



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

January 17, 2019

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a meeting at the John J. Lyons Administration Building, Agawam, MA, on January 17, 2019.

Chairman Daniel Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and Commission Secretary Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

William E. Leonard, Present
Daniel Rodriguez, Present
Vanessa Otero, Not Present

Also Present

Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Norman J. Guz, Commission Counsel
Anthony Basile, Comptroller
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Bob Stoops, Chief Engineer
James Richardson, Director of IT
James Laurila, Director of Water Operations
Bill Fuqua, Director of Wastewater Operations
Dan DiRienzo, Director of Field Services
Larry Griffin, Water Distribution Manager
Scott Loomis, Procurement Officer

Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager/Secretary of the Commission

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 13, 2018, without reading, because copies were furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 13, 2018, without reading, because copies have been furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

New Business

[Item Taken Out of Order.] Executive Director Josh Schimmel and the Commissioners commended Henry Santaniello on his upcoming retirement on February 1. Mr. Schimmel and the Commissioners thanked Henry for his decades of service to the Commission, most notably as resident manager of Ludlow Reservoir. Commissioner Rodriguez thanked Mr. Santaniello for being an excellent ambassador for the Commission, and Commissioner Leonard commented that Mr. Santaniello was uniquely qualified to fill the resident manager position in Ludlow. Mr. Schimmel noted that Mr. Santaniello will continue working on a contractual, part-time basis until June to assist with the transition.

2. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Anthony Basile reported that there was \$90.5 million in cash at the end of December, which was a \$5 million decrease throughout the year. Most of that decrease was for projects that will eventually receive bond financing.

Mr. Basile reported that 54% of the operating budget has been expended through the fiscal year. There are currently 23 vacant positions. The positions continue to be filled, but 3% of the budget will remain unexpended.

A total of \$9.3 million will be spent in capital projects. The Connecticut River Crossing project will utilize the largest portion of that funding.

A total of \$79.6 million in revenue is to be collected, which is \$1.1 million more than estimated. Variances include additional interest, as well as the true-ups on wholesale contract water.

Of the \$90.5 million in total cash, \$24.4 million is unrestricted. There are just under \$5.7 million in receivables, and \$2.6 million in receivables over 60 days old. There is \$435.9 million in total assets, including the OPEB trust fund, and liabilities of \$275.6 million, most of which is outstanding long-term debt.

3. Consideration of FY 2019 O&M Transfer of Funds – Amendment #1: Report by Comptroller.

Mr. Basile explained a request for amendment #1 to the operations maintenance budget. A \$40,000 transfer is needed for additional features for Paymentus, which now include a rolling 24-month billing statement. In addition, more people signed up for Paymentus than anticipated. Paymentus currently serves 11,000 customers per month, an increase from approximately 8,000 customers previously. The new 24-month statement will help reduce phone calls from landlords as well.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve FY 2019 O&M Transfer of Funds – Amendment #1.

4. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable for December: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported \$5.8 million in billings, with an accounts receivable balance of \$5.1 million. There were 7,419 accounts over 60 days old representing \$1.9 million.

There were 43 credits issued in December, totaling \$225,975.55. The bulk of this amount is the abatement for Sabis School due to its undetected meter.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER LEONARD AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve credits in the amount of \$225,975.55.

5. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2019-08: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Schimmel explained that this CIP amendment would establish a new CIP Reserve account to streamline some transfer activities. This reserve account would be for capital projects where balances can reside once projects are closed out, and can be used for change orders. A board vote will still be required to move funding in and out of the account, but it will eliminate a couple of other votes.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked what happens with the money remaining at the end of the fiscal year. He does not want the funding to accumulate and the account to become a "slush" fund. Mr. Schimmel responded that remaining funding at the end of a fiscal year would be assigned to a project coming at the end of a fiscal year. Some funding may be left in at the beginning of the fiscal year to provide cushion for the first few months, but it will remain as capital funding.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER LEONARD AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve CIP Amendment 2019-08.

6. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2019-09: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that this amendment would be the first transfer to the new reserve account, from \$4,316.40 left in the Main Interceptor Project account.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER LEONARD AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve CIP Amendment 2019-09.

7. Consideration of Tighe and Bond Project Order 17C-15 for Private Well Treatment Systems Evaluations: Report by Chief Engineer.

Chief Engineer Bob Stoops reported that 16 out of 17 private wells in Westfield have been installed, and water quality data is returning. Typical contaminants are being found in the groundwater, and this work order is for an expert to analyze what the contractor is recommending for treatment of these wells.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked how many wells were problematic, and how homeowners have been reacting. Mr. Stoops responded that most have iron, turbidity, and a few with manganese. Homeowners have been cooperative to date. No wells have been connected to homes yet, and the goal is to have everyone online by the end of the fiscal year.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve Tighe and Bond Project Order 17C-15 for Private Well Treatment Systems Evaluations.

8. Consideration of AECOM Work Order 17B-07 for Rapid Sand Filter Cleaning: Report by Director of Water Operations.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that a trial cleaning of filter 1 would be performed under this work order to determine the benefits for filter run times. Recommendations will be developed for cleaning all filters.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve AECOM Work Order 17B-07 for Rapid Sand Filter Cleaning.

9. Consideration of AECOM Work Order 17B-08 for Water Treatment Piloting Protocol: Report by Director of Water Operations.

Mr. Laurila reported on a work order to prepare the water treatment plant process piloting protocol. A bench-scale test program was completed that looked at chlorine dioxide to remove disinfectant byproduct precursors. The bench-scale testing produced positive results. A pilot program protocol is now needed, and a DEP permit for that pilot will be required. The pilot project will look at the use of coagulants, pre-oxidation, different filter media, and a clarification unit such as dissolved air flotation.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve AECOM Work Order 17B-08 for Water Treatment Piloting Protocol.

10. Consideration of CA-1907-19 Medora Environmental Inc. for Provin Tanks Mixers: Report by Director of Water Operations.

Mr. Laurila reported that this contract would provide nine underwater mixers for three operational tanks with Provin. Last year work with CDM Smith showed that there are dead zones within the tanks. In using these mixers, chlorine residual will be tested at different depths and temperatures. Medora will install the mixers.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve CA-1907-19 Medora Environmental Inc. for Provin Tanks Mixers.

11. Consideration of Legal Services Agreement for Hawkins Delafield and Wood LLC: Report by Director of Wastewater Operations.

Director of Wastewater Operations Bill Fuqua reported on a legal services contract with Hawkins Delafield and Wood LLC to assist in developing procurement documents and contracts for the upcoming

wastewater operations contract. A staff member from this firm did the original contract with Suez, and is still available to assist. The provisions of public-private-partnerships have changed over the past few decades, and this firm has stayed on top of the changes. The contract does not include hours for future contract negotiations.

Commission Counsel Norm Guz added that it is desirable to have a firm with wastewater contract procurement experience.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER LEONARD AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve Legal Services Agreement for Hawkins Delafield and Wood LLC.

12. Update on Water and Sewer Activities: Report by Executive Director.

Communications Manager Jaimye Bartak reported on a social media policy in Commissioners' packets for their review. The policy would be utilized to establish expectations related to communications with the Commission on social media and expectations of employees in their use of social media as it relates to the Commission.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a public notice that would be released the following day regarding an exceedance of the MCL for haloacetic acids (HAA5). The Commission is required to issue a public notice (PN). There is no immediate health risk associated with HAA5. MassDEP ultimately reviews and approves the language in the PN.

Ms. Bartak explained that the PN will be issued via mail to all customers in the Commission's database, posted on the website, and mailed to public buildings such as City Hall and public libraries for posting. A press release will also be issued, and a FAQ page will be posted on the website.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked when the issue is expected to resolve. Mr. Laurila responded that resolution is based on the precipitation over the winter. The naturally dissolved organic matter peaked in November, and is decreasing, but in a similar situation after Hurricane Irene it took six months to settle down. Data is being collected daily to address this issue, and the pilot is part of the solution. Other communities in Massachusetts are experiencing issues with HAA5 due to the high rainfall in 2018.

Mr. Schimmel reported on a recent meeting with the Springfield Redevelopment Authority about potential expansion plans for the Colton Street facility. The discussions are only preliminary, but there are several scenarios for expanding the central facility for the Commission. Mr. Guz added that the facilities planning process is looking at whether there are ways to combine staff into one facility. City-controlled properties adjacent to the Operations Center are being explored for expansion purposes, but these properties would need demolition and remediation. The City needs funding to proceed on those tasks. It is better to expand on Commission-owned sites because bonds can be used to finance the building.

Mr. Schimmel reported that the CIP quarterly report and executive summary will be presented at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Guz reported that he has been working with Mr. Schimmel on a procedural change to decrease the amount of sign-offs Commissioners need to make for smaller projects and change orders. For example, currently every project under an on-call contract has to come back to the board for approval. This takes staff time to prepare and uses Commissioners' time to consider, when there are many other more pressing

issues. The potential change could establish a limit or contract percentage above which Commissioner sign-off is required when Commissioners approve a contract.

Commissioner Rodriguez was supportive, and said that seeking approval for small changes wasted staff time and could delay projects unnecessarily. He reiterated support of the proposed change because it would increase organizational efficiency in the interest of ratepayers, and authorization can always be revoked if necessary.

Mr. Schimmel discussed a letter for the City of Chicopee that details the requirements for the City to become a wholesale customer of the Commission. The letter details the operating costs, and what it would have cost if they had joined the Commission over the past three years using baseline flow. The benefits to the Commission are that it broadens the customer base, results in 4-6% savings year-to-year for other wholesalers and retail customers, and Chicopee would buy in to the Commission's infrastructure and assets. A meeting next week will discuss the methodologies used to calculate what they would have to pay to buy in.

Mr. Schimmel continued that the study used to develop the methodology looked at projected costs for the treatment plant. Currently, the contracted operators are responsible for maintaining the plant, but the future contract will require new capital investment in upgrades to the plant. If Chicopee is added, some capital projects may need to be accelerated. Chicopee's buy-in costs would be utilized by the Commission because the capacity they would receive would come out of retail customer capacity, so the buy-in should benefit retail customers. The capacity of existing wholesalers cannot be reduced due to contractual obligations. Chicopee would bear the entire cost of the pump station and pipeline.

Commissioner Leonard asked how much wastewater Chicopee would be sending. Mr. Schimmel responded that it would be capped at 25 MGD during wet weather, 15 MGD during dry weather. Chicopee's flows and loading have been decreasing because they have heavily invested in sewer separation, which is the most expensive methodology to address CSOs. As it turns out, now stormwater requires a permit too. Chicopee can expect a nitrogen limit similar to the Commission's, and there is no space at the Chicopee treatment plant to add nitrogen reduction technology. Mr. Schimmel commented that it would likely be more cost effective to build a new pump station and pipeline than a new treatment plant.

Mr. Schimmel reported on the incident occurring in Electric Park in Ludlow on January 15. The cause is still being determined. The response included utilizing mobile asset management technology. Reverse 911 was used, a press release was issued, and customer service representatives stayed late. Every call was given a work order so it could be followed. There were 140 complaints, and crews visited 122 homes that night to confirm any flooding. Staff will be holding an after-action meeting to review the response and note improvements that can be made.

Ms. Bartak reported on a collaboration with Springfield's Greening the Gateway Cities Program on offering rain barrels to incentivize tree planting in Old Hill, Upper Hill, and McKnight neighborhoods. The Commission will provide a limited number of free rain barrels to property owners that sign up for two or more trees to be planted in their yard by ReGreen Springfield. The neighborhoods are located in a combined sewer area, so additional trees and rain barrels can help reduce storm runoff and CSOs.

Director of Field Services Dan DiRienzo reported that the last homes in Ludlow that were affected by the pressurization incident are being visited. Mr. DiRienzo is also working on moving staff from Bondi's to Colton Street as part of the ongoing reorganization.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that he is working with the bond trustee for consent forms for the release of the reserve requirement. The consent form has been sent to all bond holders, and 66 2/3 of them must approve to release the reserve requirement.

Mr. Basile reported that the budget process starts tomorrow.

Mr. Laurila reported that Cobble Mountain is at 95% capacity. Work is also continuing on responding to MassDEP regarding the HAA5 exceedance. A new operator is starting at West Parish Filters and two student interns from Westfield State are starting as well. The interns will go through a rotational program among different areas of water operations. Both are environmental science majors. Work is also continuing on the design of capital projects.

Mr. Stoops reported that he was upgrading guidelines and materials specifications, designing FY20 projects, and working with water operations on facilities planning.

Mr. Fuqua reported that the York Street project CMAR has completed the 100% design plans and specifications. Sub-bids for trades will be filed on January 28. The kick-off for the wastewater operations contract begins next week.

Director of IT James Richardson reported that despite high amounts of cyberattacks in 2018, the system remained safe. Mr. Richardson commended employees for reporting suspicious emails and activities. The IT team is also moving some services to the cloud to reduce cost and increase availability.

Mr. Schimmel reported that a new safety officer began on January 7.

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

Mr. Schimmel reported on an inter-governmental agreement with Wilbraham for a radio tower for meter reading of homes that the Commission serves in that municipality.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER LEONARD AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ VOTED UNANIMOUSLY:


to approve inter-governmental agreement with Wilbraham for a radio tower in the form presented and to authorize executive director to sign the agreement.

Mr. Schimmel presented a contract for part-time liaison services to be provided by Henry Santaniello at Ludlow Reservoir through the remainder of the fiscal year. The contract would be effective February 4.

UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER LEONARD AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ VOTED UNANIMOUSLY:

to approve the contract for part-time liaison services with Henry Santaniello.

The next Commission meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 9 AM. Adjourned by unanimous vote at 10:54 AM.



Jaimye Bartak, Secretary

