CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 16, 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: 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. HERNANDEZ: The meeting of the East Chicago Department of Waterworks Board of Directors will now come to order for February 16th, 2026.
Can I get a motion to approve minutes from the February 2nd, 2026 meeting as written?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.
Approval of Warrants - Payroll.

Electronically signed by Peggy LaLonde (301-364-327-3860)

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I'll read these two and entertain a motion. Warrant 021326, amount of $41,868.64, payroll dates of 1-24-26 to 2-6-26; Warrant 021326, amount of $176,603.76, payroll dates of 1-24-26 to 2-6-26.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Any comments or questions? (None)

All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.

Accounts Payable: Warrant 020626 WB, $170,825.00; Warrant 021626 WB, amount of $296,092.06; Warrant 021626 CD, amount of $347.00.

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to accept.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Any comments or questions? (None)

All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.

Reports - Water Report: Winna Guzman.

MS. GUZMAN: Just two little items. I just wanted to advise the Board we have activated our pay over the phone type system as of Friday. So our customers can call in and make a payment via phone. It's also in Spanish to accommodate our customers. It's been a long time coming, but I am very happy that we have implemented this system as our customers have been inquiring on this for the past couple of years. So that's an additional convenience to our customers and resource for them to pay.

MR. BAKOTA: Is that a credit card or debit card?

MS. GUZMAN: Credit card, debit card, and I believe their bank account, checking account. So, you know, feel free to try it out if you so choose. Everyone is happy about that because a lot of people have been asking for that.

Electronically signed by Peggy LaLonde (301-364-327-3860) 16f7b974-ce7e-4b19-9104-e8f0952d1e84

Also I wanted to just mention to the Board that bids will be presented and opened before this Board in the upcoming weeks, which projects are reflected on the Resolution WD 26-04 that's being presented today. So I just wanted to advise the Board of that.

MR. BAKOTA: Didn't we go at that once, a similar one?

MS. GUZMAN: Yes, we did, but this is the second phase of that. So we have a couple more improvement projects that we are looking to do, which are listed on this resolution. So just to advise you that we are going to be receiving bids in the next couple of weeks.

MR. BAKOTA: Are they going to have a public meeting on that or no?

MS. GUZMAN: We'll open before the public forum.

MR. BAKOTA: Before our meeting.

MS. GUZMAN: Just to let you know. That completes my report.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Distribution/Filtration Report: Mr. Allan Lee.

MR. LEE: You have the report in front of you. Pretty much good.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Legal council, Mr. Allegretti.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: Good afternoon. Briefly, as I mentioned at the last meeting, there is a resolution on the agenda, which is also called a declaratory resolution, which is the first step authorizing the issuance of bonds. It sets a maximum amount of money in bonds that can be issued, and kind of briefly and generally describes the nature of projects that are going to be financed. And as Winna said, there is going to be a bid opening at the next two regular meetings. Thank you.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Financial Report:

Rebecca Sliger. Miss Sliger is not present.

New Business: Resolution WD 26-04, Amended and Restated Declaratory Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Department of Waterworks of East Chicago, Indiana, authorizing the rebuilding, repairing, extending, and improving the Waterworks system of the City and related matters (Water).

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Any comments or questions? (None)

All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.

Agreements - I'll read all the agreements and entertain a motion.

Alert Alarm, Alarm Monitoring Agreement, not-to-exceed $700.00 (Water).

Alert Alarm, Alarm Monitoring Agreement, rear of the building, not-to-exceed of $700.00 (Water).

Arrow Services, Inc., annual monthly service agreement, first year total $629,96, not-to-exceed $700.00 (Water).

Arrow Services, Inc., annual monthly service agreement, first year total $718.77, not-to-exceed of $700.00 (Water/Distribution).

Cintas, East Chicago Waterworks, estimated average annual cost, $13,410.00, not-to-exceed $10,000.00 (Water).

Cintas, East Chicago Waterworks, service location 0319, not-to-exceed $10,000.00 (Water).

Cintas, Location Agreement 210422387, not-to-exceed $5,000.00 (Water/Filtration).

Cintas, Location Agreement 210422387, not-to-exceed of $10,000.00 (Water).

Any comments of questions?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to accept.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

I do have a question. Arrow Services, annual monthly service agreement was $718.77, but the not-to-exceed is $700.00.

Electronically signed by Peggy LaLonde (301-364-327-3860)

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MS. GUZMAN: Can I ask that be amended to -- we can do $750.00. I apologize for that.

MR. BAKOTA: And the next one, Cintas, estimated average annual cost of $13,410.00. The not-to-exceed is $10,000.00.

MS. GUZMAN: We'll have that amended to reflect $13,500.00, not-to-exceed. Thank you for identifying that.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Those are the only two, right?

MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

MR. BAKOTA: There is two Arrow Services, but just the one.

MR. HERNANDEZ: So Arrow Services and Cintas.

All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.

MS. GUZMAN: Thank you.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Proposals and Quotations. I'll read all of them off and entertain a motion.

Christopher B. Burke, professional engineering services, raw water pump, $93,000.00 (Water).

Christopher B. Burke, professional engineering services, lead service line replacement, $233,000.00 (Water).

Morrison Construction Company, sulfuric acid leak repair, $7,107.00 (Water/Filtration).

13661 Clow Valve Company, $3,000.00 (Water).

Crane 1, invoice #INN07-31457, $969.00 (Water/filtration).

Bray, sale order #SMW 052158, $4,976.78, (Water/Filtration).

Korellis, proposal # CM260212 B, not-to-exceed $3,000.00 (Water/Filtration).

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Any comments or questions? (None)

MR. HERNANDEZ: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.
Unfinished Business: None
Public Comment: None
Our next regular meeting is Monday, March 2, 2026, at 5:00 p.m., here in The Council Chambers.
Is there a motion for adjournment?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to adjourn.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. HERNANDEZ: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion carries.
Meeting adjourned. Thank you. Have a good evening.

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

Electronically signed by Peggy LaLonde (301-364-327-3860)

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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
February 16th, 2026

Approved and signed March 2, 2026

Joseph Ochoa, President

Steve Hernandez, Vice-President

John Bakota, Member

Anthony Askounis, Member

Ray Lopez, Member

Alysia Dunbar, Recording Secretary.

Electronically signed by Peggy LaLonde (301-364-327-3860)

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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 20th day of February, 2026.



Peggy S. LaLonde

Electronically signed by Peggy LaLonde (301-364-327-3860)

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