

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BOARD MEMBERS

Grayling Gordon, President  
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President  
Valda Lewis, Secretary  
Gilberto Cantu, Member  
Eugene Austin, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes  
(Via Zoom Conference)  
Tuesday, March 22, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates  
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present in Chambers: Grayling Gordon,  
Eugene Austin.

Present Via Zoom: Valda Lewis, Gilberto Cantu.

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Ateria Allen,  
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange.

Present Via Zoom: Dawn Dawkins.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes: March 8, 2022.

Motion to approve March 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes made  
by Gilberto Cantu. Second by Valda Lewis.

Questions/Comments: None.

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

Approval & Signing of Payroll: March 18, 2022

Motion to approve March 18, 2022 Payroll made by Valda Lewis.  
Second by Gilberto Cantu.

1 Questions/Comments: None.

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

4 Approval & Signing of Warrant: 032222PB \$37,432.17.

5 MR. GORDON: There is a note made for this that the  
6 largest item for this warrant is \$12,400 for water and  
7 sewage, \$14,400 for insurance and \$6,000 other improvements.  
8 Plus various other small expenses.

9 Motion to approve Warrant 032222PB made by Gilberto Cantu  
10 Second by Eugene Austin.

11 Questions/Comments: None.

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

14 OLD BUSINESS: None.

15 NEW BUSINESS:

16 MR. GORDON: Now we'll move to New Business. And we  
17 have Miss Vanessa Hernandez-Orange, Director of Parks and  
18 Recreation, to introduce any New Business.

19 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good evening, Board. I am here  
20 to ask for a couple of approvals.

21 The first item that we have up here is approval of  
22 OZOH Engineering & Construction LLC for Nunez Park Trail  
23 Improvements.

24 I'm actually going to ask for that to be tabled.  
25 Well, we don't have to do anything with it. But we did not  
receive the funding from the Council in order to move forward  
with this. So I cannot have this approved tonight.

Hopefully I will get some type of approval  
Wednesday. We'll see.

The next item that we have is the Maintenance  
Agreement for Sportsfields, Inc. for Block Stadium Baseball  
Field. And we're doing a rate for 825 per visit.

Because this is a newly remodeled item, we want to  
make sure that we're doing the field correctly.

1 Previously we used to have the coaches kind of fill  
2 in and figure it out and dump stuff on there. But the plan  
3 is to make sure that we do the things at the stadium  
correctly.

4 So they will be coming out before and after games  
to fix the field. Again it's a rate of 825 per visit.

5 We are looking into charging other individuals who  
6 come. So we have an MOU with the high school. So that's  
why they're able to come use it basically for free.

7 When we have other individuals come out, we're also  
8 going to charge them around about for this price so that we  
can actually get paid for it.

9 Again this is just approval of the rate sheet for  
10 the maintenance through Sportsfields.

11 MR. GORDON: Any questions?

12 MS. DAWKINS: Will I need to prepare that MOU?

13 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Attorney Dawkins, we had the MOU  
14 signed about three years ago between School City of East  
Chicago and the City of East Chicago because it's all of our  
15 facilities that we have a joint partnership with.

16 MS. DAWKINS: Okay. Real good.

17 MR. GORDON: So my question is \$825 every time they come  
18 out?

19 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct.

20 MR. GORDON: And they will come out when you request  
21 them or after every game?

22 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: When we request them. So like  
23 right now they have our schedule for the home games for the  
24 Central High School.

25 We have had inquiries about people coming to play  
at the location. So what we'll do is we'll tell them, hey,  
that's fine, but this is what you're going to have to pay.  
That money will then go towards Sportsfields to come out and  
fix the field.

When we are in conversation with the semipro teams,

1 again we want to make sure that the field is done correct and  
2 it will last long. So we're going to tell them this is what  
3 we pay per game. Before and after price is what I need you  
4 to pay for.

5 MR. GORDON: So what you're saying is the people will  
6 come out and look at it when requested. But the teams that  
7 use it, other than School City, will pay whatever that price  
8 is, 825 every time they want to use it.

9 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct. They will have to pay  
10 for it, yeah.

11 MR. GORDON: So we should be able to make money that we  
12 will have as a reserve or no?

13 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Honestly?

14 MR. GORDON: I do basketball. I don't know.

15 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: The truth is no, we will not make  
16 any money. Because if we say that we need to have  
17 Sportsfields come 825 to begin with before the game and after  
18 the game and we're charging maybe \$1,000 for Block Stadium,  
19 we will not make the money from it. That's just being  
20 realistic.

21 Unless we do the concession stand or we do the  
22 game, charge them for the game. That's always an option.  
23 But until we get a staff I cannot say we're going to be able  
24 to do that.

25 But we just want to stay above water. And  
26 hopefully with the semipro team that comes in they will be  
27 taking care of all this for the payment. But we're still  
28 doing it for the high school team.

29 Motion to approve Sportsfields, Inc. Maintenance Agreement  
30 made by Gilberto Cantu Second by Valda Lewis.

31 Questions/Comments: None.

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

34 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: The next item we have and I am  
35 not sure if we approved it. But I would say I would like to  
36 have it approved. It's a Request for use of Lake County  
37 Board of Elections for some of the recreation facilities as

1 well as the Sunnyside Park Hothouse.

2 So during election time the election officers are  
3 asking us for the property. Technically we have to give it  
4 to them regardless. But we just ask for approval.

5 What we have done is they did ask for Unity Center  
6 also. That one we're kind of giving them a little bit of a  
7 pushback because we noticed last time we had an election we  
8 had to change. We actually shutdown because you have kids  
9 going in there. You have just the hecklers of the election  
10 time. So people did not want to go in regardless.

11 So we are kind of pushing them back and asking them  
12 to go to their previous place. I think it was probably where  
13 you go.

14 MR. GORDON: Zion.

15 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: You go to Zion?

16 MR. GORDON: Yeah.

17 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: No.

18 MR. GORDON: Lakeside Garden.

19 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Maybe. That's where it was?

20 MR. GORDON: Yes. It's in the Sixth.

21 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yeah. We're asking them to push  
22 it back for the Hunter Building. We're asking them to put it  
23 back that way and not Unity because I have to pay staff to  
24 come in earlier and stay later. I have to pay for security  
25 because we just don't know who is going to come in.

So I still haven't received any information  
regarding that. But the recreation centers that are on here  
they're not in use right now. So we're 100 percent on board  
for that.

And Riley Park Pavilion we're just not renting it  
out that day. And the hothouse no one is there at the  
hothouse. But it's at the park.

So we're just asking for approval for this item.

MR. GORDON: Question. Is there a way that they can pay

1 for the security? I know that was brought up in a precinct  
2 meeting. But they would have to provide or maybe there could  
3 be a way that they could use another entrance and seal part  
4 of the center off.

5 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So I actually sent that request  
6 and information to see if they'll do that. But they just  
7 told me, responded back with we get to use whatever building  
8 is a public building.

9 So I sent it up to the attorney, our attorneys.  
10 Not Miss Dawkins, but to Joe Allegretti. Because again  
11 that's something that is touchy.

12 The reason why the school has been going away from  
13 people coming in is you have registered sex offenders going  
14 to the same school. Well, we have kids who go into the  
15 centers and we're going to be open. So I anticipate those  
16 centers being open having kids or people in there.

17 MR. GORDON: So you're not telling them they can't use  
18 it. But if they pay for it, pay for the security and things  
19 of that nature.

20 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I would prefer for them not to  
21 use it at all because I have to change for staff. Literally  
22 they would have to come at 6:00 o'clock in the morning and  
23 stay until 6:00. So that's overtime pay plus security.

24 But I gave them an option. I gave them the option  
25 of using the side door if that's a possibility. I got a  
26 different response. So I might come back for that one.

27 MR. GORDON: The centers that are listed Roxanna, Martin  
28 Luther King Center, Riley Park and Sunnyside.

29 Motion to approve Request For Use, Lake County Board of  
30 Elections made by Gilberto Cantu Second by Valda Lewis.

31 Questions/Comments: None.

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

34 MR. GORDON: Thank you.

35 PUBLIC COMMENTS:

MR. GORDON: We'll move on to Public Comments. Are

1 there any Public Comments?

2 MR. AUSTIN: I'd like to ask you. Voting is coming  
3 around. Are we going to that this year? Have anybody set  
4 that up where they're going to vote at or are they going to  
5 just tell them same place like we did years back?

6 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: You just approved it right now.  
7 You just approved what they're able to use again.

8 Unity Center is what's in question. I might have  
9 to come back and ask for approval for that one.

10 MR. AUSTIN: I mean that's what I was saying. Let's try  
11 to put that in the notes now because voting time is right  
12 around. And then everything is slow.

13 MR. GORDON: I think that was made on the record. So  
14 it's there.

15 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct.

16 MR. AUSTIN: Just don't everything to --

17 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Last minute. I got you,  
18 Mr. Austin. I got you. You're right.

19 MR. GORDON: Are there any other public comments?

20 MR. AUSTIN: Just don't want people to come down on us.

21 \* Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, April 12, 2022  
22 @ 5:00 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers.

23 Motion to adjourn was made by Eugene Austin. Second by Valda  
24 Lewis.

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

\* Meeting ended at 5:16 p.m.

1 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of

2 Tuesday, March 22, 2022


3 Approved and Signed April 12, 2022

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6 Grayling Gordon, President

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9 Rick Rodriguez, Vice President

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11 Valda Lewis / Zoom  
12 Valda Lewis, Secretary

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15 Eugene Austin, Member

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19 Gilberto Cantu, Member

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23 Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

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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 30th day of March, 2022.



*Lisa Pena*  
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Lisa Pena  
Notary Public Porter County  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
License Number 084-003483

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