

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
April 12, 2022

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

STAFF:

Ateria Allen
Dawn Dawkins
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

Reported by: Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR
Fissinger & Associates

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Grayling Gordon,
Gilberto Cantu, Eugene Austin

Telephonic: Valda Lewis

Staff Present: Ateria Allen
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

MR. GORDON: We do have a quorum.
First, under Administrative Matters,
we have approval of March 22, 2022 meeting minutes, as
written. I'll entertain a motion to approve.

MR. CANTU: So move that we accept the
meeting minutes.

MR. AUSTIN: Second.

MR. GORDON: Any questions on the motion?
(None) All in favor signify by saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

Now we have approval and signing of
payroll dated April 1st, 2022. Can I have motion for
approval of payroll dated April 1st, 2022?

MS. LEWIS: Move for approval of payroll.

MR. CANTU: Second.

1 MR. GORDON: Any questions on the motion?
(None) All in favor signify by saying aye?

2 (All signify aye.)
Motion carries.

3 Next, we'll move for approval and
4 signing of Warrant 040622 PB, in the amount of \$18.14.
I believe this is probably for sales tax.

5 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: We have two
6 separate accounts and mostly that's the one that's for
7 our receipts or payments for supply purchases and
purchases for the flowers and all that.

8 MR. GORDON: Okay. Can I have a motion
for approval?

9 MR. CANTU: Move that we approve.

10 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

11 MR. GORDON: Any questions on the motion?
(None) All in favor signify by saying aye?

12 (All signify aye.)
Motion carries.

13 Next approval and signing of Warrant
14 041222 PB, in the amount of \$27,699.06; \$19,000 for
Braman Insurance, \$3,000 for Belsen Outdoors and other
15 improvements, and \$2,500 for utilities, the rest is
miscellaneous operating expenses. Can I have a motion
16 for approval and signing of warrant?

17 MS. LEWIS: I move for approval of the
warrant.

18 MR. CANTU: Second.

19 MR. GORDON: Any questions on the motion?
(None) All in favor signify by saying aye?

20 (All signify aye.)
Motion carries.

21 Next is Old Business. Madame
Secretary, do we have any old business?

22 MS. ALLEN: No.

23 MR. GORDON: We'll move forward to New
24 Business. I'd call on Mrs. Hernandez-Orange, Director
of Parks and Recreation.

25

1 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good evening
2 everyone. I am here before you with good news. We are
3 opening the City of East Chicago. Council passed the
4 ordinance about three weeks ago stating that we are
5 going to be able to enjoy our facilities at full
6 capacity. Most of our business at park and recreation
7 locations you don't have to wear a mask anymore. You do
8 have to wear it in City Hall or the Mayor's office, and
9 the Water Department in certain areas. But we are happy
10 to say that we are open again.

11 So, we are able to be at full
12 capacity. We are able to open up for rentals. So
13 before you I have the Parks and Recreation facility
14 rentals for indoor facilities at this point and time. I
15 looked up previous items to see if this was ever
16 approved in the notes that I have. I don't have an
17 approval notice.

18 With that being said, we had to
19 change some things regardless. I guess there was a run
20 in with people when renting Riley Hall, they were not
21 paying for police. So now when we ask for payments or
22 when they rent the hall, they have to give payment for
23 the police. It's \$30 an hour and you have to have all
24 that paid for prior to the event date.

25 Also we added that three of the
26 rooms can be used for events. So in Riley Park, in
27 Heritage Hall, as well as Unity; we have a community
28 room that's fits about 35. So that's able to be used
29 for things like a baby shower or small gathering, and we
30 are now going to rent it out to the community. So it's
31 another space for the community to be able to enjoy.
32 That's also added to the chart that I have here for you
33 guys. So just asking for approval of this item.

34 MR. GORDON: One question I have, when
35 you are charging for the police at \$30 per hour, we are
36 assuming that's for one officer, right?

37 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct, one
38 officer at \$30 a hour.

39 MR. GORDON: If it's a bigger event, they
40 need two officers at \$60?

41 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: We have always
42 had just one officer for Riley Park, and it's always
43 been a minimum of four hours and they are paying the \$30
44 per hour
45

1 MR. GORDON: Okay. And when we look at
2 the gym rental, what would that be, just if someone
3 wanted to come in?

4 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: If they want to
5 do practice, or a team or a group of guys wanted to have
6 carte blanche of the space, then because technically the
7 facility is open to the public, they can't. We are
8 going to have a pick up game. No, you can't play.
9 Unless you paid the amount for half of a court, you
10 cannot tell somebody they are not able to play.

11 MR. AUSTIN: I'd like to ask a question.
12 We have a new building. How are we going to use it?
13 The building over here and then the one in the Harbor
14 are big, nice buildings. I guess if you want to have an
15 affair or something, how does that work? People have
16 asked me, we've got a new building, do we still have to
17 go to the Mayor's office to rent it?

18 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Again, like I
19 stated, to begin with, we are finally open. We
20 previously had to make an appointment in order to use
21 the facility. You are not able to play contact sports,
22 so I wasn't able to set basketball games against
23 somebody else. I could shoot, but I can't play contact
24 sport. That was all in guidance from what the health
25 director stated.

