

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular Meeting Minutes  
February 1, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS:	STAFF:
Henry Ventura, President	Winna Guzman
Joseph Ochoa, Vice-President	Ben El Harit
John Bakota, Member	Ed Santeen
Anthony Askounis, Member	Joseph Allegretti
Ray Lopez, Member	Bill Biller

Reported by: Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.

By: Peggy S. LaLonde

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present: John Bakota, Henry Ventura,  
Anthony Askounis

Present Telephonic: Joseph Ochoa, Ray  
Lopez

Staff Present: Winna Guzman, Anthony  
Herrera

Staff Present Telephonic: Ed Santen, Joseph  
Allegretti, Bill Biller, and  
Ben El Harit

MR. VENTURA: Call to order the meeting  
of the City of East Chicago Department of Waterworks.  
First on the agenda we have approval of minutes from  
January 21, 2021, as written.

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

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

(All signify aye.)

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
Next Check Warrants.

WARRANT 123120 WD - \$249,253.32.

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

1 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

3 (All signify aye.)

4 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
WARRANT 012721 WB - \$26,390.48

5 MR. OCHOA: Motion to approve.

6 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

8 (All signify aye.)

9 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
WARRANT 020121 WB - \$223,549.27.

10 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion.

11 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

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

13 (All signify aye.)

14 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
Payroll Warrants.  
WARRANT 122320 - \$34,699.52  
Dates of 12-5-20 to 12-18-20

15 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

16 MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

18 (All signify aye.)

19 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
WARRANT 012221 - \$37,846.43  
Dates of 1-2-21 to 1-15-21

20 MR. OCHOA: Motion to approve.

21 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

23 (All signify aye.)

24 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

25

1 WARRANT 012221 - \$20,404.17 - Utilities Payroll  
2 Dates of 1-2-21 to 1-15-21

3 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

4 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

5 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
(None) All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

6 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
Filtration Report, Ben El Harit.

7 MR. EL HARIT: No report at this time.

8 MR. VENTURA: Water report, Winna Guzman.

9 MS. GUZMAN: No report.

10 MR. VENTURA: Distribution report, Edward  
11 Santen.

12 MR. SANTEN: I have no report at this  
13 time.

14 MR. VENTURA: Next, we are going to have  
under New Business, Resolution number WD 20-03, and this  
15 is a Resolution of the Board of Directors authorizing  
the write-off of certain delinquent water charges and  
16 penalties. Do I have a motion to approve?

17 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion.

18 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

19 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
(None) All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

20 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
Next on agenda, under New Business,  
21 Agreements. First agreement is M.E. Simpson, water  
audit and validation services. And I believe that's for  
22 \$19,900.00. Do I have a motion to approve?

23 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

24 MR. OCHOA: Second.

25 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?

1 (None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

2 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

3 Under agreements, Bosak Ford,  
4 premium maintenance plan, for Filtration. This is for,  
5 I think, \$1,355.00. Do I have a motion to approve?

6 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

7 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

8 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?

9 (None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

10 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

11 Next on the agenda, we have  
12 adjustments. First adjustment is 4729 Northcote.  
13 Winna?

14 MS. GUZMAN: Good evening, Winna Guzman,  
15 Water Department Director. The current owner paid  
16 \$60.00 additional towards this account and was applied  
17 under the previous owners name. The account was not  
18 transferred to current owner on the date the payment was  
19 applied to the previous owner. So this account needs to  
20 be adjusted and corrected to reflect the payment of  
21 \$60.00 to be applied under the new current owner. I  
22 would recommend that the Board approve the reversal  
23 correction of the \$60.00 payment and apply directly to  
24 the new owner.

25 MR. VENTURA: Do I have a motion to  
approve?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?

(None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

Next adjustment, we have R & R  
Visual, hydrant permit.

MS. GUZMAN: This is a hydrant permit  
issued to R & R Visual. The charge quote associated  
with the meter hydrant usage was incorrectly inputted  
back in 2017. And reviewing the charge code, it was a

1 rate charge of .008400 for water usage, which was  
2 incorrect. So we have corrected it and there has to be  
3 an adjustment to this account in order to bill this  
4 account properly. So I'm recommending the Board allow  
5 me to adjust and correct this bill for this customer.

6 MR. VENTURA: Do I have a motion to  
7 approve?

8 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

9 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

10 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
11 (None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

12 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
13 The last adjustment is for 4901  
14 Walsh.

