



Established

1996

SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION

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Minutes of Meeting

September 15, 2022

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission held a hybrid meeting on September 15, 2022 in accordance with Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022.

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m. and announced the Commissioners that are participating. Secretary for the Commission Jaimye Bartak called the attendance roll:

William E. Leonard, Present
Daniel Rodriguez, Present
Vanessa Otero, Present

Also Present
Joshua Schimmel, Executive Director
Norman J. Guz, Commission Counsel
Theo Theocles, Director of Legal Affairs/Chief Procurement Officer
Jaimye Bartak, Communications Manager/Secretary for the Commission

Participating Remotely
Anthony Basile, Comptroller
Domenic Pellegrino, Director of Finance
Darleen Buttrick, Director of Engineering
Bob Stoops, Chief Engineer
Frank Zabeneh, Senior Engineer
Jim Laurila, Director of Water Operations
Christina Jones, Deputy Director of Water Operations
Steven Frederick, Deputy Director of Wastewater Operations
Kristin Monfette, Safety Manager
James Richardson, Director of IT
Ryan Wingerter, Deputy Director of Field Services
Raemarie Walker, Assistant Procurement Officer
Katie Shea, Educational Outreach and Communications Specialist

Business Matters

1. Approve the minutes of the meeting held on July 21, 2022, 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 YES –
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER LEONARD:**

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on July 21, 2022.

New Business

2. Financial Report: Report by Comptroller.

Comptroller Tony Basile reported an ending cash balance of \$91.4 million, which is a \$20.3 million decrease since July. This is not unusual and is due to one-time payments of debt service made in July.

There is a \$780,000 variance in the revenue budget, which reflects actual consumption in July. Mr. Basile reported this number tends to even out as the year progresses. There was \$9.0 million in total revenue in this fiscal year to date.

Debt service payments of \$7.2 million were made in July. Overall the Commission expended \$18.8 million, which reflects 22% of the O&M budget.

There was just under \$10 million in capital spending in July, mostly on the York Street Pump Station and Clearwell and Backwash Pump Station projects.

There was \$91.5 million in cash in July, of which \$5.8 million is unrestricted. Reimbursement from SRF (\$9.8 million) and WIFIA (\$12.8 million) is pending.

There was \$7.8 million in outstanding receivables in July, of which \$1.7 million is over 60 days old.

There was \$895.3 million in total assets, and \$682.6 million in liabilities, of which \$560 million is outstanding long-term debt.

3. Consideration of Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable July and August 2022: Report by Director of Finance.

Director of Finance Domenic Pellegrino reported accounts receivable totaling \$5.5 million. This is a 12% improvement from this time last year.

The over-60-day outstanding balance was just under \$1.6 million, which is closer to pre-pandemic levels. The number of these accounts has decreased in comparison to each of the corresponding months last year.

Mr. Pellegrino reported 109 credits in the amount of \$33,310.87. Mr. Pellegrino noted that CAP credits were held back in anticipation of LIWAP funding. Last year there were 384 sewer CAP credits issued totaling \$29,361 and 424 water CAP credits issued totaling \$23,621. Executive Director Josh Schimmel noted that the state has only issued \$300,000 of \$19 million in LIWAP funding, and noted that similarly, only 25% of eligible recipients take advantage of LIHEAP, according to LIHEAP agencies.

Mr. Schimmel is advocating for LIWAP to be issued as a flat credit if a customer also qualified for LIHEAP. Mr. Pellegrino reported that the Commission received only 16 LIWAP-eligible accounts from Valley Opportunity Council, but since LIWAP only pays off arrearages, none of those accounts qualified as their balances were not in arrearage. Commissioner Rodriguez noted that LIWAP was intended to help people during the pandemic crisis, but the state has been slow to roll out the funding.

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

**VOTED YES –
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER LEONARD:**

to approve credits in the amount of \$33,310.87 as presented.

4. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2023-05: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a request to increase appropriations for the 42” raw water conveyance insurance proceeds, to account for an insurance payment of \$1.7 million. This funding will be applied towards rehabilitation of the 42” pipeline, as required by the Commission’s bond resolution.

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

**VOTED YES –
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER LEONARD:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2023-05.

5. Consideration of CIP Amendment 2023-06: Report by Director of Finance.

Mr. Pellegrino reported on a request to reduce appropriations and close out project 001-0011, which is phase 2 of the electrical system upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant. This project was incorporated into the SRF biological nutrient removal project.

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

**VOTED YES –
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER LEONARD:**

to approve CIP Amendment 2023-06.

6. Capital Projects Update: Report by Director of Engineering.

Director of Engineering Darleen Buttrick reported on several capital projects. The water treatment plant is currently at 10% design. The next step will be preliminary design, with an expected early works bidding

to be issued in the fall of 2023. The 42” pipeline is approaching 90% design for rehabilitation, with bidding expected in the second quarter of 2023 and construction by the end of 2024. A parallel project of installing an energy dissipation valve facility at the end of the 42” is in preliminary design, with bidding expected in the second quarter of 2023. The Locust Street project is still focused on utility relocations (electric, telecommunications, etc.), and the contractor anticipates early 2023 construction. The Clearwell and Backwash Pump Station project is on-track for completion at the end of 2023, with Water Operations planning on a rapid sand filter shut-down in November to tie the project into the system.