Now it's a different ball game. Now
we are able to play sports. We are able to have the
capacity inside the building and all the locations
within the building. We actually the other day had a
self defense course where we had eight ladies, and then
another session was two ladies, that come in and are
able to partake of the program. We have programs that
are going to be started for the summertime. So we are
finding a way to open it up a bit more. Anyone is able
to go in there. All you have to do is pay the correct
fee associated with membership and you are able to use
all of that.

MR. AUSTIN: I know that we had a meeting
before, it's been a while back, that we were going to
have organized sports. We don't even have a team as I
know. There would be competition and we could go out
and get other teams from Hammond, Gary, Whiting to come
and play with us. How are we going to establish that or
do we already have it? It's just unknown to me what is
the procedure that we would have to do to put that

1 together.

2 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So, because of my
3 background with basketball, I know how important it is
4 within the City of East Chicago. So what I have done
5 with my staff is, first off, for open gym we'll have two
6 days of open gym, on Monday and Tuesday at one center
7 and Thursday and Friday in another center. But because
8 I know that there are individuals who like to play
9 volleyball also, we have a set space for them too on
10 different days, on alternating days at the center.
11 We'll announce open gym is back to let to the community
12 know. We also are putting it on Facebook, letting them
13 know we are open.

14 Number 2, I asked for appropriations
15 for programming, to have a bitty ball program. I've
16 reached out to individuals who are doing that and what
17 not, and I'd love to have that into our community
18 center. I understand it's the heart of what happened at
19 the high school because I was a coach and I know the
20 system is very, very important. I would like to see
21 students come from East Chicago, little to big. So that
22 is the goal and the plan, I just have to be able to
23 receive the money. It was passed on first reading. So
24 it's going to take -- well, it can't pass tomorrow. So
25 probably get it sometime in June.

1 So, the bitty ball program that I
2 wanted to start in May is probably not going to start
3 until early August, but at least it's something -- right
4 -- we are starting and that's progress.

5 Also my plan, my goal is to have our
6 high school coaches, like last year we asked them to do
7 summer camps for our kids. Maybe do two hours this year
8 because one hour did not work and we didn't get enough
9 kids in. So I am going to work with them and ask them
10 to do that and I will also pay the coaches so it goes to
11 their pocket or team pocket, that's how we used to do it
12 when I used to work in Parks and Recreation as an
13 intern.

14 I'm not reinventing the wheel, but
15 trying to make it happen for our community. That's what
16 I am trying do, to make sure we have people in our
17 centers and children are doing something for the summer,
18 just period.

19 MR. AUSTIN: Just was a question that I
20 wanted to know. We had started back a year or so, but
21 '19 it stopped everything. So saying that, there's a
22 lot of people have been asking. We've got a new

1 building and should be some kind of program. We could
2 go to the churches and make an announcement for a lot of
3 things, you know what I'm saying. And instead of them
4 taking the money out of East Chicago, let's keep it in
5 our city.

6 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I hear you, Mr.
7 Austin. Thank you for your help and advice for that.
8 Thank you.

9 MR. GORDON: Is there anything else?

10 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I need approval
11 for this.

12 MS. LEWIS: I have a question. I may be
13 misinterpreting this, but under Riley Hall and the
14 Repass rental, it says that \$200.00 deposit, which I
15 understand, and I understand you only get it back if
16 there are no damages. But it says, cleaned within 4 to
17 6 weeks of an event. That sounds to me like after the
18 event you have 4 to 6 weeks to clean it.

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I see what you
20 are saying. No, the \$200.00 is to hold the date. We
21 will return it if there is no damage and cleaned. So
22 there should have been another comma to separate that.
23 We do let the renters know that there must be no damages
24 and cleaned, but that it takes about 4 to 6 weeks for
25 the return of the \$200.00 deposit. We always say that
and we explain to them it's just because of how our
dates work for the meetings, that's why it takes a bit
longer.

MS. LEWIS: Okay, I can understand that.
But the way that I interpreted, the way that it was
written, that I am given 4 to 6 weeks to have it
cleaned, and, you know, that wasn't making no sense to
me.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: No, no, that's
fine. And I will add a comma to separate that.

MS. LEWIS: Okay, thank you.

MR. GORDON: Are there any other
questions? (None) Can I have a motion to accept the
2022 Parks and Recreation rental fees?

1 MS. LEWIS: I move for approval of the
rental fees.

2 MR. CANTU: I second.

3 MR. GORDON: Are there any other
4 questions? (None) All in favor signify aye?

(All signify aye.)

5 Motion carries

6 Is there any public comments?

7 MR. AUSTIN: Only what I just said, make
use of the new building and having activities here in
8 East Chicago. I said I was going to bring it up to see
what can we do. We got some nice buildings.

9 MR. GORDON: All right. So we'll move
on. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 26, 2022,
10 here at City Hall Council Chambers, 4525 Indianapolis
Boulevard, East Chicago, Indiana, at 5:00 p.m.

11 With that being said, can I have a
motion for adjournment?

12 MR. CANTU: I move to adjourn.

13 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

14 MR. GORDON: All in favor signify aye?
15 (All signify aye.)


16 Motion carries. The meeting is now
adjourned. The time is 5:20 p.m..

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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday
April 12, 2022

Approved and signed _____



Grayling Gordon, President

Rick Rodriguez, Vice-President

Valda Lewis, Secretary



Gilberto Cantu, Member



Eugene Austin, Member



Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

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 Valparaiso, Indiana, this 19th day of April, 2022.

Peggy S. LaLonde

Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR



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