15 MS. GUZMAN: Again, this meter was  
16 running counterclockwise and reading the payment in the  
17 negative consumption causing the account being assessed  
18 usage of 9732218. This again in gallons. The owner was  
19 contacted multiple times to schedule an inspection, with  
20 no response. We finally were able to inspect the meter  
21 and it was identified it was installed incorrectly and  
22 it was incorrectly billed. The biller didn't catch  
23 this, but the owner was incorrectly billed that amount  
24 and we want to correct that so he can be correctly  
25 billed.

MR. BAKOTA: Was that meter put in  
backwards?

MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

MR. BAKOTA: Who installed that?

MS. GUZMAN: I can identify that and  
provide it at the next meeting.

MR. VENTURA: So it's been --

MS. GUZMAN: It's been corrected.

MR. BAKOTA: It's hard to do that since  
there's an arrow on the meter showing you which way to  
install.

1 MS. GUZMAN: Well, we do have some going  
2 counterclockwise and we are trying to reach out to the  
3 property owners to be able to gain access to check on  
4 it. So you don't know if it was identified or installed  
5 incorrectly.

6 MR. VENTURA: Do I have a motion to  
7 approve?

8 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

9 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

10 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
11 (None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

12 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

13 Next on the agenda we have past due  
14 invoices. First one for Cintas for \$77.03, Filtration.  
15 The reason for the delinquency, invoice was sent  
16 1-27-2021 from Public Works. Do I have a motion to  
17 approve?

18 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

19 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

20 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
21 (None) All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

22 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

23 Next is First Merchants, that's for  
24 \$5.00. And the reason for the delinquency was, vendor  
25 sent invoice in December of 2020. Do I have a motion to  
approve?

MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

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

(All signify aye.)

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

Next, Compliance Report: None  
Report from legal counsel, Attorney

Allegretti.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: I have nothing in

1 particular to report. The analysis and study by our  
2 consultants and staff is proceeding on the IURC. They  
3 are working very hard and it's kind of a challenging and  
4 daunting task. We expect to have the case filed by  
5 Spring and a new appropriate rate to provide sufficient  
6 revenue for the operation of the utility by the end of  
7 the year. We've got our fingers crossed.

8 It's a time consuming and extensive  
9 process, but as we all know from hearing Winna and Bill  
10 Biller tell us about our financial problems, our rates  
11 aren't sufficient to support our operation and  
12 maintenance of our utility, but we're working on it.  
13 That's all, thank you.

14 MR. VENTURA: Thank you.

15 MR. OCHOA: Is there a limit on this  
16 issue with the State, the SRF?

17 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No. The State Revolving  
18 Fund is used to finance Public Works projects. This is  
19 the IURC, Director Ochoa, and there is the local  
20 counselor who defends and acts as the advocate for the  
21 public and our industrial community, and the appropriate  
22 state ones. When our rate case is filed, they usual  
23 band together, which they normally do, to resist and try  
24 to keep the rates down. And it's kind of a cross  
25 between an arbitration and litigation and a mediation.  
You know, in our case, in the past our past rate cases,  
it's ended by compromise by all the parties involved.  
So that may be what happens here, but we are seeking a  
significant and substantial increase, and I guess we'll  
know as time goes on.

MR. OCHOA: Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for  
Attorney Allegretti? (None)

Next we have Financial report, Bill  
Biller.

MR. BILLER: No report.

MR. VENTURA: Unfinished business: None  
Public Comment: None

Our next meeting will be  
February 15, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., East Chicago Council  
Chambers, City Hall.

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

1 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to adjourn.

2 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.


3 MR. VENTURA: All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

4 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
Meeting is adjourned.

5 \*\*\*\*\* Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.\*\*\*\*\*

6  
7 Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of  
8 February 1, 2021

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

10  
11   
12 Henry Ventura, President

13 SI Joseph Ochoa  
14 Joseph Ochoa, ~~Vice-President~~ vice president

15  
16 SI John Bakota  
17 John Bakota, Member

18 SI Ray Lopez  
19 Ray Lopez, Member

20  
21 Anthony Askounis  
22 Anthony Askounis, Member

23   
24 Anthony Herrera, Secretary

25



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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 3rd day of February, 2021.

*Peggy S. LaLonde*



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR