

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
June 22, 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, Rick  
Rodriguez

Telephonic: Valda Lewis, Gilberto Cantu

Staff Present: Ateria Allen  
Vanessa Hernandez-Orange

MR. SERNA: We do have a quorum.

First, under Administrative Matters,  
we have approval of June 8, 2021, meeting minutes. I'll  
entertain a motion to approve.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I move for approval.

MR. CANTU: Second.

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

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

Next, approval of payroll dated  
June 11, 2021. Entertain a motion to approve the  
payroll of June 11, 2021.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I move for approval.

MR. AUSTIN: Second.

MR. SERNA: All in favor signify by

1 saying aye?

(All signify aye.)

2 Motion carries.

3 Next we have approval of Warrant  
4 Report 060921 PB, in the amount of \$138,292.29. I will  
entertain a motion to approve warrant report.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I move for approval.

6 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

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

(All signify aye.)

8 Motion carries.

9 Next we have Warrant Report 062221  
10 PB, in the amount of \$24,062.30. Entertain a motion to  
approve warrant report.

11 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I move for approval.

12 MR. AUSTIN: Second.

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

(All signify aye.)

14 Motion carries.

15 Next item, Old Business. Madame  
Secretary, do we have any old business?

16 MR. ALLEN: No.

17 MR. SERNA: We'll move on to New  
18 Business, Vanessa Hernandez-Orange, Director of Parks  
and Recreation.

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good afternoon.  
20 Today I'm bringing a couple of past due invoices from  
the Federal Protection Agency. We had a couple issues  
21 in regards to being kind of, lost in translation you  
could say. First one, we had our manager leave. I have  
22 currently an acting manager in her place and we both  
were getting familiar with the payment of the PO. So  
23 that was probably one of the reasons why early October  
it didn't get paid.

24 Next, the books were closed in  
November, so that's probably the reason why something  
25 didn't get paid in December. And the books did not open  
until maybe -- I want to say end of January, early

1 February, when we were actually able to start paying.

2 So, after discussing with Federal  
3 Protection, we made sure they -- actually they gave us  
4 about ten invoices that came our way. We double  
5 checked, triple checked, compared to what we had in our  
6 office, as well as at the Center for the check-in, and  
7 this is what was owed to them. So I am asking for  
8 approval of the past due invoices.

9 MR. SERNA: All right. So looks like we  
10 have five of them. Invoice number 4307, dated  
11 October 11, '20, amount of \$849.60; invoice number 4358,  
12 dated November 1st, '20, in the amount of \$339.84. Next  
13 is number 4412, invoice date of November 22, '20, amount  
14 of \$679.68. Next invoice is 4449, dated December 6,  
15 '20, in the amount of \$424.80. And the final invoice is  
16 invoice 4642 dated January 31, 2021, in the amount of  
17 \$849.60. Which these past due invoices total out to  
18 \$3,143.52.

19 Are there any questions on this  
20 Board members? (None) I'll entertain a motion to pay  
21 the past due invoices to Federal Protection Agency, in  
22 the amount of \$3,143.52.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I move for approval.

24 MR. LEWIS: Second.

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

(All signify aye.)  
Motion carries.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I don't have  
anything else, other than I wanted to say thank you to  
our Board member, Rick Rodriguez. I just wanted to note  
that at the Council meeting following our Board meeting,  
once again the ordinance was presented to receive the  
program funding for additional funds, and it got through  
quick, no questions, no nothing. We have it passed.  
Right now we've had the first and second reading, and  
for the next Board meeting it will be hopefully passed  
on the third reading. From my understanding, the public  
hearing will happen on that day and hopefully we will  
receive the funds within the next month maybe. That's  
about how long it takes for it to actually show so we  
are able to move forward. I appreciate that.

I explained to the Chief of Staff, I  
said maybe we all need to talk to the Board members and

1 have a representative go back and talk to the Council,  
2 because you guys do know what is happening because we  
3 come before you. Again, I cannot thank you enough for  
4 making that happen.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No problem. I didn't  
6 like what was going on, so it kind of gets me mad when  
7 they try politics with the kids. And to me, like I  
8 always said before, you can always play with the adults,  
9 but don't play with the kids. Adults should know better  
10 anyway. It kind of got me mad and I had called four  
11 council people and talked to them all.

12 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: They couldn't get  
13 it out of their mouth before it was approved -- that  
14 someone made a motion for approval. Again, I cannot  
15 thank you enough.

16 MR. SERNA: You have been very effective,  
17 Rick. Thank you. Just so you know, we now know you  
18 have a good outreach with the Council and we can  
19 approach them. Definitely it's for the program to get  
20 things done for our kids primarily, which is the summer  
21 programming, which is the playground equipment or  
22 fitness equipment and Riley Park and different things.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: What about the mulch  
24 request?

25 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I actually just  
26 need to update you, I did send your information that you  
27 gave to me to Public Works. So I am not the one in  
28 charge of purchasing that, but I explained to them that  
29 this is what they were saying to my Park Board  
30 President. So I said that we need to make sure that we  
31 are checking, is there a possibility for the red mulch.  
32 And I haven't received a response, once I do, I will  
33 definitely let you know.

34 Again, I double checked with the man  
35 who does our tree planting and he said that's artificial  
36 coloring. I said, but, they are not -- my people who  
37 are on my Board -- I said I need to get something in  
38 writing about the effects. He said, let me see if I can  
39 find something. He hasn't given anything to me. When  
40 both of those things -- if they come -- I will  
41 definitely show you.

42 MR. RODRIGUEZ: That was research from my  
43 neighborhood -- that was from the people, what they

1 want. So then I agreed with them, I like the red better  
2 than the brown. It looks good.

3 MRS. HERNANDEZ-RANGE: I agree 800  
4 percent. For our Park Department, we do buy the red  
5 mulch to let the flowers stand out. But again, that's  
6 solely for our Park Department that we purchase a couple  
7 bags. We don't do the parks and that's solely up to  
8 Public Works. They do this bulk buy. So I expressed my  
9 concern and I let the Public Works Department director  
10 know. So hopefully we'll get some response back.

11 MR. SERNA: Thank you. Do you have any  
12 anything else?

13 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's all.

14 MR. SERNA: Any questions for our  
15 Director?

16 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Other than -- I have one  
17 question. This looks really nice, the Kenny Lofton  
18 looks really nice. It's not completely done, right?

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: No. The Kenny  
20 Lofton site will be done sometime this week. They are  
21 stenciling the statistics on there and then put on the  
22 final clear coat.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: They are going to clear  
24 coat the whole thing?

25 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's what he  
said. The other three areas, we hope to get that done  
sometime prior to the Fall, if I have any funds left  
over. That's one of the projects I would like to have  
finished. So hopeful we will get that done.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: I have a question,  
Vanessa. This Little League emblem from like 50 years I  
think it was, I was told the only reason why it lasted  
that long was because it was on the north side, away  
from the sun and snow. I don't know if you want to keep  
it there or keep it on the side. That was donated by  
the sign company down here on Indianapolis Boulevard.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: They are working  
with the painter, Marco, to put more paint on there,  
kind of make it a little bit more vibrant. When I

1 talked to the Little League team, I guess you could say,  
2 they are the ones who stated that we could change it.  
3 They actually asked us to change the number because that  
4 is I think 2, 3 years old, if I am not mistaken.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: What number?

6 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Like the 50-year  
7 mark because now it's a couple years older. They asked  
8 us to change that, which we are going to do.

9 MR. RODRIGUEZ: This was donated because  
10 it was the 50-year anniversary.

11 MR. SERNA: They should get another sign  
12 and that should be the 51-year rather than painting over  
13 it.

14 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's not  
15 honestly up to me. I left it to the Little League Board  
16 that's there now. It's not been painted yet.

17 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It's not painted now  
18 because the paint will come off later.

19 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: So, again, when I  
20 asked them what they wanted me to do with that, they  
21 said that they kind of wanted to make it toward this  
22 year, and I'm not sure how many years it's been.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: That was just the  
24 anniversary, that should stay 50-year.

25 MR. SERNA: They should get a whole new  
sign.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I can let them  
know we had this discussion and see what their thoughts  
are.

MR. SERNA: That's something we can fund  
raise for.

MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's a hundred  
percent. Just find a way to keep something from the  
Little League that said it was from the Little League.  
I asked the Chief of Staff and the Mayor to make sure we  
dedicate one of those walls to them, because I believe  
that -- you know -- at the end of the day, that's their

1 field, always has been that way.

2 MR. RODRIGUEZ: How much did it cost  
3 anyway, for Kenny Lofton?

4 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: To give you the  
5 exact numbers, I actually have to go back --

6 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Approximately.

7 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I want to say, I  
8 think, it was 9,000 or little bit less, maybe 8,000. So  
9 the paint actually came from a fund that we already had  
10 with Public Works so we didn't have to worry about that.  
11 I want to say it was about 8,000, but I would rather  
12 give you the exact number. I can e-mail that to you.

13 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It looks nice, really  
14 nice.

15 MRS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: And the other  
16 portion we have yet to finish off. All three sides will  
17 be painted at one point.

18 MR. SERNA: Thank you. All right.  
19 Moving on to the next item, which is Public Comments.  
20 Are there any public comments? (None)

21 Next meeting date is Tuesday,  
22 July 13, 2021, right here at City Hall Council Chambers,  
23 at 5:00 p.m..

24 I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

25 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Make a motion to adjourn.

MR. CANTU: Second.

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

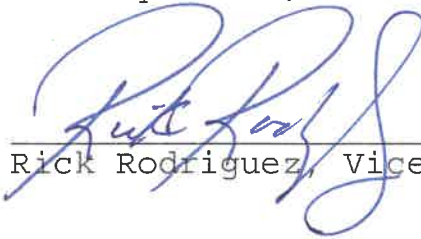
(All signify aye.)  
Motion carries. Meeting adjourned.

\*\*\*\*\* Meeting Adjourned \*\*\*\*\*

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of Tuesday  
June 22, 2021

Approved and signed July 13, 2021

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Serna, President



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Rick Rodriguez, Vice-President

Valda Lewis / Zoom

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Valda Lewis, Secretary

Gilberto Cantu ? Zoom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gilberto Cantu, Member



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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 Munster, Indiana, this 25th day of June, 2021.



*Peggy S. LaLonde*

Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR

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