

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular Meeting Minutes  
April 20, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS:

John Bakota, President  
Henry Ventura, Vice-President  
Joseph Ochoa, Member  
Anthony Askounis, Member  
Ray Lopez, Member

STAFF:

Winna Guzman  
Anthony Herrera  
Joseph Allegretti

Reported by: Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.

By: Peggy S. LaLonde

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: John Bakota, Joseph Allegretti  
Present Telephonic: Henry Ventura, Ray  
Lopez, Joseph Ochoa

MR. BAKOTA: First item, Board's approval  
of minutes from April 6th, 2020, as presented.

Motion to approve minutes from April 6th, 2020 made by  
Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

We'll go to Check Warrants.

WARRANT 041720 WB - \$176,927.74.

Motion to approve Warrant 041720 WB, in the amount of  
\$176,927.74, made by Ray Lopez. Second by Henry  
Ventura.

Questions/Comments: None

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

WARRANT 042020 WB - \$112,791.10

1 Motion to approve Warrant 042020 WB, in the amount of  
2 \$112,791.10, made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Ray Lopez.

3 Questions/Comments: None

4 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
5 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

6 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

7 WARRANT 042020 CD - \$327.20

8 Motion to approve Warrant 042020 CD, in the amount of  
9 \$327.20, made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

10 Questions/Comments: None

11 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
12 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

13 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

Next we have payroll warrants.

14 WARRANT 040320 - \$27,642.24 - Utilities Payroll

Dates of 3-14-20 to 3-27-20

15 Motion to approve Warrant 040320, in the amount of  
16 \$27,642.24, Utilities Payroll, for dates of 3-14-20 to  
17 3-27-20, made by Henry Ventura. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

18 Questions/Comments: None

19 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
20 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

21 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

22 WARRANT 040320 - \$36,885.51 - Payroll

Dates of 3-14-20 to 3-27-20

23 Motion to approve Warrant 040320, in the amount of  
24 \$36,885.51, Payroll for dates of 3-14-20 to 3-27-20,  
25 made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

Questions/Comments: None

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

1 Filtration Report.

2 MR. EL HARIT: Everything is going well.  
3 We have all the chemicals for three months now, so we  
4 are doing fine. Filtration is doing good.

5 MR. BAKOTA: Do Board members have any  
6 questions? (None)

7 Water Report.

8 MS. GUZMAN: None.

9 MR. BAKOTA: Distribution report.

10 MS. GUZMAN: No report.

11 MR. BAKOTA: We are moving to New  
12 Business.

13 First we have Water, Resolution WD  
14 20-03. This is a resolution authorizing the write off  
15 of certain unpaid water bills by the East Chicago Water  
16 Department. You have this in your packet. Winna, you  
17 want to make a statement on that?

18 MS. GUZMAN: Winna Guzman, Water  
19 Department Director. Just to advise the Board, this was  
20 brought before the Sanitary District and they did  
21 approve it at the last -- I believe last Thursday's  
22 meeting. And basically these are a number of unpaid  
23 water bills, which I have provided a list of, and I also  
24 have copies of all the unpaid bills, for the record,  
25 that should be written off and removed from the Water  
Department. They are uncollectible due to various  
reasons, vacancy, bad debt, bankruptcy, tax sales, our  
issuance of Sheriff's deed. So basically this is the  
amounts relating to Water. There may be assessed some  
late fee, NSF checks, related amounts or fees, also  
garbage. I'm just trying to give a couple reasons, but  
there is different -- there is various reasons. We do  
list the reasons for what type of debt it is related to.

So, I'm asking the Board to approve  
this Resolution WD 20-03 as a result.

Motion to approve Resolution WD 20-03 made by Joseph  
Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

1 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

2 Next, Resolution WD 20-04,  
3 Resolution Board of Directors, East Chicago Department  
4 of Waterworks, establishing the policy regarding the  
5 department's responsibility for payment for water usage.

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: This is Joseph  
7 Allegretti. This is a resolution which serves two  
8 purposes, establishing a policy concerning resolving  
9 ongoing questions about whether the property owned by  
10 the Water Department should pay water charges. And the  
11 answer is in the negative, they should not, although  
12 they should be continued to be metered. Of course they  
13 continue to pay any related sewer user charges related  
14 to the consumption -- based on the consumption of  
15 metered water. So it resolves that.

16 And it further serves to write off  
17 and discharge any old water bills billed by the  
18 Department to the Department itself for properties owned  
19 by the Department and used in the operation of the  
20 distribution and making of water. So this is just a  
21 housekeeping resolution requested by Miss Guzman to  
22 clarify the situation.