Ms. Buttrick continued that the coagulant portion of the bulk chemical storage project is wrapping up. The Provin tank rehabilitation and lagoon cleaning task orders are ongoing, as is the design for the first phase of the collection system rehabilitation project. Rapid sand filter 6A repair is complete. An alternatives analysis report for the Cobble Mountain Power Station will be complete by the end of October.

Deputy Director of Wastewater Operations Steve Frederick reported that the east side river crossing piping should be complete, with work continuing on the west side before winter. Work is currently a week behind schedule. Internal piping continues at the new pump station. Skylights are going in, and repaving of York Street is underway. At the wastewater treatment plant, electrical work has kicked off, and diffusers are being replaced in the aeration basins, which leaves the plant at a limited intake capacity. For the grit room upgrade project, 65% design plans have been submitted.

Mr. Schimmel added that the lack of an aeration basin has increased odors. Protocols are in place in anticipation of the Big E, but odors may be intermittently increased as this work takes place over the next 18 months.

7. Consideration of Kleinfelder Task Order 21 Collection System Cleaning and Assessment: Report by Deputy Director of Wastewater Operations.

Mr. Frederick reported on the task order for 10 miles of cleaning and assessment of the sewer collection system. Areas that are affected by roots and high-grease issues have also been identified by Field Services crews.

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

**VOTED YES –
COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ
COMMISSIONER OTERO
COMMISSIONER LEONARD:**

to approve and authorize the Executive Director to sign Kleinfelder Task Order 21.

8. Consideration of Intergovernmental Agreement for Bondi’s Island Fire Line: Report by Director of Legal Services.

Director of Legal Services Theo Theocles reported on a proposed extension of a Commission-owned water line for fire service on Bondi’s Island. The extension will serve the landfill. The City of Springfield is paying for the new line, and Covanta is reimbursing the City. The City will be the owner of the fire service line.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER LEONARD:

to approve the intergovernmental agreement for Bondi's Island fire line substantially in the form presented.

9. Water and Sewer Updates: Report by Executive Director.

Mr. Schimmel reported on signed contracts less than \$250,000.

Mr. Schimmel reported that Cobble Mountain Reservoir levels remain normal, despite news stories about the drought. Water restrictions currently in place in wholesale communities were not requested or required by the Commission. Mr. Schimmel noted that the state is working on updating Water Management Act regulations to require conservation measures in accordance with the state drought plan, which the Commission plans to appeal.

Mr. Schimmel requested permission to send Commission staff, as available on a voluntary basis, to assist with the water crisis in Jackson, Mississippi as needed. Commissioners agreed.

Mr. Schimmel reported that sampling for DBPs took place on September 6. Improved results are anticipated now that water production is less reliant on the slow sand filters again. Mr. Schimmel noted that DEP is currently updating the template for DBP public notification.

Mr. Schimmel requested a new job description for a human resources director. The human resources manager position will continue to be advertised, but the human resources director position will allow for a candidate with more strategic and/or advanced experience and qualifications. The salary range for the human resources director is proposed at \$85,000 - \$150,000.

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

VOTED YES –

COMMISSIONER RODRIGUEZ

COMMISSIONER OTERO

COMMISSIONER LEONARD:

to approve the Human Resources Director job description in the form presented.

Communications Manager Jaimye Bartak reported that the employee picnic is tomorrow, and outreach with partner organizations and Springfield Public Schools is ongoing to develop new educational programs. Educational Outreach Specialist Katie Shea presented a draft apprenticeship program that is under development to present to Putnam Technical School. Commission Counsel Norm Guz reported that representatives from Springfield Public Schools are interested in speaking with the Commission about new educational programming.

Director of Water Operations Jim Laurila reported that the sanitary survey will take place in two weeks.

The next Commission meetings will be on October 20, 2022, at 1 PM, and December 1, 2022, at 9 AM.

Mr. Schimmel announced that this Board meeting would be Commissioner Leonard's last. Mr. Schimmel remarked that he was blessed to work with Commissioner Leonard for his entire career. Mr. Schimmel noted that Commissioner Leonard served 31 years, and the citizens of Springfield and the region have benefited from his leadership and direction. Mr. Schimmel thanked Commissioner Leonard for setting an example for everyone, both personally and professionally. Mr. Schimmel announced the new water treatment plant would be named the William E. Leonard Water Treatment Plant when it is complete.

Commissioner Rodriguez thanked Commissioner Leonard for his service, remarking it had been a pleasure to know him as a fellow Commissioner and friend.

Commissioner Otero thanked Commissioner Leonard for his collegueship, friendship, patience, and added she is grateful for his service.

Atty. Guz remarked that he was always appreciative of Commissioner Leonard's friendship and contributions since he joined the Board in 1991.

Commissioner Leonard remarked that nothing has touched his heart like the water department, that he loved this business, and that he loved working with everyone. He added that he had no doubt the Commission is in good hands.

Voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:43 PM.

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

None considered.



Exhibits considered:

Draft July 21, 2022 Meeting Minutes
Monthly Financial Report
Monthly Utility Billing Credit Summary and Summary of Accounts Receivable
CIP Amendment 2023-05 (Incr Appr 005-0090)
CIP Amendment 2023-06 (Decr Appr 001-0011)
Engineering Services Contract Summary – Kleinfelder Task Order 21
Contracts Signed by Josh Schimmel
Intergovernmental Agreement – Bondi's Fire Line
Cobble Mountain Reservoir Capacity Levels
Draft Human Resources Director Job Description
Draft Apprenticeship Program