



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION**  
**P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

Date of Issuance: April 27, 2021

Contact: Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager  
Springfield Water and Sewer Commission  
[jaimye.bartak@waterandsewer.org](mailto:jaimye.bartak@waterandsewer.org)  
(413) 452-1302

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Issues Proposed FY 2022 Budget**

*Virtual Public Hearing Scheduled for Wednesday, June 2, 2021, 6 PM*

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) has issued its proposed FY22 budget and schedule of rates, fees and charges, and revisions to its *Rules and Regulations*. A virtual public hearing on the proposed changes is scheduled for Wednesday, June 2, 2021, at 6 PM.

- The proposed rates for FY22 were developed with an ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility and delivering essential drinking water and wastewater services, which requires unavoidable upgrades to century-old drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Infrastructure reinvestment will be enhanced in FY22 by the finalization of competitive state and federal subsidized loans recently secured by the Commission.
- The average rate increase on residential customers will be \$6/month.
- The Commission also will maintain and facilitate customer assistance programs for customers struggling to pay their bills.

**Water and Sewer Infrastructure Renewal**

In 2019, the Commission initiated much-needed strategic investment in several keystone projects that serve the Springfield region. This included planning and design for upgrades to the West Parish Filters Water Treatment Plant, which dates from 1909, and the construction of the York Street Pump Station and Connecticut River Crossing Project, which will upgrade 1930s and 1970s-era wastewater infrastructure. The FY22 capital budget includes the construction phase of the West Parish Filters upgrades to address recent water quality exceedances associated with haloacetic acids (HAA5), which are due to the plant's outdated filtration technology. It also includes upgrades mandated by new state or federal regulations, as well as smaller-scale but critical projects such as water main replacements.



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

The FY22 capital budget is unique in that it also incorporates projects previously scheduled for future years in order to qualify for financing by the federal Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA). The Commission was recently selected among a highly competitive national pool of WIFIA applicants to receive \$251 million in low-cost financing for water and sewer infrastructure projects. WIFIA financing is expected to save ratepayers \$60 million in borrowing costs over the next 30 years. The FY22 capital budget of \$298 million includes appropriations for all WIFIA-financed projects, which will be implemented on an accelerated five-year schedule.

The Commission also recently announced \$46.7 million in financing from the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds to finance two wastewater projects and one drinking water infrastructure project. The competitive state financing program, which is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and includes some debt forgiveness, will save ratepayers approximately \$20 million in borrowing costs over the next 20 years.

“The amount of investment needed for our water and wastewater infrastructure is unavoidable, but the Commission’s commitment to fiscal responsibility has positioned its ratepayers to save millions over the long term,” said Executive Director Josh Schimmel. “Leveraging state and federal financing opportunities whenever possible reflects our tremendous focus on maintaining the affordability of these essential services for our customers.”

The Commission’s only source of revenue is from the sale of water and sewer service. There are currently no large-scale state or federal grant programs for water or wastewater infrastructure. As the current debate over a federal infrastructure bill evolves, the Commission is actively involved in outreach to the Massachusetts federal Congressional delegation to make the case for the inclusion of funding for water infrastructure. The Commission also aggressively seeks any other grant opportunities whenever feasible.

### **Proposed FY22 Rates**

The proposed FY22 combined water and sewer rate will raise the average residential bill by \$6/month. The residential water rate will increase from \$3.96 per 100 cubic feet (CCF) to \$4.19 per CCF, a 5.9% increase. The residential sewer rate will increase from \$6.25 per CCF to \$6.62 per CCF (also a 5.9% increase). WIFIA and State Revolving Fund financing enabled a 3.6% reduction in the necessary rate increase, from 9.5% to 5.9%. The proposed rate increases will be applied to water and sewer use beginning July 1, 2021, with increases reflected in bills issued in August 2021.

### **Customer Assistance Programs**

The Commission offers several financial assistance programs to help customers struggling to pay their water and sewer bills. This includes payment plans and monthly discounts for senior, disabled, and disabled Veteran homeowners. In FY21



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

the Commission launched a new Customer Assistance Program that provides an annual \$125 credit for homeowners that qualify for the state's low-income heating assistance program (LIHEAP), and this program will continue into FY22.

Congress recently appropriated \$1.1 billion in the last two Covid-relief bills for emergency water and wastewater assistance for low-income households nationwide. The Commission is in contact with the Massachusetts agencies slated to administer these funds in order to facilitate and expedite the distribution of this financial assistance to eligible customers.

**Public Hearing**

Ratepayers, customers, and members of the public are invited to participate in the following public hearing via telephone or computer:

DATE/TIME: Wednesday, June 2, 2021, 6:00 P.M.  
LOCATION: **Telephone:** 413-261-6430, Conference ID: 174 005 683#  
**Computer (live video conference):** <https://bit.ly/3dpJqGK>

Relevant documents are available on the Commission's web page at <https://waterandsewer.org/updates/public-notices/> and the Commission encourages interested parties to submit questions and comments in advance of the hearing via [info@waterandsewer.org](mailto:info@waterandsewer.org).

**About the Commission**

Established in 1996, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission is an independent, public regional utility. The Commission serves 250,000 customers in the lower Pioneer Valley with safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater service. The Commission provides retail drinking water service to Springfield and Ludlow; wholesale drinking water service to Agawam, Longmeadow, and East Longmeadow; and emergency/peak service to Westfield, Southwick, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Wilbraham. The Commission provides retail wastewater service to Springfield and wholesale wastewater service to West Springfield, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Wilbraham, and Ludlow.

**END**