on a consultant agreement with Tony Basile due to his experience with municipal finance. Under the agreement, which includes a dollar amount/hours cap for the term, Mr. Basile will provide support to the Commission on annual financial reporting, financial planning, and related work.

**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 the General Consulting Agreement with Tony Basile as presented.

10. Consideration of Engagement Agreement - Pierce Atwood (Battery Projects): Report by Director of Legal Affairs.

Atty. Theocles reported on an Engagement Agreement with the firm Pierce Atwood for legal assistance related to solar power, power plant, storage, and related energy projects.

Mr. Schimmel stated that working with experienced energy-sector professionals is important in advancing the rehabilitation at the hydrostation, as well as other projects, to provide the highest benefit to the Commission.

Atty. Guz added that attorneys at Pierce Atwood are very knowledgeable and experienced in the energy sector and will be a benefit to the Commission.

**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 the one-year Engagement Agreement with Pierce Atwood LLP as presented, not to exceed \$50,000.

11. Consideration of award of SWSC Contract No. 20260011-COS Paving Alternate: Report by Director of Legal Affairs.

Atty. Theocles reported on a contract for \$398,150.00 with the City of Springfield for various water and sewer work such as manhole covers related to street paving as part of the City's 2025 Pavement and Sidewalk Improvements.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to award SWSC Contract No. 20260011-COS Paving Alternate as presented.

12. Consideration of Amendment No. 2 to KLF/Stantec Task Order 50: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported on an Amendment to Task Order 50 with Kleinfelder and Stantec for engineering support for Riverside Road. Support services will include coordination with Army Corps of Engineers, monitoring reports, and onsite observation due to unanticipated changes in conditions at the site, including sink holes. The Amendment value is \$110,169.92.

Commissioner Otero asked for more information regarding the situation on Riverside Road.

Mr. Schimmel stated that the ongoing issues at Riverside Road are not resolved, and the Commission is working with the City of Springfield DPW and the Army Corps on assessment and planning.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked about financial commitments for the project from the Commission and the other parties involved.

Mr. Schimmel stated that the Commission has funded some engineering services as well as construction for a critical repair to a water main on Riverside Road, which was recently completed. The planning and assessment for future repairs of the area include assessing costs and financial responsibilities for the various parties.

**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 Amendment No. 2 to KLF/Stantec Task Order 50 as presented.

13. Consideration of Award of SWSC Bid No. 25-65 FY 25 Sewer Improvements: Report by Director of Engineering.

Ms. Buttrick reported that the Commission received bids on July 9, 2025, for the FY25 Sewer Improvements Project. Baltazar Contractors Inc. was determined to be the lowest responsible bidder and recommended the award of the contract to Baltazar pending receipt of acceptable bonds and insurance. The contract value is \$2,494,196.

Commissioner Otero asked which neighborhoods the sewer improvements would be taking place and notification procedures for impacted residents.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the repairs will take place in various locations around the city. The Commission will follow its typical construction project outreach including notifying impacted residents and outreach to the specific neighborhood councils.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to award SWSC Bid No. 25-65 FY 25 Sewer Improvements to Baltazar Contractors Inc., as presented.

14. Consideration of Wright Pierce Task Order No. 26 Construction Phase Services for FY25 Sewer Improvements: Report by Director of Engineering.

Ms. Buttrick reported on Task Order No. 26 with Wright-Pierce to provide construction phase support services for the FY25 Sewer Improvements Project. The Task Order value is \$259,598.

**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 Wright Pierce Task Order No. 26 Construction Phase Services for FY25 Sewer Improvements as presented.

15. Consideration of Award of SWSC Bid No. 25-48 JJS OPS Center - Colton Street Generator: Report by Director of Engineering.

Ms. Buttrick reported that the Commission received bids on June 18, 2025, for the Joseph J. Superneau Operations Center Emergency Stand-By Power Generator Project. Systems Electrical Services, Inc. was determined the lowest and responsible bidder, pending receipt of bonds and insurance, in the amount of \$409,560.00.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ**

**COMMISSIONER OTERO**

**COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to award SWSC Bid No. 25-48 JJS OPS Center - Colton Street Generator to Systems Electrical Services, Inc. as presented.

