

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 9, 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
Alysia Dunbar
Winna Guzman

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, Joseph
Ochoa, John Bakota, Anthony Askounis, Ray
Lopez

Staff Present in Chambers: Obed Perez, Allan
Lee, Winna Guzman, Bill Biller, Joseph
Allegretti, Alesha Dunbar

MR. VENTURA: Call to order the meeting
of the East Chicago Department of Waterworks Board. I
would like to welcome Alysia Dunbar as the new
secretary.

Entertain a motion to approve
minutes of August 16, 2021, as written.

MR. OCHOA: Motion to approve.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

Warrant approval.

WARRANT 082021 - Utilities Payroll
Dates of 7-31-21 to 8-13-21
Amount of \$12,916.05

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve

MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

WARRANT 082021 - Payroll - Dates of 7-31-21 to 8-13-21
Amount of \$31,901.42

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to accept.

MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

WARRANT 082421 WB - 9-1-21 - Amount of \$33,205.41

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

WARRANT 090921 WB - 9-1-21 - Amount of \$72,683.85

1 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

2 MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

7 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
8 Next, Filtration report, Obed Perez
9 Jr.

10 MR. PEREZ: Currently, since I have been
11 here, we have repaired Ni-Source pipe 1571, installed a
12 new phosphate feed pump. We have also repaired a tank
13 flow meter and calibrated it. We have also repaired
14 pump 1661 in the recycling lift station. The
15 ventilation system has been repaired. We are currently
16 working on servicing our out valve by the tank, by the
17 Water Department.

18 We are currently working on meters,
19 flow meters in high service areas for the operators.
20 It's a live feed of what is going on in the plant.

21 We are currently in contact with the
22 chemical supplier for citric acid. We have called and
23 they don't have any right now. I called the
24 manufacturer to give us an idea of someone who would
25 have some in stock right now. They directed us to a
company and I'm currently in contact with them, giving
them our paperwork and processing where we can order
citric acid from them.

18 MR. OCHOA: Is this a problem with
19 inventory?

20 MR. PEREZ: Inventory for us, yeah,
21 because the membrane washing we do once a month to clean
22 and we need at least 2400 pounds to do all six membranes
23 a month. We don't have anything right now and we are
24 hoping to get those drums in as soon as we can from that
25 company.

23 MR. OCHOA: Are you going to stockpile
24 it?

25 MR. PEREZ: I asked how many they had
available. They only had eight. So I said, give me all

1 eight if that's all you have. I am trying to get in
2 contact to get more in the future. I am still calling
around right now.

3 MR. BAKOTA: Is there any other chemical
4 you can use?

5 MR. PERZ: I also contacted the
6 manufacturer with that too. They directed me -- for
7 citric acid, because we prefer that. If need be, I am
8 going to have to use other chemicals, if need be, in the
9 future.

10 For the lab, we currently did hire
11 Louis Garcia as lab adviser and he's already had five
12 years experience as a microbiologist and currently being
13 trained to get monthly samples throughout the
14 distribution system. And by this month I am hoping to
15 have him trained to enter results online for the State.
16 And we are currently trying to get him a new meter to
17 read on-site samples. Make life a lot easier for him.
18 And we are suppose to be doing that anyway, reading the
19 results on site.

20 And then we are also -- we had an
21 audit recently. We are certified for three years and we
22 are currently working on any deficiencies that were
23 found.

24 MR. LOPEZ: On the last one there, you
25 are going to get a meter or testing chlorine. How do
you do it now?

MR. PEREZ: We have a meter that does it,
but this one does multiple tests at one time as opposed
to one chlorine test. You wouldn't have to deal with
the powder. We usually deal with powder, pour it in
there, but with this new technology where you just put
it in there, it tests like three different tests all at
the same time and runs all the tests in front of you and
records it for you too.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for Mr.
Perez? (None) Thank you, Mr. Perez.

Next we have Water, Miss Winna
Guzman.

MS. GUZMAN: No report.

1 MR. VENTURA: Distribution report, Allan
2 Lee.

3 MR. LEE: Good evening. Well, we've got
4 a lot of work to do and we are going to get it done.
5 Right now we are in the process of repairing ten large
6 meters that weren't reading. We have got that down to
7 five now. And the problem with that is the metal
8 buildup. It's not getting out. We didn't have the
9 right resources and we are working on that, so hopefully
10 by next month all those big meters will be registered.
11 We also are going back on the 24 where we had that main
12 blocked off. We are putting that ACP in that, that's
13 starting up. I'm excited about that. Those are big
14 mains that you have and I'm surprised we didn't have
15 problems with that.

16 On Olcott, we got a leak in that
17 area. So we go down and it shows you what we did this
18 month, 14 service leaks, one valve leak, 23 box pit
19 repaired, also we have 113 shut offs. I got 86 of them
20 out being repaired at this time. They were all over
21 900, but we are looking into budgeting that and getting
22 that done. But these aren't just numbers either. The
23 numbers you see, I have created a data base of numbers.
24 On the data base it's a main number, address, and what's
25 going on. So it's not just a number. Those are facts
for you.

The valve box, 117 valve boxes that
need to be repaired. We are in the process of going
through that and seeing if it's the valve or the valve
box because some of the valves are broke or needing
repair, about half of them. I am looking through and
working on that. They are just under the blacktop, so
if you don't get there, the blacktop goes over it and
covers them up.

Putting in three new hydrants.
Looks like Public Works likes to water their grass. But
we are also putting a new sensor down there. That's
something with the main, so we can monitor the pressure
and move the sensor from Gary Road because we have a lot
of people wanting to use those hydrants intermittently,
so we can lock them up. So that's what is going on with
that.

Our meters, our inventory, you know
how many meters we have now. That's done. All our
clamps have been inventoried. I made a list of those
that we are short and I'm in the process of ordering to
make sure we have one clamp for any size main that would
break, so we don't have to wait for a clamp or borrow

1 one. I also talked with American Water. If we don't
2 get a clamp in by the time we need them, they would loan
3 us a clamp, if they have that size, which they have
4 almost everything -- but they don't have -- there is a
5 couple they don't have.

6 We've got ME Simpson coming in to
7 start maintenance on the hydrants. We got a lot of
8 maintenance on the list from the last two years. They
9 are going to be starting that and then we have got
10 someone -- I think what may happen with that, they will
11 go right behind them and paint them and make them nice
12 and shiny, look new. What else do we have?

13 Flow meters, we are going to be
14 working with Filtration and with ME Simpson so we can
15 look at how much water is going out and how much water
16 we are essentially -- how much we are short. How much
17 are we losing, either by leaks or people helping
18 themselves.

19 MR. OCHOA: When are you going to be able
20 to find that out?

21 MR. LEE: We are in the process of that.
22 The flow will help us and look at the ones that you are
23 reading and you just deduct that. You can see what is
24 unaccountable. I see a lot of unaccountable with Public
25 Works and I've only been here 30 days, but I have got
the same thing over at the Marina. They have got a nice
picket made up with cans, sort of nice for my house, and
they put them on the garden house on different
attachments and water the grass with no meter. We are
going to be addressing that. The one I like, they have
the meter on one end, but there is pit on the other
which should be put on the size of the meter.

26 The priority this week is the 23
27 hydrants we wrote up last year, that they have severe
28 problems, broke, don't work, and not acceptable. So far
29 we got two more yet to check and only five of those have
30 been changed out. All the rest are still critical. We
31 got a big list of ones that need little stuff. As long
32 as the water comes out and it works, I'm okay with that.
33 Later we'll deal with the little stuff.

34 And then we have a PD working, we
35 found someone out there with the sensor and we have got
36 five leaks out there, that should be wrapping up by
37 tomorrow on those five leaks. So then we can re-sensor
38 it and see if there is anymore there. And we are in the
39 process -- it's not on there -- but we will get all our
40 fittings and all of our valves inventoried because I

1 have no idea for sure what we have. But I probably will
2 know by next month. That's what I got for the month.

3 MR. BAKOTA: The valves you are talking
4 about are mainline valves. If I am right, there is 800
5 in the City.

6 MR. LEE: Okay. So ME Simpson does the
7 valve program. So as they go through, they give us a
8 report which ones are broke, which ones the nuts are
9 gone, which ones are paved over. So I have taken their
10 list -- give you a little sample, the data base of the
11 valves we know of. So then we know exactly what needs
12 to be done, where it is at, and then we will be going
13 through that in the next couple of weeks. Which are the
14 critical ones that we really need to make sure they are
15 available to get to. We can't get them all. We are
16 going to be working on that too, but it's important that
17 we go through and see which valves are critical. On
18 some of those big ones, make sure they are brought up to
19 the ground level -- you know -- four-inch won't do too
20 much damage. But 16, that will get you going.

21 MR. BAKOTA: And even hydrants, we have
22 600 hydrants in the City.

23 MR. LEE: We have got ME Simpson to do
24 hydrant maintenance. They will be doing all the little
25 stuff and we are working on inventory on that too.
We'll get caught up one brick at a time.

MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for Mr.
Lee? (None) Thank you, Mr. Lee.

Report from Legal Counsel, Attorney
Allegretti.

MR. ALLEGRETTI: Our cost of service --
slash -- rate consultant, BakerTilly, Andre Riley, is
winding up the Cost of Service Study in preparation for
filing our rate case with the IURC. We'll be scheduling
a work study session for the Board to hear what the
recommendation is and ultimately take it under
consideration at the appropriate time. Everything else
is okay.

MR. VENTURA: Financial Report, Bill
Biller.

MR. BILLER: No report.

1 MR. VENTURA: New business. Resolution
WD 21-14, and this is for Water Utility Construction
2 Fund 605, additional appropriation.

3 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

4 MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

8 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

9 MR. BAKOTA: One comment, they have me
here as vice-president and as you remember, I was
10 impeached. So Mr. Ochoa is vice-president.

11 MS. GUZMAN: I didn't catch that, but I
will correct it. I will make sure and advise them. I
12 apologize for that, I didn't catch it.

13 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

14 Resolution WD 21-15. This has to do
with the agreement with Bill Biller Financial Services.
This is for financial and accounting services.

15 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

16 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

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

21 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

22 Next we have past due, Calumet City
Plumbing. And this is a past due invoice for \$5,850.88.
Reason for delinquent, invoice was not received until
23 August 16th. Do I have a motion to approve?

24 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

25 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

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

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

5 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
6 We have another past due. This is
7 for Konica Minolta, amount of \$243.00. And the reason
8 for delinquent, invoice was not received until
9 August 16, 2021. Do I have a motion to approve?

10 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

11 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

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

16 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
17 Agreements. First agreement is
18 BakerTilly, 2021 contract addendum. That's in your
19 packet. I believe this is not to exceed \$18,360.00.

20 MS. GUZMAN: This is an addendum to the
21 contract for 2021. This is for services to be rendered
22 for the remainder of the year and the expenses are
23 covered under this addendum.

24 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

25 MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
Next agreement is Biller Financial
Services. This is the 2022 contract.

MS. GUZMAN: Again, this is for Biller
Financial Services and for services, financial services,
to be rendered in the year 2022.

1 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

2 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

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

7 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
8 Next, ME Simpson-2021/2022 Valve
9 Exercising Assessment.

10 MS. GUZMAN: To reiterate, this the
11 proposal from ME Simpson to perform Valve Exercising
12 Program for the Water Department. I'm just asking that
13 the Board approve this so we can get started on this
14 project.

15 MR. OCHOA: How many valves are in
16 question?

17 MS. GUZMAN: I believe on this one it's
18 approximately 550 valves that they will be assessing.
19 So it's 4 to 8 inch right now, that's what we are
20 focusing on, and then we'll go on to the bigger valves
21 once we complete this.

22 MR. OCHOA: Are these valves located at
23 like the street?

24 MS. GUZMAN: They were scattered.

25 MR. BAKOTA: If we find a valve that's
not functioning, do we do a replacement soon after that?

MR. LEE: Well, I have got reports from
2019, but we'll be playing catch up for the last two
years. So we are going to start with inventory. We
have some inventory for 4, 6 and 8-inch. The reason to
change out is so they don't cause a disruption, only to
maybe a few customers. Like no big valves at the moment
because if we broke a valve, there is no stock. So
eventually our inventory -- in the next two weeks -- we
are going to know what we need. Once we have inventory,
then I don't mind moving back up to doing a couple
bigger valves. I'm not doing bigger valves when I don't
have inventory. So I told them you can do the City, all

1 the 4, 6 and 8-inch valves. Those are the common ones
2 that usually break. We always get a big break once in
3 awhile. And then once we get inventory, once we got
4 stuff to fix the valves -- because it could be a
5 critical valve -- then we can operate. And until we
6 have that, I don't want anything operating.

7 MR. LOPEZ: Are you running into any
8 problems that the Board can help you with?

9 MR. LEE: I only have one wish,
10 eventually you will be able to help me with and Winna is
11 working with me.

12 MR. VENTURA: Any other questions?

13 MR. LOPEZ: What's the total cost of all
14 this?

15 MS. GUZMAN: The only item we are going
16 to exclude is the GPS service for Sanitary and Storm
17 service structures, that's the only item to exclude.
18 Other than that, these are the ones. I can get you a
19 total. I apologize, I should have got you that. So
20 it's \$70,450.00.

21 MR. VENTURA: Any other questions?
22 (None) Do I have a motion to approve?

23 MR. OCHOA: Motion to approve.

24 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

MS. GUZMAN: Can I just add, I did
include the previous 2019 summary report that they did
and that entails all the valves they identified and the
ones they weren't able to get to for some reason or
another.

MR. VENTURA: No further questions for
Winna? (None)

1 Next we have ME Simpson 2021 small
2 meter bench testing.

3 MS. GUZMAN: Again, this is a proposal
4 for small meter bench testing services to be performed
5 by ME Simpson. And the cost for that will be \$4,500,
6 and that's for approximately 100 meters.

7 MR. BAKOTA: I have a question. We have
8 a testing bench meter brand new at our facility.

9 MR. LEE: First, I've got two guys and
10 I've got to change 100 meters. That's almost like when
11 you go in the rabbit hat and pull out a rabbit, you try
12 to pull out the rabbit. I've got to figure out 100
13 meters with the two guys I have. I don't know how to
14 test meters.

15 MR. BAKOTA: We have got a brand new --

16 MR. LEE: It's beautiful too, and
17 eventually, hopefully next year we'll be working at
18 getting people hired who can operate that.

19 MR. BAKOTA: That's another contract.
20 Our people have to take the meter out, so you got two
21 people usually working that. Once they take the meter
22 out, they got to put another meter in so they don't
23 interrupt service.

24 MR. LEE: Correct, we have the meter.

25 MR. BAKOTA: That's \$45.00 per meter,
plus another \$40.00 for man hours. You're talking
\$85.00 to get a damn meter tested. And are these new
meters?

 MR. LEE: I'm trying to figure out --
they would probably be the new meters. It would be
great if I could do the 113 or some of those pits and
switch those meters out. The one thing, the meters are
good. So once they are pulled out and tested, we can be
in compliance. We've got to be in compliance with the
State. Then those meters are going to go back in the
holes. They are good. There is nothing wrong with
them. They go back in inventory.

 MR. BAKOTA: I suggest we table this. We
got a damn bench tester there.

1 MS. GUZMAN: We don't have the staff.

2 MR. BAKOTA: I think we need to get the
3 staff.

4 MS. GUZMAN: We are trying really hard to
5 do this.

6 MR. BAKOTA: I suggest we table this and
7 ask the company -- is the meter calibrated not right?

8 MR. LEE: It's certifying them, so the
9 meters are correct.

10 MR. BAKOTA: And the meter could have
11 been in there a year or two years.

12 MR. LEE: It's like going to the gas
13 station and you get a gallon of gas. You get a gallon
14 and make sure it works. So they are certified to show
15 that I got that gas. There is a gallon there. So we
16 are doing the same thing.

17 MR. LOPEZ: I think John is correct. I
18 make a motion to table it and have them come and explain
19 it to us.

20 MR. BAKOTA: I'll second that motion.

21 MS. GUZMAN: I'll invite them to the next
22 meeting.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
Next we have vehicle surplus
approval.

MS. GUZMAN: These are two vehicles that
we need approval for Public Works to assist with
advertising and placing them on auction as they are
inoperable. We would like to -- and actually they are
over 14 years old as well. So we would like to get them
on the auction, and any funds that we receive from that
auction go back to the Water Department.

1 MR. OCHOA: You said they are inoperable.

2 MS. GUZMAN: Yes, they are not working at
all.

3 MR. OCHOA: Why can't we scrape them?

4 MS. GUZMAN: This is the process we
5 always used in the past. That is the process. All the
6 vehicles, even if they are -- you know -- got in a crash
or badly or severely damaged, they were sold at auction.
They have to go through that process.

7 MR. BAKOTA: I think you get more money
8 at auction than you would scraping.

9 MS. GUZMAN: Definitely. I'm requesting
10 the Board to approve this and I will have Public Works
sign off on the transfer, so I will have that on record.

11 MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for
Winna? (None) Do I have a motion to approve?

12 MR. ASKOUNIS: Make a motion to approve.

13 MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

17 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

18 Do we have any Unfinished Business?
19 (None) Public Comment? (None)

20 Next meeting is Monday,
September 20, '21, 5:00 p.m., East Chicago Council
Chambers.

21 Do I have a motion to adjourn?

22 MR. BAKOTA: Make a motion to adjourn.

23 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

24 MR. VENTURA: Roll call.

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

1 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries. Meeting
2 adjourned.

3 ***** Meeting adjourned *****
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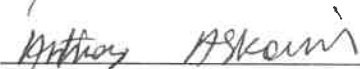
5
6 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
7 September 9, 2021

8 Approved and signed September 20, 2021

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10 _____
Henry Ventura, President

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12 _____
Joseph Ochoa, Vice-President

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14 _____
John Bakota, Member

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16 _____
Anthony Askounis, Member

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18 _____
Ray Lopez, Member

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20 _____
Alysia Dunbar, 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 14th day of September, 2021.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR