

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS

BOARD MEMBERS

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

Regular Meeting Minutes
(Via Telephone Conference)
Monday, March 1, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

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

Present Via Telephone Conference: Joseph Ochoa.

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Anthony Herrera, Winna
Guzman.

Present Via Telephone Conference: Joseph
Allegretti, Edward Santen, Bill Biller.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 15, 2021.

Motion to approve February 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes made by
John Bakota. Second by Anthony Askounis.

Questions/Comments: None.

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

APPROVAL OF CHECK WARRANTS:

MR. VENTURA: Approval of Check Warrants. Check Warrant
021921 WB in the amount of \$24,735.36.

Motion to approve Check Warrant 021921 WB made by Joseph
Ochoa. Second by Anthony Askounis.

1 Questions/Comments: None.

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

4 MR. VENTURA: Check Warrant 030121 WB in the amount of
5 \$279,514.49.

6 Motion to approve Check Warrant 030121 WB made by Joseph
7 Ochoa. Second by John Bakota.

8 Questions/Comments: None.

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

11 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANTS:

12 MR. VENTURA: Approval of Payroll Warrants. Payroll
13 021921 in the amount of \$40,004.04. That's for payroll from
14 1/30/21 to 2/12/21.

15 Motion to approve Payroll Warrant 021921 Payroll from 1/30/21
16 to 2/12/21 made by Anthony Askounis. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

17 Questions/Comments: None.

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

20 MR. VENTURA: Payroll Warrant 021921 and the correct
21 amount is going to be as per the Warrant \$21,508.78.

22 MR. OCHOA: My Warrant says \$20,508.78.

23 MR. VENTURA: That should change. It should be
24 \$21,508.78.

25 MR. OCHOA: Okay.

26 Motion to approve Payroll Warrant 021921 Utilities Payroll
27 1/30/21 to 2/12/21 made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Anthony
28 Askounis.

29 Questions/Comments: None.

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

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1 FILTRATION REPORT: None.

2 WATER REPORT:

3 MR. VENTURA: Water Report, Winna Guzman.

4 MS. GUZMAN: Good evening, Board. Winna Guzman, Water
5 Department Director. I have submitted a report to this
6 Board. If you have any questions, I am happy to answer any
7 questions you may have.

8 MR. VENTURA: Any questions for Winna?

9 MR. BAKOTA: I do. There was I believe a write-off on
10 Mittal Steel. I lost it. I had it marked here. Or it was
11 adjustments. I'm not sure. But I thought it was on page 7
12 here.

13 MS. GUZMAN: No. I don't see any adjustments in January
14 or February relating to Arcelor.

15 MR. BAKOTA: All right. I'll defer.

16 MS. GUZMAN: Just let me know and I can bring it up
17 before the next meeting. Or even if you want to call me
18 back, I can answer that for you or respond.

19 MR. BAKOTA: All right.

20 MR. VENTURA: Any further questions for Winna? Thank
21 you, Winna.

22 MS. GUZMAN: You're welcome.

23 DISTRIBUTION REPORT:

24 MR. VENTURA: Do we have a Distribution Report?

25 MR. SANTEN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. We are
working on our water leak survey with ATS LTD out of Villa
Park, Illinois.

We're in our third week of examining the
distribution system. We found so far about two dozen leaks,
several water main breaks. But none significant that would
halt, reduce our unaccountability.

The majority of the leaks have been service line
leaks on the old lead services. But I hope to report some

1 good news once they're completed. But right now that's the
2 status of that project.

3 That's all I have to report.

4 MR. VENTURA: Thank you. Any questions for Mr. Santen?
5 Thank you.

6 MR. SANTEN: Thank you.

7 NEW BUSINESS WATER:

8 MR. VENTURA: Next we're going to go to New Business
9 Water. And the first on the agenda is going to be the
10 Agreements portion. And that's an agreement with Christopher
11 Burke Engineering. And this is for water distribution system
12 review.

13 Can anybody elaborate on this? Winna is going to
14 speak on this.

15 MS. GUZMAN: I think Ed can talk on it. But I can just
16 briefly. Again Winna Guzman for the record. This is for
17 professional engineering services to be rendered on behalf of
18 the Water Department. And the total amount is \$23,000 with
19 time and material. That's on all on-call consultation basis.

20 So some of the items that were in the scope of
21 services that will be rendered will be data collection and
22 review. This is water main atlas information, high service
23 and pumps, elevated water tank, water usage data, water model
24 as well as prepare technical memorandum.

25 And obviously item number 4 is on-call consultation
services.

MR. VENTURA: And the total amount is \$23,000?

MS. GUZMAN: Yes. Plus time and material for on-call
consultation.

MR. VENTURA: I have a question, Winna. On page 4 where
it says Christopher Burke Engineering and it's got a schedule
of per hour. It's on the fourth page.

MS. GUZMAN: Yes. That would be based on the on-call
consultation.

MR. VENTURA: Right. On the last line of that page it

1 says Christopher Burke Engineering reserves the right to
2 increase these rates and costs by 5 percent after December
31, 2020.

3 MS. GUZMAN: That may be 2021. That may be an error
4 there. But I can definitely look, inquire on that.

5 I'll have an amendment to that sent over before we
6 send it down to the Controller's Office.

6 MR. VENTURA: Okay.

7 MS. GUZMAN: Thank you for noting that.

8 MR. VENTURA: Any further questions for Winna?

9 Motion to approve Christopher Burke Engineering Agreement
10 made by John Bakota. Second by Anthony Askounis.

11 Questions/Comments: None.

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

14 MR. VENTURA: We have next on the agenda a Rate Sheet
15 for Commonwealth Engineers. And you have that in your
16 packet.

17 Any questions or comments on this?

18 Motion to approve Commonwealth Engineers Rate Sheet made by
19 Anthony Askounis. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

20 Questions/Comments: None.

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

23 MR. VENTURA: We also have and it should be in your
24 packet a Memo from the City Controller regarding Cancellation
25 of Warrants.

And it reads pursuant to IC 5-11-10.5 all checks
outstanding and unpaid for a period of two years as of
December 31 of each year shall be declared canceled.

And then he encloses a list of checks that have
been outstanding for two or more years and will be canceled
and received back into the fund upon which they were

1 originally drawn.

2 I don't know if there's any questions regarding
3 this.

4 This is just basic info, right.

5 MS. GUZMAN: It's notification.

6 MR. VENTURA: We're going to go then into Adjustments.
7 We have one for 4729 Kennedy Avenue. The owner is Victor
8 Castaneda Galindo.

9 And reason for adjustment owner was estimated
10 usage. Owner did not have a service line. Owner was
11 estimated usage for eight months. Account has new meter and
12 is receiving actual reads.

13 Do you want to comment, Winna?

14 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. Basically this meter was changed out.
15 And it was noted then, recently noted that they were
16 estimated and charged for water usage which should not have
17 been.

18 So we're correcting that account to remove that
19 charge or charges assessed.

20 MR. VENTURA: Do we have any questions for Winna?

21 Motion to approve 4729 Kennedy Avenue Adjustment made by
22 Joseph Ochoa. Second by Anthony Askounis.

23 Questions/Comments: None.

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

MS. GUZMAN: Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: You're welcome.

COMPLIANCE: None.

REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL: None.

FINANCIAL REPORT: None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1 MR. VENTURA: Any Unfinished Business?

2 MR. BAKOTA: Winna, I found it. It's titled Over-Short
3 Adjustment Process. It shows unpaid amount and then it shows
write-off on page 7.

4 MS. GUZMAN: I see it here. The \$4,553.96.

5 MR. BAKOTA: Mittal Steel.

6 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. I would have to go back and bring it
7 back to the Board at the next meeting just to verify exactly
what occurred.

8 But most of these either their payment was applied
9 incorrectly or they have a credit that we need to clear off
the books.

10 So we're trying to clean up the books. We're
11 trying to get all these off our books and our records and
clean them up.

12 So I will check on this one. And I will bring you
the information at the next meeting.

13 MR. BAKOTA: They show an unpaid amount of \$4,553.

14 MS. GUZMAN: I see that, yes. I do see that.

15 MR. BAKOTA: And a write-off of \$4,553. It's active.

16 MS. GUZMAN: And we brought this before I think the
17 previous Board to write these off. But I will double check
on this one.

18 MR. BAKOTA: Thank you.

19 MS. GUZMAN: It was approved. But I don't have the
20 reason for that. But I can bring that next meeting.

21 MR. BAKOTA: I appreciate it.

22 MS. GUZMAN: No problem.

23 MR. VENTURA: Thank you.

24 PUBLIC COMMENT:

25 MR. VENTURA: Do we have any Public Comment?

1 MR. HERRERA: We have Public Comment. State your name,
2 your address and the reason.

3 MR. LOPEZ: Michael Lopez. My address is 1107 East
4 Columbus Drive, East Chicago, Indiana.

5 I've been assessed 17 or \$1,800 for 4204-4202
6 Euclid Avenue. The City notified me of the New Meter
7 Program. And I agreed to have a new meter put in over there.

8 At the time of the installation the plumber or
9 contractor stated that there was a by-pass.

10 I have had the building for 20 years approximately
11 and never knew there was a by-pass. Had I known and invited
12 the City surely I would have removed it. So I was totally
13 baffled.

14 I understand there's a by-pass. I never knew it.
15 My only comment is that I bought it from Marilyn Miller who
16 had a laundromat before me there. If she put it, she's dead.

17 I have never skirted. I got plenty of water bills
18 at 1102 East Columbus Drive. I pay those. We've paid these
19 faithfully every month since about 2004. So I don't see how
20 I am responsible.

21 MR. BAKOTA: Did they fine you for that?

22 MR. LOPEZ: No. They want me to pay for the new
23 installation.

24 If I knew it was a by-pass, I have the capabilities
25 of removing it. I certainly would never have invited you
without putting or removing the by-pass. I mean it's as
simple as that.

Actually the building belongs to my kids. I was
renting it from them, paying the rent and everything.

26 MR. BAKOTA: So were we going to remove the by-pass?

27 MS. GUZMAN: It has been removed. But I would need to
28 bring the documentation at the next meeting.

29 MR. BAKOTA: We wouldn't remove the by-pass. We may
30 order it removed.

31 MS. GUZMAN: It was removed. The work was performed,

1 yes.

2 MR. BAKOTA: We did it?

3 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

4 MR. LOPEZ: Somebody put the by-pass. Look, I've been
5 in this Town a long time. I know the by-pass was there. I
6 have had meter readers. I have had a couple of individuals
7 tell me, Vic, it was there before you ever bought the place.

8 I mean I am sure I am not the only person in this
9 Town or the only building that had a by-pass. At one time it
10 was not common, but plenty of people had them.

11 I did not put the by-pass in.

12 MR. BAKOTA: Vic, I mean are you protesting a charge on
13 it?

14 MR. LOPEZ: No. I am protesting -- I'm being charged
15 for the new water meter, right, for the labor on it or
16 something?

17 MS. GUZMAN: It's the labor cost.

18 MR. LOPEZ: The labor cost on the new water meter.

19 MS. GUZMAN: I would have to bring it in because I don't
20 have the documentation.

21 MR. BAKOTA: Why would we charge him for installation of
22 a meter?

23 MS. GUZMAN: It wasn't the installation of the meter.

24 MR. LOPEZ: Well, they removed it. And I didn't go to
25 see what they removed. It stated that they removed the
by-pass. Wherever the by-pass was at I have no clue.

And I don't run the laundromat.

MR. VENTURA: Was this during the installation?

MS. GUZMAN: During the installation of the new meter.

MR. VENTURA: Of the lines and all that?

MS. GUZMAN: Yes. That is correct.

1 MR. LOPEZ: It was part of the New Meter Program.

2 MS. GUZMAN: That is correct.

3 MR. LOPEZ: Look I would have never invited anybody in
4 if I had put it in or knew about it. I mean like I said I
5 have capabilities of removing it. Why would I invite you in
6 if I knew there was a by-pass?

7 MR. BAKOTA: I think we ought to give the option to the
8 owner to remove a by-pass if he wants to.

9 It's illegal, yeah. He said he didn't know. We
10 should give the owner the right. Maybe you could have done
11 it yourself.

12 MR. LOPEZ: I would have removed had I known there was
13 one there. Why would I invite you in knowingly?

14 I made an appointment. I think somebody from the
15 Water Department said when can we come in. We agreed to a
16 shift for the day or half a day, whatever it took.

17 MR. BAKOTA: What was the charge on that?

18 MS. GUZMAN: I would have to bring that.

19 MR. LOPEZ: It's 1,800.

20 MR. BAKOTA: \$1,800.

21 MR. LOPEZ: Yeah. 22 then it went up to 1,800. I've
23 never been late on a water bill since -- I've leased it for
24 four years. So here it is 2021.

25 I know 2004 I got the mortgage on it. And I had it
for two years prior to that on contract.

Marilyn might have had it. Like I said I've talked
to people. We've had meter readers in there since I had it.
Certainly the meter reader could have said something. He
didn't tell me.

26 MR. VENTURA: Winna, prior to this where Calumet City
27 went in did any of the meter readers ever mention it?

28 MS. GUZMAN: Again I would have to go through the
29 records and bring them up. At this time I do not have that
30 information. So I would like the opportunity to bring it

1 before the Board next meeting.

2 MR. LOPEZ: I don't want to tell on anybody. A guy told
3 me, he said I've read meters there for 20 years. It was
4 there. I said why didn't you notify the City when I took it
5 over.

6 When I took it over, I had to get a meter reading.
7 I got a meter reading. I mean come on. Somebody certainly
8 would have seen it.

9 Like I said I didn't really check. I'll be honest
10 with you. I never checked on it.

11 MR. BAKOTA: Did they tell you they were going to take
12 the by-pass out?

13 MR. LOPEZ: No. I just said it's part of the New Meter
14 Program. They found a by-pass.

15 When they came, they said we can't do anything
16 because there's a by-pass there.

17 MS. GUZMAN: I think we need to bring up the information
18 at the next meeting. I'll send it to Attorney Allegretti.
19 Let him review it.

20 MR. ASKOUNIS: You were getting every month a water bill
21 on that place?

22 MR. LOPEZ: Absolutely.

23 MR. ASKOUNIS: How did he get a water bill when you
24 by-pass it?

25 MR. LOPEZ: You know what, I don't even know how the
by-pass worked over there.

MR. BAKOTA: Well, you by-pass to cheat water usage.
You shut the valve off so it won't go through the meter.

MR. LOPEZ: Someone told me for laundromats with storage
tanks they put a by-pass on to reduce the flow so you
wouldn't blow the meter out.

I couldn't tell you. I've been told several
stories like I said.

And the other story was three people approached me,

1 two don't work for the City, one still works for the City.
2 I'm not getting them involved. Vic, that thing was there
before Marilyn got it. What can I tell you.

3 MR. VENTURA: I say then let's put it on hold. Then we
4 can give Winna a chance to do what's she's got to do.

5 MR. BAKOTA: In my opinion we should give the owner a
certain amount of time to remove it on their own.

6 Even if we go into a house and the piping is wrong,
7 we always tell them get a plumber to do it. Our people don't
do that work. I don't understand.

8 MR. LOPEZ: My point is had I known the by-pass was
9 there after agreeing to have a date to have a new meter put
in I'm pretty sure -- I don't even know where the by-pass was
10 exactly. I know I could have taken it off. I mean I
wouldn't have put myself in this predicament.

11 MR. VENTURA: We'll table it for now and give Winna a
12 chance.

13 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. And I can bring the information.

14 MR. BAKOTA: For the next meeting?

15 MR. VENTURA: To present everything she's got and get
the attorneys involved.

16 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Just a thought I mean we can
17 extrapolate what the bill would have been going forward.
Extrapolate an estimate how much water was consumed and not
18 paid for. So it's double-edged sword.

19 MR. LOPEZ: Well, all I can tell you is you're going to
find less water before the new owner took over or the new
20 laundromat owner because I was running two, three machines.
So you're going to see less water being used than now.

21 The new owner put in 20 new machines, larger
22 machines. So you will definitely see a difference in water
usage.

23 MR. ASKOUNIS: So you're contesting the \$1,800 that was
24 the labor?

25 MR. LOPEZ: That's the labor charge.

1 MR. ASKOUNIS: Labor and material for taking out and
putting in the pipes.

2 MR. LOPEZ: I'm assuming that's what it.

3 MR. ASKOUNIS: Not the water bill. You're not
4 contesting the water bill?

5 MR. LOPEZ: No. I paid the water bill. But if you're
going to check the water prior to 2019 or '18, whenever the
6 lady took over, she put in new machines. Consumption is
going to be skewed because she put in new machines. I had
7 four or five machines running.

8 MR. ASKOUNIS: So \$1,800, that was for the work. So we
understand each other.

9 MR. LOPEZ: It was labor to my understanding. Right?

10 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. I believe it was labor, yes.

11 MR. ASKOUNIS: To disconnect and connect.

12 MR. LOPEZ: I think they had to remove the by-pass.

13 MR. ALLEGRETTI: There is no charge for the water that
14 was consumed and not paid for.

15 MR. VENTURA: So we'll just go ahead and give Winna a
chance to present and let the attorneys review it.

16 MR. BAKOTA: It will be our next meeting.

17 MR. VENTURA: Next meeting March 15.

18 MR. LOPEZ: Do I have to come back then?

19 MR. BAKOTA: Yeah. She will have the information.

20 MS. GUZMAN: You can also call.

21 MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

22 MR. VENTURA: Any other Public Comment?

23
24 * Next Regular Meeting Date: March 15, 2021
@ 5:00 p.m.

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1 Motion to adjourn was made by John Bakota. Second by Anthony
Askounis.

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* Meeting ended at 5:28 p.m.

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1 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
2 Monday, March 1, 2021
3 Approved and Signed _____
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6 Henry Ventura, President
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9 Joseph Ochoa, Vice President
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12 John Bakota, Member
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16 Anthony Askounis, Member
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19 Ray Lopez, Member
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22 Anthony Herrera, Board Secretary
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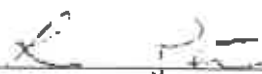
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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 12th day of March, 2021.


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

