CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS:
Joseph Ochoa, President
Esteban (Steve) Hernandez, Vice-President
John Bakota, Member
Anthony Askounis, Member
Ray Lopez, Member

STAFF:
Joseph Allegretti
Winna Guzman
Allan Lee
Rebecca Sliger
Alysia Dunbar

Reported by: Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.
By: Peggy S. LaLonde

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Joseph Ochoa, Steve Hernandez, John Bakota, Anthony Askounis, Ray Lopez,

Staff Present in Chambers: Alysia Dunbar, Secretary
Winna Guzman, Director Water
Allan Lee, Director Operation

Staff Present via Zoom: Joseph Allegretti, Legal Counsel

MR. OCHOA: The meeting of the East Chicago Department of Waterworks Board of Directors will now come to order for January 22nd, 2026.
Can I get a motion to approve minutes from the January 5th, 2026 meeting as written?

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

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Approval of Warrants. Payroll: 011626, amount of $38,353.66, payroll dates of 12-27-25 to 1-9-26; Warrant 011626, amount of $17,352.59, payroll dates of 12-27-25 to 1-9-26.

Do I have a motion?

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Accounts Payable: Warrant 012226 CD, amount of $426.35; Warrant 121625 WF, amount of $333,303.00; Warrant 012226 WM, amount of $2,397.28; Warrant 012226 WD, amount of $8,310.00; Warrant 012226 WB, amount of $114,111.79.

Do I have a motion?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Reports. Water Report: Winna Guzman.

MS. GUZMAN: I have no report at this time. I'll have one at the next meeting.

MR. OCHOA: Distribution/Filtration Report: Allan Lee.

MR. LEE: If you look the Water Distribution Report, it says, Utility Director, Water Distribution. Couple of things I wanted to get on record. Monday we have got another operator breaking in. Excited about that.

Getting a quote on a mini excavator so we can quit contracting hydrants out.

M.E. Simpson is all done with their leak survey, their valves and their hydrants. There is as of right now two hydrants out of service. We have four or five -- bunch of cars that last ice storm, so we have two to fix.

We have got done with our meters or

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the meter bench over there. We tested 240 meters in-house. Accuracy is 99.42, which is pretty good. I will give you the statistics next on how many jobs we are contracting out. We are about 50/50 in-house and out of house.

So the Membrane Report. Water is getting a little cold, so the water coming in is a little slow, but we are okay. I was hoping to have the two new membranes running by now, but it looks like maybe end of February for those to kick on. Gets a little colder, you know, the plant goes a little slower.

We are getting ready to bid out in February for a new well water pump to be put in the plant, a new settler which recycles the water. That recycles about 99 percent of the water instead of putting it in the sewer. So that's coming along pretty good.

I talked to Austgen about finishing our cyber security and our servers. He said he is going to get on that, maybe in the next 30 days it will be done. So I told him I'm going to keep him to the grindstone on that because I want that done.

We are also bidding in February on the tank to be painted and redone with epoxy inside, and have a pump station there that will be able to run the city just like Tod does, if something is wrong with the plant. So then we'll have two backups. We still have the tank at Filtration too. Just in case we need to make some major repair. The bid goes out, so the tank will probably be down all summer. It's where they sandblast and paint inside and out, epoxy inside.

MR. OCHOA: Which tank are you referring to?

MR. LEE: The water tank on Chicago Avenue. The one up in the sky there.

Then I gave you the list, so we do a weekly thing. Today was the meeting with the head of maintenance. We go through all the tickets, all the work is tracked to make sure that nothing slips through the cracks. We have an average of one to two tickets a day at the plant. This just sort of gave you -- it's a little breakdown where the tickets are. Some of them are still parts, but just sort of shows you what still has to be fixed, shows you what leaks, and, you know, valves, and just gives you an idea of what has to be fixed. That's what is left.

And the last one is our coming up

with the rate case. So sort of tells you what is out there. We just did a survey on all water maintenance that needs to be replaced. I forget how many feet. That was like --

MS. GUZMAN: I think like 140,000.

MR. LEE: That's feet of water main that needs to be replaced and that was generated so we know exactly what needs to be changed in the city still. After next year we are going after that main on Indianapolis. I want to finish Roxanna. We had about 97 valves broke in the city and we need about a million dollars to finish the rest of the curb spots that are broke.

As you know, we are in the process in a couple years of replacing all the meters because all the batteries are going old and we have to progressively get that done.

It shows you what else Filtration has, what it needs on here.

And then finally on the bottom is what has to be done every year in the plant. This is a regular maintenance list. I didn't put the cost there, I didn't want you to see that.

I think everything is going pretty good. We run Tod during the day, empty that tank over there, and run the city on it. We have enough storage for about 24 hours. Looking into the tank at the old plant, not sure what we are going to do with the old plant. We don't know, but I'm still looking at maybe the next -- we have a one and a half million gallon underground tank not being used. It's in really good shape and possibly using the tank until we decide what we are going to do.

MR. BAKOTA: Is that a steel tank?

MR. LEE: It looks like -- if you were in the Roman time, it has those kind of columns from the Romans all through it. Next meeting I'll bring you pictures of the inside. It's pretty awesome. When you go down there you have to have a 30-foot ladder.

MR. BAKOTA: What's this, remove chemicals from old plant, $150,000.00?

MR. LEE: We have old chemicals at the old plant. Actually working with a company yesterday,

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we have chemicals still in the new plant and we are going to have that done probably quickly and cleaned. They have got to be removed because it's not being used. Just being in compliance with everything.

We are going to turn the old fluoride room into a tack room and buy it by the bulk, that saves a lot of money, which is used for the settler.

MR. BAKOTA: That's on the new plant?

MR. LEE: Yes.

MR. BAKOTA: That's charcoal?

MR. LEE: No, that's the old plant. That's it. I'll leave you alone now.

MR. OCHOA: Thank you. Legal Counsel: Joseph Allegretti.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: No report, Mr. President.

MR. OCHOA: Financial Report: Rebecca Sliger. Not present.

Next is Resolution WD 25-03. A Resolution of the Board of Directors authorizing the write-off of certain delinquent water charges and penalties (Water).

Do I have a motion?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: Any comments or questions? (None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Proposals and Quotations: M.E. Simpson, proposal for water audit and validation services, $17,000 (Water).

BakerTilly - proposed financial advisory and accounting services, general accounting and reporting support, $95,000.00 (Water).

Bray Sales Midwest, Quote QQ-3129546-00, $6,816.92 (Water/Filtration).

Calumet City Plumbing, water

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disconnect, 4837 McCook Avenue, $9,500.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, water leaks 4126 Deal Street, $8,500.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, water leak 3818 Alder Street, $12,000 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, water services at 1508 Columbus Drive, $25,000.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, water services at 1510 Columbus Drive, $30,000.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, meter pit, 510 West 142nd Street, $6,000.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, water leak 4136 Ivy Street, $5,000.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, meter pit 616 West 144th Street, $7,000.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, water leak 5519 Walsh Avenue, $13,000.00 (Water). Calumet City Plumbing, 16-inch insertion valves, Columbus/Indianapolis; Columbus/Railroad, $144,990.00 (Water). Semcor, Quote 251217C-rev1, $2,469.00 (Water/Filtration). Torrenda Surveying LLC, plat of vacation, $3,250.00 (Water). Air Services Companym. Service order #270848, amount $10,622.79 (Water/Filtration). Can I have a motion?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: Any comments or questions? All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Rate Sheet: Eurofins 2026 rate sheet (Water). Do I have a motion?

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion to accept.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Change Order. F.E. Moran, Change Order #2, change amount of $4,095.30 (Water). Do I have a motion?

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion to approve.
MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.
MR. OCHOA: Any comments or questions? All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Past Due Invoices: EC Auto, invoice #29471, $195.00 (Water/Filtration). Explanation: Had to wait to pay due to no funds in PO. Invoice dated 10/14/25.
BakerTilly, invoice #BT 3322267. Explanation: Received invoice January 16, '26 after inquiry by BakerTilly. The original was sent to Controller's Office. Invoice amount $1,653.75 (Water).
The third one is invoice #GSM2500693. This invoice received January 12, '26 and '25 PO was already closed. This invoice will have to wait for '26 PO. Amount is $3,980.27 (Water).
Do I have a motion on these three past due invoices?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: Any comments or questions?

MS. GUZMAN: I don't think you mentioned the vendor's name. That was for Ford Fleet Care.
MR. OCHOA: What was that?
MS. GUZMAN: The vendor on the last one was Ford Fleet Care.

MR. OCHOA: Ford Fleet care, invoice #GSM2500693. All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Unfinished Business: None.
Public Comment: None.
Our next regular meeting will be Monday, February 2, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., here in the Chambers.
Is there a motion to adjourn?
MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to adjourn.

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MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Meeting adjourned. Thank you.

***** Meeting Adjourned *****

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
January 22nd, 2026

Approved and signed 2/2/26

Joseph Ochoa, President

Steve Hernandez, Vice-President

John Bakota, Member

Anthony Askounis, Member

Ray Lopez, Member

Alysia Dunbar, Recording Secretary.

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