23 MR. BAKOTA: Are there any other  
24 questions?

25 MR. LOPEZ: So this comes as a write off,  
right?

MR. ALLEGRETTI: Exactly.

MR. LOPEZ: We just approved to pay those  
bills for write off for like the Marina and Parks, and  
all that. This is all covered?

MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes. And the Sanitary  
District is going do to the mirror image for itself.  
Continue to pay water charges, but not send sewer user  
charges to the Sanitary District. So literally  
eliminating taking out of one pocket and put in another  
pocket. Just kind of housekeeping measure.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you. That saved me a  
lot of questions.

Motion to approve Resolution WD 20-04, made by Ray  
Lopez. Second by Henry Ventura.

1 Questions/Comments: None

2 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
3 saying aye?

4 (All signify aye.)

5 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

6 Next we have emergencies. Calumet  
7 City Plumbing, 148th and Melville, total of \$4,690.00.  
8 Winna, do you want to comment on that?

9 MS. GUZMAN: This is an emergency at  
10 148th Street and Melville Avenue, in the amount of  
11 \$4,690.00. There was a main that was leaking in that  
12 area. I believe it's a four-inch main. So I would like  
13 the Board to approve this as an emergency so we can get  
14 this paid.

15 Motion to approve Calumet City Plumbing, emergency at  
16 148th and Melville, amount of \$4,690.00 made by Joseph  
17 Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

18 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
19 saying aye?

20 (All signify aye.)

21 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

22 Next is Hasse Construction, Michigan  
23 and Guthrie, total of \$66,194.30.

24 MS. GUZMAN: This was an emergency  
25 situation where a valve -- 16-inch valve -- was  
repaired. And I'm requesting that the Board approve  
this as such.

Motion to approve payment to Hasse Construction, for  
emergency at Michigan and Guthrie, in the amount of  
\$66,194.30, made by Henry Ventura. Second by Joseph  
Ochoa.

Questions/Comments: None

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

Next is Nies Engineering Agreement  
increase for the two four million gallon tanks  
Construction Phase Engineering Service Agreement.

1 DR. ZEHRAOUI: March 26th I received a  
2 bid from Nies Engineering for this award. The contract  
3 ended in July, so we have to renew it, but we didn't  
4 renew the contract, so they keep working for us, around  
5 five months. So initially it was one million point two,  
6 which is around 1.3 percent. So right now, because of  
7 the delay we have with Michigan Avenue, we need them to  
8 stay till the end of next month. Right now we need to  
9 extend it.

10 MR. BAKOTA: I added up these final  
11 totals on the invoice and it came to \$178,815.00.

12 DR. ZEHRAOUI: It shows a grand total for  
13 Nies Engineering. So they got all the bids and they  
14 didn't send out the bids after March 26th. Even though  
15 the contract ended in July 2019, this is for the  
16 project. Because the project is still working, we have  
17 to extend it.

18 MR. HERRERA: He's asking to extend the  
19 contract, that's what he's saying.

20 MR. BAKOTA: All I want is to be clear  
21 what the final amount is.

22 MR. HERRERA: That's the final amount  
23 submitted, that's the invoice information.

24 MR. BAKOTA: I understand. Okay, thank  
25 you. Do I have a motion?

MR. LOPEZ: What is the total amount, are  
we voting for three different --

MR. VENTURA: That covers both tanks?

DR. ZEHRAOUI: That covers all projects.

Motion to approve extension of Nies Engineering's  
services made by Ray Lopez. Second by Henry Ventura.

Questions/Comments: None

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

Next we go to past due invoices.

1 We have Hasse Construction, \$27,890.00, and the reason  
2 is proposal received, exploratory type work was  
3 performed to avoid contract delays and expediate work  
4 related to three million gallon tank near Water  
5 Treatment Plant. Hasse Construction performed said  
6 exploratory work?

7 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Doug Cunningham,  
8 Construction Manager, City of East Chicago. We called  
9 in -- I called in Hasse Construction on this project.  
10 Hasse is one of the contractors that I can truly rely on  
11 when I know I am in a very difficult situation and they  
12 are very conscious to that effort. We had a lot of  
13 conflicts where this pipe came in by the fire pump and  
14 we had Hasse to go down and do some exploratory work.

15 When they did perform the  
16 exploratory work, we found some additional problems  
17 associated with the installation of the new pipe. There  
18 were blocks in the way holding the existing pipe. The  
19 sewer had to be relocated. It was a mess. And so in  
20 the final completion of this project, if it wasn't for  
21 Hasse, we would probably have incurred a lot more  
22 additional work.

23 Every time you hire a contractor and  
24 they explore the work, and they run into a problem; they  
25 stop. I'm paying for the man and material till we come  
up with a solution.

In this case, we found the problem  
before the contractor was prepared to install and the  
original cost was \$35,979.17. And because we went over  
our estimated budget, we got discounted down to  
\$27,890.00, and that's why this was done.

MR. BAKOTA: Very good. Thank you.

DR. ZEHRAOUI: This is why, from  
Filtration, why we contact them.  
Motion to approve payment of past due invoice from Hasse  
Construction, in the amount of \$27,890.00, made by Henry  
Ventura. Second by Ray Lopez.

Questions/Comments: None

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

1 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you very much.

2 MR. BAKOTA: Next we have Fissinger &  
3 Associates, \$160.00. This was an invoice received on  
4/13/2020. They were being sent to another AP clerk.  
Issue has been resolved. Do I have a motion?

4  
5 Motion to approve payment of past due invoice from  
6 Fissinger & Associates, in the amount of \$160.00, made  
7 by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

8 Questions/Comments: None

9 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
10 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

11 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

12 Next is Grainger, \$95.72,  
13 Filtration. Invoice was sent on 4/8/2020. That's the  
14 only explanation here.

15 Motion to approve payment of past due invoice to  
16 Grainger, in the amount of \$95.72, made by Henry  
17 Ventura. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

18 Questions/Comments: None

19 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
20 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

21 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

22 Next is Viking, amount of \$576.75.  
23 The reason was invoice was sent to us on 4/17/2020. We  
24 requested for them to e-mail it to the company. Do I  
25 have a motion?

26 Motion to approve payment of past due invoice to Viking,  
27 in the amount of \$576.75, made by Joseph Ochoa. Second  
28 by Henry Ventura.

29 Questions/Comments: None

30 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
31 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

32 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

33 Next is Performance Auto, \$1,647.58,  
34 Filtration. Says invoice was just sent to me due to  
35 work getting finished earlier this year that was started



1 on last year.

2 Motion to approve payment of past due invoice to  
3 Performance Auto, in the amount of \$1,647.50, made by  
Ray Lopez. Second by Henry Ventura.

4 Questions/Comments: None

5 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

6 (All signify aye.)

7 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

8 Next, Eurofins, \$345.00. Invoice  
was being sent to former secretary to pay due to them  
being late.

9 Motion to approve payment of past due invoice to  
10 Eurofins, in the amount of \$435.00, made by Henry  
Ventura. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

11 Questions/Comments: None

12 MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by  
saying aye?

13 (All signify aye.)

14 MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

15 Next, report from Legal Counsel.

16 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No report.

17 MR. BAKOTA: You have in your packet the  
financial report. Are there any questions on it? Of  
course Bill Biller isn't here, but the report is there  
for you to scrutinize.

18 Also there was Planning and Economic  
Business Development report was in the packet, which is  
19 just an informational thing for you to see. It's just  
an informational packet.

20 Next is Public Comment. (None)

21 Our next meeting will be May 4th --  
did we settle on that meeting date?

22 MR. ALLEGRETTI: The Plan Commission  
meeting, which is starting at 4:30, on May 4th, I expect  
23 it to go for two hours; so I think we should reschedule  
our first meeting in May.

24

25 MR. BAKOTA: You want to reschedule and  
will be contacting members as to the new date?

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

MR. HERRERA: Correct.

MR. BAKOTA: Board members, did you hear that?

MR. ALLEGRETTI: We are going to reschedule the May 4th meeting, and Winna or Anthony will contact everybody with a new date.

MR. BAKOTA: Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry Ventura.

MR. BAKOTA: All in favor signify by saying aye?

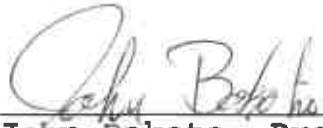
(All signify aye.)

MR. BAKOTA: Motion carries.

\*\*\*\*\* Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.\*\*\*\*\*

Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of  
April 20, 2020

Approved and signed \_\_\_\_\_



John Bakota, President

/s/ Henry Ventura

Henry Ventura, Vice-President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joseph Ochoa, Member

/s/ Raymond Lopez

Ray Lopez, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Askounis, Member



Anthony Herrera, Secretary

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Peggy S. LaLonde, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of the said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Munster, Indiana, this 22nd day of April, 2020.

*Peggy S. LaLonde*



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR