In The Matter Of:

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF REDEVELOPMENT

MEEETING HELD ON

January 6, 2026

REGION REPORTERS LLC

219-400-6070

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Region REPORTERS

Min-U-Script® with Word Index

STATE OF INDIANA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF LAKE)

BEFORE THE EAST CHICAGO
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had at the meeting before the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission, reported by Kristen K. Stokes, CSR, Notary Public in and for the County of Porter, State of Indiana, taken via Zoom Video-Conferencing to be held at City Hall Council Chambers, 4525 Indianapolis Boulevard, East Chicago, Indiana 46312, on December 16, 2025, scheduled to begin at 5:00 p.m. in the evening.

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APPEARANCES (IN PERSON):

Anthony Serna, Board President
Christine Russell, Board Vice President
Delainah Valdez-Medina, Board Commissioner
Randall Artis, Board Commissioner
Shelice Tolbert, Board Attorney
Frank Rivera, Executive Director
Thomas Mesich, Financial Advisor
Alysia Dunbar, Program Director
and
Members of the Public

APPEARANCES (VIA ZOOM):

Region Reporters

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PRESIDENT SERNA: Good evening. I'd like to call to order today's regular meeting of the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission for today, January 6, 2026. The time is now 5:00 p.m. If we could all please rise and renew our allegiance to the flag.

(PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE WAS RECITED.)

PRESIDENT SERNA: Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Judy Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Here.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Randy -- Randall Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Here.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Christine Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Here.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: James Portalatin? Present.

Anthony Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Present. We have all of our Commissioners present. Welcome to our new Commissioner, Judy Nava.

We'd like to move on to the agenda item, nominations and election of officers.

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: I'd like to nominate

Tony Serna for President.

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Second.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Okay. Any questions? I accept that nomination.

Counsel, do we need a vote?

ATTORNEY TOLBERT: Yes.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Okay. Secretary Portalatin, if you can do a roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Thank you.

We'll move on to the position of Vice-President.

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: I'd like to nominate Christine Russell as Vice President.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Second.

Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?
COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Portalatin? Yes.
Vice President Russell?
VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?
PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes.
VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Thank you.
PRESIDENT SERNA: For the position of Secretary?
COMMISSIONER ARTIS: I'd like to nominate James Portalatin -- Porta --
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Portalatin.
COMMISSIONER ARTIS: -- Portalatin for Secretary.
VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Second.
PRESIDENT SERNA: Mr. Secretary, roll call.
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?
COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?
COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.
SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner

Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Thank you, Commissioners, for your comments and your support for 2026.

We'll move on to our next item on the agenda, the approval of the regular meeting minutes from December 16th, 2025. Do I have a motion?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: (Inaudible.)

THE REPORTER: I can't hear you very well. Can you speak up. Who said that?

PRESIDENT SERNA: The motion was made by Commissioner Artis to approve the regular meetings.

THE REPORTER: Okay. Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Second.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Second by Vice President Russell. Any questions on the motion?

Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner

Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Motion carries. Next item on the agenda is for Director Rivera.

DIRECTOR RIVERA: Yes. Good evening, Mr. President, Vice-President, all the Commissioners, congratulations. We'd like to draw our attentions to our first action item, which is a motion to approve a request for purchase orders for Redevelopment Subrecipient Agreements for agencies in the total amount of $102,000.

The Redevelopment Department has received Subrecipient Agreements from the following agencies to provide community programs and services for the residents of East Chicago, which are funded by using CDBG funding for the programs. Below is a list of the organizations that have submitted agreements that need to be funded. The total amount of the agreements is $102,000 and requires requests for purchase orders for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2026, for each vendor listed in the attached document. The purchase orders will be created from funds allocated in the approved 2026 budget for CDBG

contractual expense.

Action is recommended to approve the request for purchase orders for the list of vendors' contractual expenses and authorize the Executive Director to sign any necessary documents. It is recommended that the following motion be adopted verbatim.

PRESIDENT SERNA: I'll entertain a motion to approve the request for purchase orders for Redevelopment Subrecipient Agreements for agencies in the total amount of $102,000 and to authorize the Executive Director to sign any necessary documents.

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Christine Russell, so moved.

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Randy Artis, second.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Motion made by Vice President Russell, second by Commissioner Artis.

Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Motion carries.

DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you.

The next item is a motion to retroactively accept the terms and conditions for a renewal of legal services of Tolbert & Tolbert, LLC, through December 31st, 2026. I'm only going to read the first paragraph. I think that's the most important part.

Tolbert & Tolbert, LLC, is honored to have the opportunity to continue to provide professional legal services for the City of East Chicago Redevelopment Commission. We understand the value of the work you do and the importance of selecting the right legal counsel. Please allow this correspondence to serve as our engagement letter outlining the terms of our legal services through December 31st, 2026. I'd like to have a motion to accept the contract for Tolbert & Tolbert.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Is there a motion on the floor to accept the contract for 2026 Tolbert & Tolbert Legal Services?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Randy Artis, so moved.

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Christine Russell, second.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Motion made by Commissioner Artis, second by Vice President Russell. Any questions on the motion?

Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Motion carries.

DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you.

Okay. We go on to our last item, which is a resolution, Resolution Number 2026-RED-1962. It's a resolution of the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission ratifying previous actions of the East Chicago Board of Public Works authorizing the contract with the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission to administer the City-Funded Homeowner's Inventive Program for 2026 and 2027.

Whereas, the Redevelopment Commission is authorized by Indiana Code 36-1-4-16 to ratify previous actions of the City of East Chicago if those actions could have been approved in advance.

And whereas, the City of East Chicago Board of Public Works, on January 8, 2026, approved the contract between the City of East Chicago Board of Public Works and the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission regarding the City-Funded Homeowner Incentive Program, known as CHIP, 2026 and 2027 with the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission for the administration of the City-Funded Homeowner Incentive Program for January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2027.

And whereas, the Redevelopment Commission desires to ratify said actions and adopt said actions of the City of East Chicago Board of Public Works.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Redevelopment Commission that:

Section 1. The actions previously taken by the City of East Chicago Board of Public Works related to approval of the contract for the administration of the City-Funded Homeowner Incentive Program are hereby ratified.

Section 2. The above actions are adopted as actions of the Redevelopment Commission effective the date of said action by the City of East Chicago Board of Public Works.

Section 3. This resolution shall be effective on its adoption and passage.

Adopted this 6th day of January, 2026.

PRESIDENT SERNA: I'll entertain a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-RED-1962.

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Randy Artis, so moved.

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Second, Christine Russell.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Motion made by Commissioner Artis, second by Vice President Russell. Any questions?

Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Motion carries.

The next item on the agenda is public expression. Is there any public expression? Any public expression? Any public expression?

I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: So moved.

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Second.

PRESIDENT SERNA: Mr. Secretary, roll call.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Nava?

COMMISSIONER NAVA: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Artis?

COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: Commissioner Portalatin? Yes.

Vice President Russell?

VICE PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes.

SECRETARY PORTALATIN: President Serna?

PRESIDENT SERNA: Yes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

(PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED AT 5:08 PM.)

STATE OF INDIANA)
) SS:
COUNTY OF LAKE)

BEFORE THE EAST CHICAGO
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, KRISTEN K. STOKES, CSR, Notary Public in and for the County of Porter, State of Indiana, do hereby certify that I reported in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings had in the above-entitled matter, at the time and place herein set forth; and I do further certify that the foregoing transcript, consisting of 16 (sixteen) typewritten pages, is a true and correct transcript of my said stenographic notes.

Signed this 9th day of January, 2026.



/s/ Kristen K. Stokes
KRISTEN K. STOKES
CSR# 084-003723
My Commission Expires: 8/06/31
Notary Public: Porter County, Indiana

APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2025
APPROVED & SIGNED TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2025

Anthony Serna
President

Christine Russell
Vice President

James Portalatin
Secretary

Randall Artis
Commissioner

Judy Nava
Commissioner

Frank Rivera
Executive Director