

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
May 25, 2021

BOARD MEMBERS:

Anthony Serna, President
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President
Valda Lewis, Secretary
Gilberto Cantu
Eugene Austin

STAFF:

Ateria Allen
Dawn Dawkins-Legal
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: Anthony Serna, Eugene Austin
Telephonic: Valda Lewis, Gilberto Cantu

Staff Present: Ateria Allen
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

MR. SERNA: We do have a quorum. Rick Rodriguez advised me he would not be able to attend tonight's meeting.

First, under Administrative Matters, we have approval of April 11, 2021, meeting minutes. I'll entertain a motion to approve.

MR. CANTU: I move for approval.

MR. AUSTIN: Second.

MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries. Next, approval of payroll dated May 14, 2021. I'll entertain a motion to approve the payroll.

MS. LEWIS: Make a motion for approval of payroll.

MR. AUSTIN: Second.

1 MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by
saying aye?

2 (All signify aye.)

3 Motion carries. Approval of Warrant
Report 051721 PB, in the amount of \$51.19. Entertain a
motion approve.

4 MS. LEWIS: Move for approval of warrant
5 report.

6 MR. CANTU: Second.

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

8 (All signify aye.)

9 Motion carries. Next approval of
Warrant Report 052521 PB, in the amount of \$103,709.91.
Entertain a motion to approve.

10 MS. LEWIS: Motion to approve warrant
11 report.

12 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

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

14 (All signify aye.)

15 Motion carries. Next we have Old
Business. Madame Secretary, any old business?

16 MS. ALLEN: No.

17 MR. SERNA: Next item on the agenda, New
18 Business, Vanessa Hernandez-Orange, Directors of Parks
and Recreation.

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good evening to
20 everyone. You have before you a memo basically asking
for approval of a donation from a resident, Rick
21 Chavarria. He basically donated containers, planters,
and rollers. The total amount of the donation would be
22 roughly \$8.55. The reason why I am asking to have this
approved is -- obviously the donation from a resident --
23 it should be approved. I know previously it wasn't
being done. But now we are running into issues where
24 someone kind of wants an item that was given to the
Greenhouse back, and I don't know if that's really
25 theirs or not. So moving forward, anything that gets
donated will be approved by the Board, and for State

1 Board of Account purposes obviously, it should be done.
2 So that's why it's before you.

2

3 MR. SERNA: Correct. I did experience
4 that when I was head of the fire department. Any
5 donation we took, we had to have it approved by the
6 Board of Public Works, even the smaller dollar amount.
7 Totally understandable. Any questions, Board members?
8 (None)

9 All right, I'll entertain a motion
10 to approve the donation from Rick Chavarria, the items
11 for the Greenhouse. Total dollar amount of the donation
12 is approximately \$8.55.

13 MR. AUSTIN: Make a motion.

14 MS. LEWIS: Second.

15 MR. SERNA: Any questions on the motion?
16 (None) All in favor signify by saying aye?
17 (All signify aye.)
18 Motion carries.

12

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's all for
20 today.

21 MR. SERNA: All right. Any questions --
22 do we have any questions for the Director? Any
23 questions, Board Members, for the Director?

24 MS. LEWIS: No. Keep up the good work
25 that you and your staff perform.

17

18 MR. SERNA: Public comment? (None)

18

19 MR. AUSTIN: Well, one question that I
20 would like to know, in the near future, how long will it
21 be before we are able to offer the people some of the
22 things that we offer and how many people can sign up to
23 participate. Have we put anything out?

21

22 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Unfortunately I
23 have not. There are two things. One, I have put out
24 some things to hire basically college students or
25 students who are 18 years or older. From my phone call
with HR, only two people have applied so far. So we are
obviously still looking for that. I have put things on
multiple social media sites. Basically everywhere we
could, and I still have not received a response from

1 that.

2 I have also started to post again on
3 various social media sites, at our website, it's also on
4 our newsletter, the camps that we have, as well as the
5 purchasing of flowers. The purchasing of flowers is
6 amazing. We are busy every day with people trying to
7 purchase flowers.

