



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

January 23, 2020

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a meeting at the John J. Lyons Administration Building, Agawam, MA, on January 23, 2020.

Chairwoman Vanessa Otero called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and Commission Secretary Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

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

Also Present

Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Norman J. Guz, Commission Counsel
Anthony Basile, Comptroller
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations
James Richardson, Director of IT
Bob Stoops, Chief Engineer
Stephanie Douglass, Human Resources Manager
Scott Loomis, Procurement Officer
Nicole Sanford, Water Resources Manager
Dan DiRienzo, Director of Field Services
Bruce Leiter, Attorney for the Commission
Bill Fuqua, Director of Wastewater Services
Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager/Secretary of the Commission

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 23, 2020, 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 OTERO

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY:

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on January 23, 2020, without reading, because copies have been furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

2. Approve the minutes of the executive session held on January 23, 2020, 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 OTERO

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve the minutes of the executive session held on January 23, 2020, without reading, because copies have been furnished to each member of the Commission for their review.

Old Business

3. Consideration of Appeal by Owners of 214 Russell Street: Report by Appeals Officer.

Tabled.

New Business

4. Financial Update: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Anthony Basile reported there was \$110 million in cash, which is attributable to the recent bond sale.

The projected expenditure of the operating budget is 99%. Transfers between the O&M budget will occur next month due to a carryover from last year in the electricity account. Work also continues with Blandford on finalizing PILOT payment amounts.

There has been \$23.5 million in capital spending, mostly for the river crossing project. The capital remaining budget is \$125.4 million. The revenue budget is closer to the estimates for the year and has improved since last month.

Of the cash on hand, 25% of the \$110.7 million is unrestricted. January is typically a negative cash flow month.

Receivables were just over \$5 million in December, and the total balance is \$1,869,784.

Assets were \$562.9 million, and liabilities were \$402.5 million.

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

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported net billings of \$6.3 million and \$7.1 million in collections, leaving an accounts-receivable balance of \$4.4 million. There was \$1.6 million in receivables over sixty days old. There were 42 credits issued in the amount of \$20,727.13.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve credits in the amount of \$20,727.13.

6. Update on CIP Quarterly Reports: Report by Executive Director.

Executive Director Josh Schimmel distributed the latest CIP quarterly report and asked for review and comments from the board. Mr. Schimmel reported that another board meeting will be scheduled in the spring to review the O&M and CIP budgets. In general most projects are going well and on pace.

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

Human Resources Manager Stephanie Douglass reported that she is working with the new educational outreach specialist Katie Shea to build new outreach materials for career fairs. The Commission has been invited to four career fairs in the coming months.

Commissioner Otero asked if another online class was planned for STCC. Mr. Schimmel replied that an online distribution class is planned, with the hope that other utilities will contribute to the effort. Commissioner Rodriguez asked where the students were coming from. Mr. Schimmel replied that several are community college students, some are current water utility employees, and a few were from other parts of the state.

Director of Field Services Dan DiRienzo reported crews were planning main replacements for next year and doing flushing when possible to assist with chlorine residuals.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir is at 89% capacity. The new deputy director of water operations will be starting in February. There are efforts to recruit for another operator position. The new Borden Brook Operations Manager is Josh Layfield. Updates to the drought management plan and emergency plan (including cybersecurity) are underway to comply with new EPA requirements.

Water Resources Manager Nicole Sanford reported that work is continuing on the annual watershed update that is due to DEP this month. Work also continues on boundary maintenance and updating the source water protection plan for this year. The watershed gate locks have all been replaced. Logging at Ludlow Reservoir should be complete by the end of June. A total of 200 hazard trees have been removed along the paved trail.

Chief Engineer Bob Stoops reported that a FY20 sewer construction project through wetlands was being completed this winter. There are two homes remaining to finish for the Westfield private wells project. Provin tank 1 is practically isolated, and the liner for tank 2 will be addressed in the spring. There is an upcoming bid opening for the bulk chemical system and chlorine piping improvement project. Capital planning continues with directors.

Director of Wastewater Operations Bill Fuqua reported that the non-technical evaluation committee completed work on the technical aspect of the wastewater service contracts. A report was submitted to Mr. Schimmel for consideration. Price proposals were opened yesterday, and these will be evaluated in February, followed by a report. The York Street Pump Station project is continuing, with the installation of bracing for the foundation. The GMP2 maximum price is being prepared and incorporates adjustments to the river crossing bid.

Communications Manager Jaimye Bartak reported that writing the annual report, consumer confidence report, and new website text is all underway. Ms. Bartak reported on communication with the Urban

Agriculture Subcommittee of the Springfield Food Policy Council. The subcommittee has engaged the Commission in the past to assist with strategies to encourage community gardens on vacant lots owned or controlled by the City of Springfield, which adopted a community garden ordinance in 2012 intended to promote community gardening throughout the City and on vacant lots. The subcommittee considers water access a barrier to establishing more community gardens. Potential strategies currently being explored include developing a clear guide to installing a water service line; committing to installing water service lines for community gardens (rather than requiring a more expensive private contractor); and potential waiver of backflow and turn-on/turn-off fees. The City requires a license agreement to be signed by groups establishing community gardens on City property. Commissioners will receive a copy of the license agreement and community garden ordinance for their information.

Mr. Pellegrino reported that in their further investigation of the 14 properties that were “non-active” accounts but found to have water turned on, 7 were rentals, all of different owners. All properties had been shutoff due to non-payment. There is no geographic pattern. All properties appear to be occupied, and all but one are making regular payments on meter fees.

Mr. Basile reported on CIP amendment 2020-20, which is to transfer \$2,000 out of the CIP reserve account into non-watershed land acquisition in order to purchase the Eastern Avenue parcel from the City. The original appropriation was \$100,000, but \$102,000 is needed.

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

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: to approve CIP amendment 2020-20.

Mr. Schimmel reported that MassDEP recently completed the three-year sanitary survey at West Parish Filters. A response to MassDEP’s recommendations from the survey is being submitted today.

Mr. Schimmel reported that PFAS is an ongoing issue, as it may be found in sanitary sludge and biosolids. PFAS will greatly impact the regulatory landscape for drinking water, wastewater, and biosolids.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19 at 9 AM.

8. Update on 42-inch Bypass and Plunger Valve: Report by Executive Director.

AT 9:43 AM UPON MOTION DULY MADE BY COMMISSIONER O AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER R, THE COMMISSIONERS VOTED UNANIMOUSLY to enter into executive session to discuss the 42” bypass transmission main project. It was determined that holding the discussion in public session could be detrimental to the Commission’s position in potential litigation. It was announced that public session will not resume at the end of executive session.

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

None considered.



Jaimye Bartak, Secretary