CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 20, 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: Joseph Ochoa, 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
John Caruso, Christopher Burke

MR. OCHOA: The meeting of the East Chicago Department of Waterworks Board of Directors will now come to order for April 20th, 2026.
Do I have a motion to approve the minutes of the April 6th, 2026 meeting as written?

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

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

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Approval of Payroll: Warrant 041026, amount of $40,589.82, payroll dates of 3-21-26 to 4-3-26; Warrant 041026, amount of $16,895.49, payroll dates of 3-21-26 to 4-3-26.

Do I have a motion?

MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Accounts Payable: Warrant 042026 WB, amount of $126,760.07; Warrant 042026 WM, amount of $10,835.04; Warrant 042026 WT, amount of $1,189.49; Warrant 042026 WD, amount of $6,018.00; Warrant 042026 CD, amount of $830.14; Warrant 040926 WB, amount of $170,825.00; Warrant 041026 WB, amount of $371,250.00.

Do I have a motion for Accounts Payable?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Water Report: Winna Guzman.

MS. GUZMAN: No report at this time.

MR. OCHOA: Distribution/Filtration Report: Allan Lee.

MR. LEE: I kept it short today because I new the Board meeting before was longer, so the only thing -- there's one thing. The two membranes are running. They are not finished, but they are making water at the plant. So we have eight online.

MR. OCHOA: What's keeping the membrane from getting finished?

MR. LEE: Morrison is waiting on parts. They ordered them in 2024. Don't go there, gets my blood pressure up. They didn't know they are going to need that fitting.

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MR. OCHOA: Legal Counsel, Joseph Allegretti.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: I have nothing other than some explanation and discussion about the last two resolutions on the agenda. Maybe I'll wait till those come up, if that's okay, Mr. President.

MR. OCHOA: All right. Financial Report: Rebecca Sliger. Not present, but it's in the packet.

New Business:

Resolution WD 26-13, a resolution authorizing advance payment via wire transfer for partial additional funds of the Department's raw water pump project as part of the 2026 bond insurance issue a raw water pump project. The total project cost is $2,194,888.00.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: I guess that's one of the ones I wanted to talk about. If you recall, the way our world works, when you file a rate case with IURC, they approve rates and they then authorize how much money, what portion or how much money that rate is going to be. You can use that to pay debt service for a revenue bond issue and they did that.

And the Board has, as we have gone along, approved resolutions authorizing the issuance of bond for the raw water pump project, which is approximately $2.2 million. The $2.2 million exceeded the amount that we are authorized by the IURC. So in order to conclude and consummate our loan transaction with the State Revolving Loan Fund, they are requiring us to put the difference between what is left of the authorized bond issue, which is about $650,000.00 and the balance of the $2.2 million raw water pump project posted with the New York Bank of Mellon as security to be used, allowing us to authorize and give the Notice to Proceed and Notice of Award to the successful low bidder.

Indiana law provides you can't, fundamentally cannot award a contract for a public work project unless you have money in the bank. This is their way of providing security. So we are not planning on using that money. This authorizes us to transfer, wire transfer from our Controller to the New York Bank of Mellon, monies as security for this transaction. We have planned on financing this $1.6 million difference shortfall through a future IURC filing and a future bond issue, either bond participation note or excessive bond

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issue. This is allowing us to put up security so we can proceed with all four projects.

John Caruso is also on the call and can explain further if you wish, but the SRF letter is approving the financing so we can award the four projects and proceed.

So, I am not saying it is not a big deal, but the Controller's office wants authorization from the Board to proceed to authorize them to wire transfer the money to be held by the bank.

Sorry for the long winded explanation, that's the story as best as I can tell it.

MS. GUZMAN: And thank you for allowing this to be on today's agenda. This came up on today's date where it was critical that we have this approval by the Board as we have to make that payment by Friday. Our closing date is April 28th, correct me if I'm wrong, but it's next week, so we have to have this payment in so the Controller's Office.

The Controller will not, again as Joe mentioned, they will not process the transfer unless it is approved by the Board or advance approval is received. The next meeting we'll provide the claim to you or the warrant for your official approval.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: The 1.16 million, that particular claim is not being approved and that requires time, and time did not permit it. So this resolution basically authorizes payment in advance of approval. But it's a housekeeping thing. And as I said, the Board has complete statutory authority to do this in advance like this and then ratify it later by approving the claim after the money is wire transferred to the bank.

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: Any questions or comments?

(None)

All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Resolution WD 26-12, a resolution concerning the evaluation of bids opened March 2, 2026, for the rehabilitation of the 1.5 MG legged high tank project.

Do I have a motion on this?

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MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.
MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.
MR. OCHOA: Any questions or comments?
(None)
All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Resolution 26-12 has been accepted.
Resolution 26-10, a resolution of the Board of Trustees of East Chicago Water Department authorizing the transfer of appropriations into different budget categories (Water).
Resolution WD 26-10, do I have a motion?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: Any questions or comments?
(None)
All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Resolution 26-11, a resolution of the Board of Directors authorizing the write-off of certain delinquent water charges and penalties (Water).
Do I have a motion?

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Proposals and Quotations: BS1 Online, survey options for the City of East Chicago, remediation quote for the City of East Chicago maintenance, not-to-exceed $1,650.00 (Water/Filtration).
Do I have a motion?
MR. HERNANDEZ: Motion to approve.
MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.
MR. OCHOA: Any questions or comments?

(None)

All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Christopher B. Burke -- I'll read all these and ask for one motion at the end.

Christopher B. Burke, proposal for professional engineering services, booster pump station improvements and rehabilitation of 1.5 MG elevated tank, $187,500.00 (Water).

Christopher B. Burke, proposal for professional engineering services plate settler design, membrane plant, $119,000.00 (Water).

Ferguson, Job Name 5/8 Heads, $29,502.00 (Water).

Ferguson, Job Name Meter Account, $61,960.00 (Water).

A & Z Engineering, East Chicago lead line replacement inspections, not-to-exceed fee $196,500.00.

Do I have a motion?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

All these proposals have been accepted.

Rate Sheets: Brenntag, customer #185536/629 (Water/Filtration).

Do I have a motion?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. HERNANDEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.

Unfinished Business: None

Public Comment: None

Our next meeting date is Monday, May 4, 2026 at 5:00 p.m., here in the Council Chambers.

Is there a motion for adjournment?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to adjourn.

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MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?
(All signify aye.)
MR. OCHOA: Motion carries.
Meeting adjourned. Thank you.

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

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
April 20th, 2026

Approved and signed May 4, 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 21st day of April, 2026.



Peggy S. LaLonde

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

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