8 Now, the sign up for the camp, we
9 have not received enough feedback yet or applications.
10 That's actually going to the schools and hopefully by
11 the end of the week. I had the superintendent agree to
12 post the posters, so hopefully we'll get more feedback
13 now in regards to that.

14 Other than that, we are doing our
15 part putting it out there. And, yes, we just need
16 people to partake. And I understand people are still
17 scared and I get it, but I feel like we are doing our
18 part.

19 MR. AUSTIN: Okay. Well, I guess after
20 the government lightens up this COVID. The masks, we
21 still are asked to still wear the mask.

22 MR. SERNA: And the vaccination, I think
23 that's important too. People -- only half the
24 population is vaccinated. There's still a lot of people
25 not. I totally understand if people don't want to get
26 vaccinated. That's one of the easiest ways to open up,
27 not only Parks and Recreation programs, and the economy.
28 If everybody was vaccinated you wouldn't have to worry
29 so much about masks. It's a combination. Parks and
30 Recreation, Vanessa and her staff are doing a great job.
31 You know me, I was like, shut it
32 down till next year. But they are moving forward and
33 the public needs to catch up. I think the public needs
34 to catch up and get involved.

35 It's tough as far as hiring, things
36 are tough on hiring everywhere. People are reaching
37 into the schools -- companies that never used to reach
38 in the School City, high school, ages 18 years and up,
39 that we need to do these various different jobs. Things
40 are tough all over when it comes to hiring.

41 It's surprising you are not getting
42 a lot of feedback from the camps. Seems like everybody
43 is just wait and see -- wait and see.

44 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I think because
45 of our requirement of the mask, that kind of deters
46 people too. Our numbers are going up and we have five

1 variants in our City of East Chicago. Because of that,
2 we are not going to let up on that.

3 We have seen an influx of renting of
4 the shelters too. Last night I asked to get money
5 approved, approving of the park ranger, because of the
6 fact that we have so many shelters that are being rented
7 out. We have to make sure the masks stay on and we have
8 a certain amount of people under shelters, because of
9 that, we are moving forward with our park ranger, but
10 that's only if we receive the funding. And it was
11 tabled last night by the Council, so I don't know if we
12 can even do it for this summer at this point because it
13 takes about two months.

14 MR. SERNA: At least 6 to 10 weeks. So
15 the issues that we are having with the Council, between
16 the Civil City and Council, are slowing things up. So I
17 think this year is a recovery year. I think this year
18 we are recovering from the shut down. So I don't think
19 you should be disappointed, Vanessa, or us as a Board
20 when we look at things like this. It's recovery. The
21 numbers aren't going to be what they were in 2019, but
22 we are trying to build from 2020. And I think we are
23 probably -- this whole country isn't going to get back
24 COVID 2019-2020, till maybe 2022 or 2023. It might take
25 to it '22 to get back to 2019. Keep your heads up. And
Mr. Austin, good question, and so we have our answer.

Any other questions, Board Members?
(None) All right, thank you, Vanessa.

Our next meeting date is Tuesday,
June 8, 2021, right here, at City Hall, 4525
Indianapolis Boulevard, at 5:00 p.m.

I would entertain a motion to
adjourn.

MS. LEWIS: So moved.

MR. CANTU: Second.

MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by
saying aye?

(All signify aye.)
Motion carries. Meeting adjourned.


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

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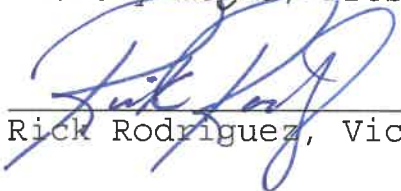
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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday
May 25, 2021

Approved and signed June 8, 2021



Anthony Serna, President



Rick Rodriguez, Vice-President

Valda Lewis, Secretary

Gilberto Cantu, Member



Eugene Austin, Member



Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary

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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 1st day of June, 2021.

Peggy S. LaLonde

Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR

