

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
June 7, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS:  
Henry Ventura, President  
Joseph Ochoa, Vice-President  
John Bakota, Member  
Anthony Askounis, Member  
Ray Lopez, Member

STAFF:  
Joseph Allegretti  
Bill Biller  
Anthony Herrera

Reported by: Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.  
By: Peggy S. LaLonde

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Henry Ventura, John  
Bakota, Anthony Askounis  
Present via Phone: Ray Lopez

STAFF Present in Chambers: Anthony Herrera  
Present via Phone: Joseph Allegretti,

MR. VENTURA: Meeting of the East Chicago  
Department of Waterworks Board come to order. Entertain  
a motion to approve minutes of May 17, 2021.

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

(None)

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
Approval of Claim Warrants.

WARRANT 060721 WB - \$42,394.17

MR. VENTURA: Do I have a motion to  
approve?

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

1 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

2 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments  
on the motion? (None) Roll call.

3 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
4 Opposed: None

5 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

6 WARRANT WB - \$2,755.00

7 Do I have a motion to approve?

8 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

9 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

10 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
(None) Roll call.

11 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

12 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

13 Approval of Payroll Warrants.

14 WARRANT 052821 - \$35,923.17 Payroll 5/8/21 to 5/21/21

15 Do I have a motion to approve?

16 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

17 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

18 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments  
on the motion? (None) Roll call.

19 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

20 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

21 WARRANT 052821 - \$17,816.85 - Utilities Payroll

22 Dates of 5/8/21 to 5/21/21

23 Do I have a motion to approve?

24 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

25 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments  
on the motion? (None) Roll call.

25

1 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

2

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

3

Next on the agenda, Filtration Report. There's a letter from Dr. Abdul Zehraoui, and that should be in the packet. Are there any questions regarding the letter?

4

5

MR. BAKOTA: It's a resignation letter?

6

7

MR. VENTURA: It's a resignation letter from Dr. Abdul.

8

MR. ALLEGRETTI: The City's Human Relations -- HR Department -- has prepared a job description for the job of Water Filtration Superintendent and soliciting for C.V. or applications. So the process has started to get superintendent level person, qualified person, good background in water filtration and distribution. So, City Hall will keep us all informed and I will do my best to participate in that too. I just wanted the Board to know. Thank you.

9

10

11

12

13

14

MR. VENTURA: No Water Report. There is no Distribution Report.

15

16

17

Next we have under New Business. Resolution WD 20-07, and this is resolution of the Board of Directors of the East Chicago Department of Waterworks authorizing a temporary transfer to depleted fund.

18

19

20

MR. BAKOTA: It's listed here as WD 20-07 and we have it as WD 21-07 in our packet.

21

22

MR. HERRERA: It should be 21-07.

23

MR. VENTURA: So there is a correction, it should be 21-07.

24

25

26

MR. HERRERA: This is routine. We actually do this every year. What it is, it's going from temporary transfer of one million dollars from water tank refurbishment, 0631, to the East Chicago Utility Fund 0601. This is routine and something we do every year, and it says, which shall be refunded on or before December 31, 2021.

27

1 MR. VENTURA: Are there any questions for  
Anthony? (None)

2 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

3 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

4 MR. VENTURA: Any further questions or  
5 comments? Roll call.

6 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

7 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
8 Now we have Resolution WD 20-08,  
9 that should be corrected WD 21-08. And this is a  
10 resolution authorizing and designating the Board  
president and/or vice-president authorized signators for  
State Revolving Loan Fund transactions.

11 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to accept.

12 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

13 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
(None) Roll call.

14 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
15 Opposed: None

16 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
17 Next we have past due invoice and  
there is five accounts in reference to Calumet City  
18 Plumbing, and they are totaling the amount of  
\$19,286.18. And the reason for the delinquency,  
19 invoices were under review and pending funds transfer in  
account. Do I have a motion to approve?

20 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

21 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

22 MR. VENTURA: Any questions or comments?  
(None) Roll call.

23 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
24 Opposed: None

25 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

1 Do we have any further report from  
2 legal counsel?

3 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes. Mr. President, I  
4 think there are two things we should talk about. On the  
5 subject of finances, not only are we on Resolution  
6 21-07, which the Board has adopted, but there is also  
7 outstanding loan from the Civil City of two million  
8 dollars, which kind of expires every year and gets  
9 renewed. There is going to be a resolution on the  
10 Common Council's agenda one week from today, whereby we  
11 are going to ask them to extend or renew the two million  
12 dollars outstanding loan. The Indiana Utility  
13 Regulatory Commission does that as part of our rate  
14 case, it has to be decided. That's going to be one of  
15 the issues. I presume the City has no option but to  
16 renew it, because we do not have any money in our  
17 account to pay it. This is being put on the agenda at  
18 the request of the controller's office, kind of a  
19 housekeeping thing. I wanted the Board to know it's  
20 still out there and it still hasn't gone away, that's  
21 why we are filing our rate case, to get our financial  
22 house in order.

23 Secondly, Anthony Herrera and I  
24 discussed before the meeting the fact of the Governor's  
25 Executive Order is expiring allowing remote meetings  
like this. There is a provision whereby a Board such as  
ours can elect to have up to 50 percent of the Board  
members participate remotely. That's pretty much what  
some of us are doing now. I know Director Ochoa is not  
here, but four of you are here. Maybe we should have  
some kind of discussion as to what the preference of the  
Board is and whether there is no legal obligation to  
have zoom meeting to allow public participation, public  
during Pandemic crisis has appeared live in the Council  
Chambers to speak on issues that have concerned them and  
we have done okay doing that.

20 So I guess the threshold question  
21 is, is the Board interested in adopting a resolution or  
22 considering a resolution to allow continued remote  
23 participation by up to one-half of the Board members,  
24 and I guess that's half of five, so two and a half.  
25 Meaning, two members can, under the resolution, if  
adopted, two members would be able to participate  
remotely. Anybody have any thoughts on that if I may  
ask?

25

1 MR. LOPEZ: Remote means by phone?

2 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes, like what you and  
I, Director Lopez, are doing right now.

3  
4 MR. LOPEZ: Because the Board can make  
that resolution, but you have democrats and republicans  
on the Board, would that make a difference, being  
5 appointed by the mayor?

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No. That has nothing to  
do with the makeup of the Board. Just allows some of  
7 the Board members to continue until some time in the  
future to be determined to participate remotely rather  
8 than coming to the meeting like we continued to do in  
the old days, where we all participated and there was no  
9 provision for participation remotely, that's by phone or  
other means, electronic means.

10  
11 So the question is, do you want --  
in the next meeting -- do we all want from now on to  
12 come and participate only in-person and no remote, no  
dial in for any director? Or do you want to consider  
allowing up to two directors to participate remotely?  
13 That's the question that I'm asking the Board.

14 MR. BAKOTA: I'm going to make a motion  
that we participate in-person at the meetings.

15  
16 MR. ALLEGRETTI: John made a motion from  
now on all participation be in-person and no more remote  
meetings. I think that's what John said.

17  
18 MR. BAKOTA: Yes.

19 MR. LOPEZ: Question on the motion.  
Okay. Now, what happens if you can't make it because of  
20 illness or whatever reason, that means you miss the  
meeting. What is the solution, you are removed as a  
Board member or what?

21  
22 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No. No. You can miss  
the meeting. If you miss a meeting, you don't get to  
participate. Just like Director Ochoa, we don't know  
23 his reasons for not calling in or coming. He's not  
voting, so there is five directors participating. It  
24 doesn't -- nobody is disqualified. The only reason  
anybody can be removed would be for some chronic  
25 serial -- you know -- missing meetings. That situation

1 has never happened. All our Board of Directors have  
2 always been very careful and dedicated to participating  
in all the meetings, rarely does anybody miss.

3 MR. LOPEZ: If I understand right, the  
4 mayor can remove somebody on the Board for something  
wrong. Well, can the Board do it too?

5 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No, only for cause. And  
6 missing an occasional meeting is not appropriate cause.  
7 If somebody became incapacitated, unable to participate,  
8 that might be grounds for removal. But in that event,  
if that happened, the director would probably  
voluntarily resign.

9 MR. LOPEZ: But missing meeting is not  
one of them?

10 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No, not missing an  
11 occasional meeting would not be sufficient cause to  
12 remove a director, not under the statute. Our  
participation, I think -- I don't know -- Director  
Bakota, correct me if I'm wrong, I think it's been  
excellent.

13 MR. BAKOTA: Yes, it has usually. Okay,  
14 I have a motion.

15 MR. ASKOUNIS: I second the motion.

16 MR. VENTURA: Any further questions or  
17 comments?

18 MR. LOPEZ: Can you read the motion  
again, just to clarify?

19 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Director Lopez, the  
20 motion Director Bakota has made, is that we not exercise  
21 our option to allow remote participation by directors  
22 during public -- regular public meetings, regular or  
23 special public meetings, rather going forward, after  
today, all meetings will be in-person. And if you don't  
appear at the meeting room in-person, in attendance,  
physically in attendance, you will not be able to  
participate by phone or otherwise.

24 So, in other words, we are going  
back to normal.

25 MR. LOPEZ: So, to clarify, that wouldn't

1 give the public -- will we be giving the public the  
2 option of coming on remotely or we cancel that out?

3 MR. HERRERA: I will not be using the  
4 phone.

5 MR. ALLEGRETTI: There is no legal  
6 obligation for us to provide a call in room for a  
7 meeting or provide access to the public as we have in  
8 the past throughout the Pandemic. The public, if they  
9 wish to participate, they have to physically arrive at  
10 the Council Chambers at the regular meeting and speak --  
11 be recognized to speak before the Board and that will  
12 not change. There will be no remote participation by  
13 the public, or in particular by the Board members. If  
14 they wish to participate, they have to show up  
15 in-person.

16 MR. VENTURA: Any further questions on  
17 the motion? We have a motion and a second. Since there  
18 is no further questions, we are going to do roll call.

19 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
20 Opposed: None

21 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.  
22 Financial Report.

23 MR. HERRERA: No report.

24 MR. VENTURA: Any unfinished business?  
25 (None) Public comment: None.

Next regular meeting will be  
June 21st, at 5:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers. Do I  
have a motion to adjourn?

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to adjourn

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

MR. VENTURA: Roll call.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None  
Opposed: None

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries. Meeting  
adjourned.

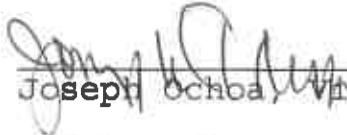
\*\*\*\*\* Meeting adjourned \*\*\*\*\*



Approval of the Meeting Minutes of  
June 7, 2021

Approved and signed \_\_\_\_\_

  
Henry Ventura, President

  
Joseph Ochoa, Vice-President

  
John Bakota, Member

  
Anthony Askounis, Member

  
Ray Lopez, Member

  
Anthony Herrera, Secretary.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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 15th day of June, 2021.

*Peggy S. LaLonde*



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR