

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS

BOARD MEMBERS

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

Regular Meeting Minutes  
(Via Telephone Conference)  
Monday, October 19, 2020 @ 5:00 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates  
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present in Chambers: John Bakota, Anthony Askounis.

Present Via Telephone Conference: Henry Ventura, Joseph Ochoa, Ray Lopez.

Also Present in Chambers: Anthony Herrera, Winna Guzman, Ben El Harit.

Also Present Via Telephone Conference: Edward Santen, John Phipps, Joseph Allegretti.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: October 5, 2020

Motion to approve October 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Ray Lopez.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

APPROVAL OF CHECK WARRANTS:

MR. BAKOTA: Next is Approval of Check Warrants. Check Warrant 091720 WF in the amount of \$143,538.

Motion to approve Check Warrant 091720 WF made by Henry Ventura. Second by Anthony Askounis.

1 Questions/Comments: None.

2 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
3 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

4 MR. BAKOTA: Check Warrant 101920 WB in the amount of  
5 \$119,429.44.

6 Motion to approve Check Warrant 101920 WB made by Joseph  
7 Ochoa. Second by Anthony Askounis.

8 Questions/Comments: None.

9 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
10 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

11 MR. BAKOTA: Check Warrant 101920 CD in the amount of  
12 \$1,305.76.

13 Motion to approve Check Warrant 101920 CD made by Ray Lopez.  
14 Second by Henry Ventura.

15 Questions/Comments: None.

16 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
17 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

18 MR. BAKOTA: Check Warrant 101620 WB in the amount of  
19 \$135,623.66.

20 Motion to approve Check Warrant 101620 WB made by Henry  
21 Ventura. Second by Anthony Askounis.

22 Questions/Comments: None.

23 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
24 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

25 MR. BAKOTA: Check Warrant 090220 WB in the amount of  
\$150.90.

Motion to approve Check Warrant 090220 WB made by Joseph  
Ochoa. Second by Anthony Askounis.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

1 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANTS: None.

2 FILTRATION REPORT: None.

3 WATER REPORT:

4 MR. BAKOTA: Water Report, Winna Guzman.

5 MS. GUZMAN: Good evening Board. I submitted my report  
6 for the previous month, September 2020. If you have any  
7 questions, I will be happy to answer.

8 MR. BAKOTA: Are there any questions for Winna on her  
9 report? If not, we'll move forward.

10 MS. GUZMAN: Thank you.

11 MR. BAKOTA: Thank you.

12 DISTRIBUTION REPORT:

13 MR. BAKOTA: Distribution report, Edward Santen.

14 MR. SANTEN: Good evening. Just a quick update on the  
15 Valve Exercising Project where we had Wachs come out and do a  
16 trial run for the City.

17 I am please to give you a good report. They did an  
18 excellent job. We took care of the Roxana Subdivision.

19 We found several valves that were buried with  
20 asphalt. But we plan on getting those exposed and getting  
21 the valves ready for operation.

22 Overall in that area about 70 valves were checked  
23 including the valves with our inner connection with Hammond.  
24 Our valve is functional and works. The City of Hammond  
25 they're valve was actually buried in the street at Michigan  
Avenue and Indianapolis Boulevard.

We will report to them that the valve is buried.  
For emergency purposes we want to make sure their side is  
open also.

We also checked the valves along the Guthrie Street  
Reconstruction Project. Four were buried in the sand in the  
middle of the road. Once those are exposed we'll check those  
with our own staff to make sure they're operational.

1 But approximately 15 valves for that project were  
checked and not working.

2 And the biggest improvement to the system there was  
3 a stuck valve behind the Alder Street Pump Station that's  
been partially closed for about 33 years.

4 Wachs managed to get that valve fully operational.  
5 And I am very pleased to let you know that that's working.

6 So my report is they did an excellent job. And I  
will be getting a proposal to do the rest of the system.

7 That's the end of my report.

8 MR. BAKOTA: Thank you, Ed.

9  
10 NEW BUSINESS WATER:

11 MR. BAKOTA: Next on the agenda is New Business. It's  
Resolution WD 20-12.

12 Whereas the Board has been advised that the Utility  
13 Department had a number of unpaid water bills that should be  
written off and removed from the books of the District  
14 because they are uncollectible due to vacancies, bad debt,  
bankruptcies, tax sales or issuance of sheriff's deed.

15 This is a total written off amount of \$22,929.45.  
16 Motion to approve Resolution WD 20-12 made by Joseph Ochoa.  
Second by Henry Ventura.

17 Questions/Comments: None.

18 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
19 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

20 MR. BAKOTA: Next is Write-Offs from 2017, 2018. We're  
going to ask for a table motion on this for lack of  
21 information. They'll change it into a resolution.

22 Motion to table 2017, 2018 Write-Offs made by Ray Lopez.  
Second by Joseph Ochoa.

23 Questions/Comments: None.

24 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
25 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

1 MR. BAKOTA: Next we have Proposals. The first one is  
2 Tanks, Calumet City Plumbing \$31,975.

3 MR. PHIPPS: Excuse me. This is John Phipps. The  
4 proposal from Calumet City Plumbing was intended to be  
5 through DN Tanks who has a markup on that. You should have  
6 a letter, an e-mail detailing all that.

7 MR. EL HARIT: So basically what John Phipps was trying  
8 to say is that proposal is from Calumet City. And also there  
9 is DN Tank, their charge. So it's like 5 percent I believe.  
10 But an e-mail should be there.

11 MR. BAKOTA: Is it in the same value?

12 MR. EL HARIT: It should be there.

13 MR. BAKOTA: We disregard this?

14 MR. EL HARIT: No. No.

15 MR. VENTURA: With the markup the total should be  
16 \$34,223.75.

17 MR. EL HARIT: Yeah. Correct.

18 MR. PHIPPS: That's right. 5 percent.

19 MR. VENTURA: Right. 5 percent.

20 MR. BAKOTA: I didn't see that. Okay.

21 MR. VENTURA: It's on the last page of the proposal, top  
22 paragraph.

23 MR. BAKOTA: Is it understood that there's a markup of  
24 5 percent of \$1,598.75?

25 Motion to approve DN Tanks, Calumet City Plumbing Proposal  
made by Anthony Askounis. Second by Henry Ventura.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

MR. BAKOTA: Next is Devine Landscaping \$11,920. That's  
Filtration.

1 MR. EL HARIT: Do you have any questions?

2 Motion to approve Devine Landscaping Proposal made by Henry  
3 Ventura. Second by Ray Lopez.

4 Questions/Comments: None.

5 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.

6 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

7 MR. BAKOTA: Next is Sweney Electric Company \$6,715.  
8 Filtration.

9 Motion to approve Sweney Electric Company Proposal made by  
10 Anthony Askounis. Second by Henry Ventura.

11 Questions/Comments: None.

12 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.

13 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

14 MR. BAKOTA: Next is F.E. Moran \$40,890 and then there  
15 is \$3,495. Filtration.

16 MR. EL HARIT: So let me elaborate a little bit on this  
17 one.

18 MR. BAKOTA: If you could talk louder.

19 MR. EL HARIT: So basically we had F.E. Moran come to  
20 our site to check what's going on with our cylinders.

21 So basically the cylinders is nitrogen and argon  
22 gas. We lost almost 51 cylinders. What we're trying to do  
23 right now -- I mean they said reason for that is there was  
24 like lightening. And then we didn't have surge protection on  
25 our system. I mean fire panels.

So that's what caused I mean actually all this  
cylinders I mean to get active. That's their testing,  
however.

So we have 51 cylinders is out. So we're trying to  
do just 18 for right now because it is expensive to fix, I  
mean to fill them up. Actually that's why you see the price  
is high repair.

So basically we're just going to do the primary. I  
mean the Plant has like cylinders. And it has primary and

1 secondary.

2 So we right now we're just doing the primary. So  
3 if something happens, just primary is working.

4 Secondary we're not going to fill up until next  
5 year. We see everything is working fine.

6 Second thing about our system is it doesn't give  
7 you a history. I mean like what's going on and what  
8 happened, exactly what happened. The history doesn't go  
9 back.

10 So this is one of the things we have to look into  
11 it in the future.

12 So I mean I guess the Plant, we can say new Plant,  
13 but still the equipment is older now comparing to what we  
14 have right now on the market.

15 So I need approval for \$43,000 actually.

16 MR. HERRERA: It's \$44,385.

17 MR. EL HARIT: 44,000. If you have any questions, just  
18 let me know.

19 MR. BAKOTA: Are there any other questions for Ben?

20 MR. VENTURA: Off of this Proposal we're going to do the  
21 additional recommended plug, the other, the 40,000, right?

22 MR. EL HARIT: Yeah. Correct. I mean like the other  
23 one, I mean like the 40 is for filling up the cylinders and  
24 putting the taps on them and then some bottles and all that.

25 However for the 3,000 is like recommendation.  
Basically what it is is the surge protector. And I think  
it's for each panel. Basically that's what it is plus labor.  
It comes out to that I guess.

MR. BAKOTA: Any other questions?

Motion to approve F.E. Moran Proposal made by Henry Ventura.  
Second by Anthony Askounis.

Questions/Comments: None.

1 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
2 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

3 MR. BAKOTA: Thanks, Ben.

4 MR. EL HARIT: No problem.

5 MR. BAKOTA: Next is Adjustment at 4716 Indianapolis  
6 Boulevard.

7 Motion to approve 4716 Indianapolis Boulevard Adjustment made  
8 by Ray Lopez. Second by Anthony Askounis.

9 Questions/Comments: None.

10 MS. GUZMAN: This is Winna Guzman, Water Department  
11 Director, again. Just to note that our Clerk entered this  
12 payment twice. So we need to correct it, correct the  
13 account. And that is the reason for the Adjustment. Thank  
14 you so much.

15 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
16 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

17 MR. BAKOTA: Next is Past Due Invoices. Again unless  
18 the Board objects I will go through them. And then if you  
19 want to discuss them and then we'll vote on them as a group.  
20 It will go through faster.

21 Number them 1 through 4. So if you have questions  
22 refer to it by the number. And we can discuss it if you  
23 want.

24 Here we go. Number one is \$23,516.22. It's says  
25 invoices were not paid timely due to pending review and  
resolution on paying only certain related billings as well as  
an analysis being performed by Bakertilly relating to  
write-offs.

The Water related charges require write-offs in  
amount billed pursuant to a Resolution previously passed and  
approved by the Board.

Number 2 \$2,150. Invoices are delinquent. E-mail  
with invoice was sent to spam folder. AP Clerk didn't  
notice until statement arrived.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: And this is for locate services I  
think.



1 MR. BAKOTA: Number 3 \$60.11. Water Department did not  
receive invoice until 10/13/20.

2 Number 4 \$300. It says Water Department did not  
3 receive invoice until 10/12/20. See e-mail attached.

4 Motion to approve Water Department, GPRS, Airgas and Ferguson  
5 Past Due Invoices made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry  
Ventura.

6 Questions/Comments: None.

7 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
8 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

9 REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL:

10 MR. BAKOTA: Next is Report from Legal Counsel,  
Mr. Allegretti.

11 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Good evening or good afternoon. The  
12 rate case is proceeding. Lots of work is being done by our  
consultants.

13 Secondly I talked with Utility Director Dr. Z  
14 today. I think he wishes to proceed with the Elevated Tank  
Water Recirculating Project. It's going to be a Public  
15 Works. It has to be bid.

16 I don't know who designed it. I don't know if John  
Phipps is still on the call.

17 MR. PHIPPS: I'm still here, Joe.

18 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Okay. The estimated cost is I think  
19 \$250,000. I talked to Biller today and Jim Bennett. We're  
looking for some money.

20 Assuming we have the money to proceed with this, I  
21 think it's been discussed earlier the need to make the  
improvements at the elevated watertank there on Chicago  
22 Avenue. We'll be coming to the Board with an authorization  
to publish solicitation to solicit bids from contractors on  
the project.

23 That's what I know. Thank you.

24 MR. BAKOTA: Thank you.  
25

1 FINANCIAL REPORT:

2 MR. BAKOTA: Next is Financial Report, Mr. Biller.  
3 We've got a comment here.

4 MR. HERRERA: Good evening, Board. This is Anthony. In  
5 your packet you have the September 2020 Cash Report.

6 Look in your packet you have September's  
7 collections. The major highlights of September were  
8 collections of \$550,310.

9 This amount was \$51,600 higher than August.  
10 September had higher collections in Residential by \$28,000,  
11 Commercial \$10,000 and Public Authority 1,000. This was  
12 offset by lower collections for Industrial by \$27,000.

13 We still believe customer collections for the year  
14 will be around \$600,000 lower than 2019. Primarily  
15 Industrial and Public Authority.

16 The disbursements are listed below. Major  
17 disbursements of September were Payroll of \$114,290.

18 If you look at ending disbursements and utility  
19 receipt tax, a total of \$46,439. We had other disbursements  
20 in Contractual Plan Operations, Distribution and  
21 Administration.

22 Cash balance for September Operations and  
23 Maintenance \$1,274,016. A balance in the Tank Refurbish Fund  
24 of \$122,042 as well as Operation and Maintenance Fund, Inner  
25 Fund Loans of Storm Water which was a \$2 million balance,  
Civil City \$2 million and Tank Refurbish \$1 million.

If you have any questions, please let me know. I  
can go ahead and address them the best I can.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: Let me say that Anthony is also going  
to be involved in the conversation to finance the Elevated  
Tank Water Recirculating Project. I think the primary source  
of funds for that project is going to be that Tank Fund just  
referred to by Anthony.

Thanks, Anthony.

MR. HERRERA: No problem.

MR. BAKOTA: Any other questions for Anthony on that

1 Financial Report?

2 UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

3 PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

4

5 \* Next Regular Meeting Date: November 2, 2020  
@ 5:00 p.m.

6 Motion to adjourn was made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Henry  
Ventura.

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8 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

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\* Meeting ended at 5:25 p.m.

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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of  
Monday, October 19, 2020  
Approved and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

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6 John Bakota, President  
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10 Henry Ventura, Vice President  
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12 |S| Joseph Ochoa  
13 Joseph Ochoa, Member  
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17 Anthony Askounis, Member  
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19 |S| Ray Lopez  
20 Ray Lopez, Member  
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24 Anthony Herrera, Board Secretary  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, LISA PENA, 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 said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 29th day of October, 2020.



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Pena  
Notary Public, Porter County  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
License Number 084-003484