16. Consideration of Tighe & Bond Task Order No. 29 Construction Phase Services for Provin Water Quality Monitoring: Report by Director of Engineering.

Engineering Manager Frank Zabaneh reported on Tighe & Bond Task Order No. 29 for construction phase engineering services, including administration, observation, and close out activities for the Provin Water Quality Monitoring project. The Task Order value is \$418,933.

Mr. Schimmel stated that this project is related to compliance including the construction of the CT building for water quality monitoring at Provin Mountain.

**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 Tighe & Bond Task Order No. 29 Construction Phase Services for the Provin Water Quality Monitoring Project as presented.

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



Mr. Schimmel reported on contracts signed by the Executive Director in the previous month. Attorney contracts included on the list were voted on and approved by the Board.

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir capacity is doing well and normal for this time of year.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the Commission will be hosting a legislative breakfast on July 29 to meet with state legislators. As part of the meeting the Commission will provide an update on capital projects and community outreach and discuss the potential for a line item in the Environmental Bond Bill. Projects that may be considered include the rehabilitation of the Cobble Mountain Hydropower Station. Mr. Schimmel added that the Commission was successful in securing a \$200,000 line item in the approved state budget for design and planning at the hydropower station.

Mr. Schimmel stated that currently the hydropower station is shedding which comes at a cost to the Commission.

Atty. Guz asked if shedding at the hydropower station was anticipated for the rest of the year and if there are any budget impacts.

Mr. Schimmel stated that it was expected that there would be more shedding throughout the remainder of the year. From an operational standpoint the Commission cannot have the hydropower station in disrepair while the 42-inch pipe is under construction.

Mr. Pellegrino responded that the Commission looks at reports of estimated revenues and current projections at the hydropower station.

Mr. Schimmel reported on House Bill 2330, presented by Representative Saunders, to restructure the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission. A hearing on the bill will be held next week and the Commission is preparing written testimony and has also spoken with Mayor Sarno.

Commissioner Otero asked if there had been any communication with members of the Western Mass delegation regarding the bill.

Mr. Schimmel stated that there will be outreach, including an opportunity for discussion at the legislative breakfast.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a recent article on Woonsocket, Rhode Island's water revenue bonds being downgraded. The article points out that the willingness to raise rates to meet operational needs is important to ratings agencies.

Atty. Guz stated that in addition to the willingness to raise rates, the rating agencies also look at planning for the future, economics of the region, median income, population, and various types of industries.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that the Commission will be meeting with S&P soon regarding the bond rating. The last bond rating was in 2019. A bond sale is also expected sometime next year.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that the finance team is also preparing for the upcoming annual audit. The Billing and Collections Department is using Everbridge to send messages to customers that have been posted for shutoff. The messages have been helpful to some customers in paying their bills and avoiding shutoff.

Human Resources Director Jennifer Boulais reported that Human Resources is planning for some impending retirements and is attrition planning. Human Resources is also coordinating with payroll on informational sessions for supervisors and managers, particularly newly promoted or hired managers on best practices for supervising staff.

Director of Wastewater Steve Fredrick reported on ICI projects at the wastewater treatment plant. The electrical upgrades project is making progress including the installation of new switch gear. The Grit Project is also progressing, and currently new grit tanks are undergoing testing.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported that preparation work at West Parish is continuing including the tie-in work and removal of overburden material in preparation for demolition of the slow sands. At the EDV Project the contractors are preparing for installation of the baffle walls and steal piping is being installed. The estimated completion of the project is sometime in early 2026. Also, at West Parish the Lagoon Cleaning Project is ongoing with work anticipated into the fall.

Ms. Buttrick continued that the Locust Street Project is complete but dry weather is needed for final testing. The Commission is working with Baltazar Contractors on the Birnie Ave. Water Main Project and will start site prep work in the fall. The North Branch Sewer/St. Michaels Sewer Project will mobilize in August. Construction at the X intersection is underway, including water pipe replacement projects and temporary bypass for some customers. The Commission has been working on neighborhood outreach in coordination with MassDOT. Planning for repairs at the hydropower station is also ongoing.

Director of IT Rick Gomez reported the operating systems are being updated across the Commission. The IT Department is replacing end of life equipment in data centers to increase bandwidth, improve resiliency, and further enhance cyber security. The department continues to monitor cyber threats.

Deputy Director of Water Operations Christina Jones reported that water quality and treatment remains steady, and demand has been relatively low. Reservoir capacity is typical for this time of year. Some of the slow sand filters that were shut down for construction are back online and the maximum daily capacity is approximately 63MGD. Water Operations have also been coordinating construction activities for the new plant and troubleshooting issues that arise due to construction. Flow meters have been installed at the Connecticut River crossings to monitor flows and support emergency response. Pipeline Program interns are onsite across Water Operations this summer including at the treatment plant, in the laboratory, and in the watershed.

Director of Legal Affairs Theo Theocles reported that he continues to work on contracts, upcoming RFPs, and legal issues. Atty. Theocles also reported that he is working with Engineering and Customer Service to improve coordination and procedures for new, private development, and the installation of new water or sewer services.

Mr. Schimmel stated that the Commission is also reviewing potential software systems to improve the process and flow of information for new developments and installation of new services.

Comptroller Patrick Burns reported that the finance team is working on the year end close of FY25 and the startup for FY26. Preparations are also underway for the annual audit and the ACFR.

Educational Outreach Manager Katie Shea reported that the Pipeline Program had a successful start to the summer, welcoming twelve high school interns from eight different high schools across Springfield to the Commission on June 30. As part of the Pipeline Program the Commission also hosted Western Mass Water Works Day in collaboration with Western Mass Water Works Association to highlight the many rewarding water sector career opportunities across the region and connect interns to more potential employers.

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

None considered.

Participants left except Mr. Schimmel, Mr. Burns, and Atty. Guz.

19. Consideration of Contractual Provisions of Existing Contract with Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported on the goals and assessments relative to the existing contract with the Executive Director. The goals are focused on enhancements at the Commission for both daily operations and long-term sustainability. The goal-setting process also includes an assessment and report of progress and outcomes.

Mr. Schimmel added that goal setting practices are common across the water utility sector, particularly for mid-to-large organizations like the Commission. As the Commission continues to advance goal setting and planning, there may be additional resources or consultants to support in development and assessment of goals in the future.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that as part of the annual budget process and fiscal year schedule the Comptroller could provide a report and information for consideration regarding proposed salary increase for the executive director based on peer comparison and research of executive salaries for utilities of similar size, operations, and governance.

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

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to approve the Executive Director FY26 goals as presented.

The next Board meeting will be on September 9<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM.

**AT 2:32, UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN**

**VOTED YES –**

**COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ  
COMMISSIONER OTERO  
COMMISSIONER DONNELLAN:**

to adjourn.

Submitted By:

*Katie Shea*

Katie Shea, Acting Secretary

Exhibits:  
June 2025 Financial Report

2025 June Finance Director Report

FY25 Comptrollers Report

CIP Amendment 2026-01

Appeal Letter from Owner of 1023 Parker Street

General Consulting Agreement with Tony Basile

Engagement Agreement with Pierce Atwood

SWSC Contract No. 20260011-COS Paving Alternate

Amendment No. 2 to Task Order 50 with Kleinfelder/Stantec

SWSC Bid No. 25-65 FY 25 Sewer Improvements with Baltazar Contractors, Inc.

Wright Pierce Task Order No. 26

SWSC Bid No. 25-48 JJS OPS Center Generator Recommendation for Systems Electrical Services, Inc.

Tighe & Bond Task Order No. 29

Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels

Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel