

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS

BOARD MEMBERS

Henry Ventura, President
Joseph Ochoa, Vice President
Anthony Askounis, Member
John Bakota, Member
Ray Lopez, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 8, 2021 @ 5:00 p.m.
Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present: Henry Ventura, Joseph Ochoa, John
Bakota, Ray Lopez

STAFF PRESENT: Winna Guzman, Joseph Allegretti.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: June 21, 2021.

Motion to approve June 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes made by Ray
Lopez. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:

MR. VENTURA: Approval of Check Warrant 070821 WB in the
amount of \$90,046.55.

Motion to approve Check Warrant 070821 WB made by Ray Lopez.
Second by John Bakota.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

1 MR. VENTURA: Check Warrant 070821 CD in the amount of
\$1,012.09.

2 Motion to approve Check Warrant 070821 CD made by Joseph
3 Ochoa. Second by Ray Lopez.

4 Questions/Comments: None.

5 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
6 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

7 APPROVAL OF PAYROLL WARRANTS:

8 MR. VENTURA: Approval of Payroll Warrants. Payroll
Warrant 062521 in the amount of \$35,000.10. And this is for
9 payroll 6/5/21 to 6/18/21.

10 Motion to approve Payroll Warrant 062521 Payroll 6/5/21 to
6/18/21 made by Joseph Ochoa. Second by Ray Lopez.

11 Questions/Comments: None.

12 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
13 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

14 MR. VENTURA: Payroll Warrant 062521 in the amount of
12,000.55. And this is for Utilities Payroll dated 6/5/21 to
15 6/18/21.

16 Motion to approve Payroll Warrant 062521 Utilities Payroll
6/5/21 to 6/18/21 made by Ray Lopez. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

17 Questions/Comments: None.

18 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
19 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

20 FILTRATION REPORT: None.

21 WATER REPORT:

22 MR. VENTURA: Water Report, Winna Guzman.

23 MS. GUZMAN: Just to very briefly note that I provided
copies of the Fire Department Reports for unmetered hydrant
usage for the year 2020 and for May and June of 2021.

24 So that completes my report.
25

1 MR. VENTURA: Any questions for Winna?

2 MR. LOPEZ: Thank you..

3 MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Winna.

4 DISTRIBUTION REPORT: None.

5 NEW BUSINESS:

6 MR. VENTURA: We will go to New Business. And under New
7 Business we have Resolution WD 21-10.

8 This is a Resolution of the Board of Trustees of
9 the East Chicago Water Department authorizing the transfer of
10 appropriations into different budget categories.

11 Motion to approve Resolution WD 21-10 made by Ray Lopez.
12 Second by Joseph Ochoa.

13 Questions/Comments: None.

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

16 MR. VENTURA: Resolution WD 2021-11. A Resolution of
17 the Board of Directors authorizing the write-off of certain
18 delinquent water charges and penalties.

19 Motion to approve Resolution WD 21-11 made by Joseph Ochoa.
20 Second by Ray Lopez.

21 Questions/Comments:

22 MR. LOPEZ: But I have a question.

23 MR. BAKOTA: I do too.

24 MR. LOPEZ: This is Department of Redevelopment bad
25 debt. Where did that come from?

MS. GUZMAN: That's McCook. They sold that property.
So there is an outstanding balance. And correct me if I am
wrong, Joe.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: No. I am familiar with it.

MS. GUZMAN: And the previous occupant we're trying to
see if we can collect it from her. But it's Department of

1 Redevelopment's property. So we wrote it off in hopes that
2 maybe we can get some type of payment in the future. But
3 just to clear our books and try clean that up we need to do
4 this.

5 MR. LOPEZ: No way to collect it?

6 MS. GUZMAN: We have billed. But right now it's sold to
7 another entity. We're working on that. I sent the
8 information over to Law Department and just waiting for a
9 response.

10 MR. LOPEZ: I know some of these are small debts.

11 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

12 MR. LOPEZ: But if you add them all up, that's a pretty
13 good amount.

14 MS. GUZMAN: For sure.

15 MR. BAKOTA: I have a question. US Gypsum is one of
16 them.

17 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

18 MR. BAKOTA: They're still an active company in our
19 City.

20 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. And that one I believe there's an
21 error. There was an error on the billing. And I believe I
22 that brought that up.

23 MR. BAKOTA: Because it shows bad debt.

24 MS. GUZMAN: Yeah. And in the future I'll be giving a
25 little bit more description on it. It's just when the staff
pulls it up they do give me the records. But they just put
bad debt on there. But I'll be more specific in the future.

MR. BAKOTA: Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for Winna?

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

MS. GUZMAN: Thank you.

1 MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Winna. Next under New Business
2 we have Hasse Construction. This is a 2021/22 rate sheet.
It's in your packet.

3 Motion to approve Hasse Construction 2021/22 Rate Sheet made
4 by John Bakota. Second by Ray Lopez.

5 Questions/Comments:

6 MR. OCHOA: Are we still paying, well, obviously we are,
the job superintendent? What does he do?

7 MS. GUZMAN: I am sorry?

8 MR. BAKOTA: Hasse Construction?

9 MR. OCHOA: Yeah. Hasse Construction. It says job
10 superintendent.

11 MS. GUZMAN: I believe that's if they're on-site then
they include that. I don't have that with me. Do you mind
12 if I see that? Thank you.

13 That's just a breakdown. So if the superintendent
or supervisor ends up at the site, then they assess based on
14 the rates provided.

15 MR. OCHOA: So he can decide he has to go there.

16 MS. GUZMAN: Depending what the situation is possibly.

17 MR. OCHOA: All right.

18 MS. GUZMAN: But it may not be assessed if they're not
there.

19 MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for Winna?

20 MS. GUZMAN: It's very detailed. They break everything
down which is good.

21 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
22 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

23 MR. VENTURA: Next we have Austgen Electric 2021 rate
24 sheet.

25 Motion to approve Austgen Electric 2021 Rate Sheet made by
Ray Lopez. Second by John Bakota.

1 Questions/Comments: None.

2 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
3 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

4 MR. VENTURA: We're going to go down to where it says
5 Adjustments. And the first Adjustment will be 3519 Grand
6 Boulevard. It's in your packet.

7 MR. LOPEZ: Excuse me. You passed Calumet City
8 Plumbing.

9 MR. VENTURA: No. We're leaving those out.

10 MS. GUZMAN: I asked if they could be removed from the
11 agenda.

12 MR. LOPEZ: Okay.

13 Motion to approve 3519 Grand Boulevard Adjustment made by
14 John Bakota. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

15 Questions/Comments: None.

16 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
17 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

18 MR. VENTURA: Next we have 4714 McCook Avenue.

19 Motion to approve 4714 McCook Avenue Adjustment made by John
20 Bakota. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

21 Questions/Comments: None.

22 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
23 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

24 MR. VENTURA: Next we have 4343 Kennedy Avenue.

25 Motion to approve 4343 Kennedy Avenue Adjustment made by
Joseph Ochoa. Second by John Bakota.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

MR. VENTURA: One North AnnexBMT/Telephone. That's in
your packet.

1 Motion to approve One North AnnexBMT/Telephone made by Joseph
Ochoa. Second by John Bakota.

2 Questions/Comments: None.

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

5 MS. GUZMAN: Thank you.

6 MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Winna. Next we're going to
7 Past Due. And the first one is for Calumet City Plumbing.
And the amount is \$17,702.40.

8 And the reason for the delinquency is no funding in
9 account to process. Transfer has been complete.

10 Motion to approve Calumet Plumbing Pas Due Invoice made by
Ray Lopez. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

11 Questions/Comments: None.

12 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
13 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

14 MR. VENTURA: Next Past Due we have Eurofins for \$340.
15 The reason for delinquent invoice was received on June 28,
2021.

16 Motion to approve Eurofins Past Due Invoice made by John
Bakota. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

17 Questions/Comments: None.

18 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
19 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

20 MR. VENTURA: Next we have Northwest Industrial
Specialist. And this is a Past Due of \$110.36.

21 I have a question. On the actual one says 110 and
22 the other one has 36 cents.

23 MS. GUZMAN: Let me look at the actual invoice. It's
\$110.36.

24 MR. VENTURA: So the actual amount is \$110.36.
25

1 Motion to approve Northwest Industrial Specialist Past Due
2 Invoice made by Ray Lopez. Second by Joseph Ochoa.

3 Questions/Comments: None.

4 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
5 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

6 REPORT FROM LEGAL COUNSEL:

7 MR. VENTURA: Next on the agenda we have Report from
8 Legal Counsel, Attorney Joseph Allegretti.

9 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Briefly at the last Council Meeting the
10 Council approved a rollover of our \$2 million debt which
11 remains unpaid.

12 It was kind of an emergency infusion of cash we got
13 from the City's General Fund. I think Winna knows the detail
14 much better than I do. But some emergency repairs, some
15 water main breaks.

16 The obvious question of course was when are you
17 going to pay it back. And the answer was we don't know.

18 We weren't specifically asking for the debt to be
19 forgiven.

20 I did inform them that we are undergoing a
21 tentative Cost of Service Study in anticipation of filing a
22 rate case with the IURC. That's the Indiana Utility
23 Regulatory commission.

24 We're nearing completion. And I've been saying
25 this for awhile. But actually I think we are closing in on a
file date.

We'll be having a work study session with our cost
of service provider to explain what our financial situation
is with the Board and what the recommended revenue needs are
for the Utility for us to be able to pay our bills and make
our repairs.

As I said earlier Winna has been acting as the De
Facto Superintendent of the Waterworks Department working
nonstop and doing a wonderful job.

I don't want to embarrass, Winna. But you have
been. It's one crisis after another.

1 Today Winna and yesterday was talking about we're
2 having a threatened shortage on needed necessary chemicals
for our treatment process.

3 These shortages are common not only I guess in the
4 chemical industry just like they are in the automobile
5 industry and in the chip industry and having Winna scrambling
around and getting backup sources from suppliers and vendors
for these things.

6 Lastly and Winna is better to talk about this than
7 I am. We still haven't filled the job of superintendent.
There is a plan on promoting Obet, Jr.

8 MS. GUZMAN: Jr., yes.

9 MR. ALLEGRETTI: To the job. He is highly qualified.
10 Has a technical degree and lots of experience, young and
energetic.

11 And that's probably going to be the subject of a
12 motion or a resolution maybe a formal report maybe at the
next meeting. But that's the plan. And that's exciting.

13 But still the superintendent position has not been
14 filled. The search goes on.

15 MR. BAKOTA: The hope is he's going to be Distribution
Supervisor.

16 MR. ALLEGRETTI: He's going to be more, no, Operations.

17 MR. BAKOTA: But Ed was Distribution Supervisor.

18 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Right. Kind of, yeah. I think the
19 most, the biggest need I think is in Operations. And Winna
is better qualified to answer that question than I am. But
that's my understanding.

20
21 But the place is running. Still producing good
water. And all we need is a little more revenue and a few
22 more people. We are undermanned and are searching for
qualified employees.

23 MR. BAKOTA: Did we get any feedback from that company
24 we hired as a lead detection for unaccounted for water?

25 MR. ALLEGRETTI: There was an extensive amount of
significant leaks that have been identified and repaired.

1 And again Winna is better qualified to talk about that.

2 MS. GUZMAN: I can provide a report on that.

3 MR. ALLEGRETTI: But it was a significant amount. I
4 don't know what the amount of water was. But I think it was
in excess of a million gallons a day.

5 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: We were losing through these leaks. My
7 understanding is that 95 percent of those leaks have been
repaired.

8 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. I would say yes. There's just a few
9 and they're on the private side.

10 MR. BAKOTA: And that study is still going on, right?

11 MS. GUZMAN: Well, we are going to be extending it to
12 actually the Marktown area. We just approved that. So we're
going to find out exactly when they're there going to
commence that work so we can continue our efforts.

13 And for next year I believe I have the proposal for
14 that. So I will be making sure that we have the funding to
cover those expenses.

15 MR. BAKOTA: And also we get the Fire Report which is
16 quite a bit of water. That surprised me the amount of water.

17 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

18 MR. ALLEGRETTI: It's an eye opener.

19 MS. GUZMAN: And I'm also asking Sanitary as well to
provide a report.

20 MR. BAKOTA: On usage?

21 MS. GUZMAN: Yes. Usage report, yes.

22 MR. ALLEGRETTI: I will just say one more operational
23 comment. These are things again as the lawyer I am not
qualified to really discuss operations. But they're are
24 ongoing.

25 We have Christopher Burke Engineering and we have
Austgen Electric collaborating on some potential future

1 capital projects among which are some design improvements or
2 replacement of the Water, Chicago Avenue Water Tower. It's
not functioning as it should be. Needs some modification or
repairs or perhaps even replacement.

3
4 And the Mayor is working on appropriating some of
the rescue funds. The City received its first \$15 million in
5 rescue funds which is half of the \$32 million the City is
eligible for and qualified to receive.

6 The major uses of those kinds of funds is
7 infrastructure, water and sanitary. And Winna and staff is
trying to make sure that the Water Utility has its hand out
8 at the appropriate time and gets its appropriate share of
those moneys for needed capital improvements.

9 And I will stop talking. Any additional questions
10 on those subjects should be addressed to Winna.

11 MR. OCHOA: Is there a shelf life for these water
treatment chemicals?

12 MS. GUZMAN: I believe that's one of the questions that
13 we brought up. So I will be getting that information in the
next couple of days. And that's something that we talked
14 about today.

15 And I just want to add that in our efforts to try
to fill some of these open positions I have forwarded to
16 various entities, contractors, plumbing contractors,
subcontractors, general contractors the open positions for
17 the Water Department. That includes Distribution,
Filtration.

18 So I have submitted. I received the list from the
Building Department. I forwarded, I e-mailed all the job
19 openings to the various contractors.

20 And I also sent out the same job openings to
various individuals within Lake County. I received a list
21 from IDEM.

22 And they are licensed operators. They hold
licenses and they are listed under IDEM. They provided me
23 that list. And I did forward them a list of the open
positions, the job openings in hopes that we can get someone
24 to come forward and fill some of these positions.

25 MR. LOPEZ: Question, Joe.

1 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes, sir.

2 MR. LOPEZ: On these funds that are coming in, these
3 moneys, more is going to be coming once they pass that other
4 bill. Who makes the decision in the City where the money
5 goes?

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: They are in the form of additional
7 appropriations. The statutory process is that an additional
8 appropriation occurs upon the recommendation of the
9 Executive, the Mayor, and approved by Ordinance, adopted by
10 Common Council.

11 So it has to be a cooperative collaborative effort
12 which sometimes that's not always easy as we all know.

13 MR. LOPEZ: There's going to be a lot of money coming
14 in. Thank you.

15 MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for Attorney
16 Allegretti? Thank you.

17 FINANCIAL REPORT: None.

18 UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

19 PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

20 * Next Regular Meeting Date: July 19, 2021
21 @ 5:00 p.m.


22 Motion to adjourn was made by John Bakota. Second by Joseph
23 Ochoa.

24 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
25 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

* Meeting ended at 5:27 p.m.

1 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
2 Thursday, July 8, 2021
3 Approved and Signed _____
4
5

6 _____
7 Henry Ventura, President
8

9 
10 _____
11 Jose Mochca, Vice President
12

13 
14 _____
15 John Bakota, Member
16

17 
18 _____
19 Anthony Askounis, Member
20

21 
22 _____
23 Ray Lopez, Member
24


25 
26 _____
27 Anthony Herrera, Board Secretary

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, LISA PENA, 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 said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 16th day of July, 2021.



Lisa Pena
Notary Public, Porter County
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number 084-003484



DATE: 07/15/2021 WARRANT: 071921WB AMOUNT: \$ 57,387.73

WE HAVE EXAMINED THE CLAIMS LISTED ON THE FOREGOING WARRANT REPORT AND EXCEPT FOR CLAIMS NOT ALLOWED AS SHOWN ON THE REPORT SUCH CLAIMS ARE HEREBY ALLOWED.

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2021.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE CLAIMS LISTED ON THE FOREGOING WARRANT REPORT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT AND I HAVE AUDITED THE SAME IN ACCORDANCE WITH IC 5-11-10-1.6.

DATE _____, 2021

CONTROLLER