

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 1, 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
Alysia Dunbar
Bill Biller
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: Alysia Dunbar
Joseph Allegretti, Winna Guzman

MR. VENTURA: Meeting of the East Chicago
Department of Waterworks Board will come to order.
Entertain a motion to approve minutes of October 18,
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.
Next we have warrants.

WARRANT 102921 - Utilities Payroll
Dates of 10-9-21 to 10-22-21

MR. OCHOA: Motion to approve.

1 MR. BAKOTA: Second
2 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?
3 (None)

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

6 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
7 WARRANT 102921 - amount of \$36,922.42
8 Payroll of 10-9-21 to 10-22-21

9 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

10 MR. OCHOA: Second.

11 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?
12 (None)

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

15 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
16 WARRANT 102621 WB - amount \$27,337.58

17 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

18 MR. OCHOA: Second.

19 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?
20 (None)

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

23 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
24 WARRANT 110121 WB - amount of \$41,842.90

25 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

1 Reports: Filtration, Obed Perez Jr.

2 MR. PEREZ: Quick update. We are trying
3 to close the old plant. We did receive a proposal from
4 a company and we are looking at two more skids to the
5 new plant. I'm working on scheduling to give them a
6 walk-through and give us a presentation what they plan
7 on doing.

8 We did service the elevated tank
9 valve. We did note some problems and we were working on
10 -- our protection wasn't properly attached and we are
11 having somebody come out and properly attach that. We
12 have a company coming out and power wash interior and do
13 inspection, and then disinfect it.

14 Other than that, that's all I have.

15 MR. OCHOA: Are we still scheduled for
16 supplying the old plant with what they need for a year?

17 MR. PEREZ: I don't imagine it being
18 done, as far as the expansion being done any time soon.
19 I asked an estimate when we start the project and they
20 said summertime, next year. Who knows what it would
21 actually take.

22 MR. BAKOTA: You got to get through the
23 winter first.

24 MR. PEREZ: Yes.

25 MR. VENTURA: Next, we have report from
Water, Winna Guzman.

MS. GUZMAN: Good evening, Board. Winna
Guzman, for the record. We provided a report of
activity through September 2021. If you have any
questions, I will be happy to answer.

MR. VENTURA: Any questions for Winna?

MR. OCHOA: Good report.

MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

MS. GUZMAN: Thank you.

MR. VENTURA: Distribution, Allan S. Lee.

MR. LEE: Take that large meter off. We

1 got the parts and got it fixed. It's working. We got
2 one large meter at the school not working again and I
left it there, the 24-inch. I guess December hopefully.

3 We are still a little short on the
4 meter count, we are working on it. The shutoffs, the
5 more you fix, they sort of grow. We fix one and two
6 comes in. So we are working on some valve boxes, we got
7 that going. And still have 12 hydrants that need to be
8 replaced. And actually they did one Monday over there
9 by Luke's gas station there, on Indianapolis. We got
10 that one done. We got our inventory on a lot of stuff
11 good.

12 We had a 16-inch main break today
13 and Hasse was going to get pipes and sleeves, and I
14 said, no, we have clamps. So I told them I wanted to
15 use the clamp, as long as it's in good shape, instead of
16 cutting out because it takes three times longer to cut
17 the pipe out. The clamp is just as good.

18 ME Simpson with the hydrants, they
19 did a few more. I'm thankful they gave me more hydrants
20 that weren't working. Giant is in the process now to
21 start painting the hydrants so they will looking good.
22 And I have Hasse coming in to look this week or first of
23 next week, coming to look at the plant to make a tap on
24 the 36 in the new plant so we can get the flow meter
25 going. They are going to give us a price. I don't
think it will be very much, it's a one-inch tap. And we
have about 128 jobs, probably 130 jobs now out.

We are working on the hydrants at
the parks now and also we are working on the meter shop
testing room. I talked to Ford about coming in and
giving some classes and get us some quotes, so I'll
share that with you.

MR. BAKOTA: Sounds good.

MR. LEE: That's on our agenda.

MR. LOPEZ: I have a question. First one
it says we are in the process of paying parks for the
Master Meter. Everything else is working.

MR. LEE: We did get the parts. We did
change it out and it's working.

MR. LOPEZ: That tells everybody
something?

MR. LEE: It relays to here how much

1 water they are using. So it's not registering, so
2 that's the company that we went to here, they are called
3 Master Meters. So, our meters are Master Meters.

4 MR. LOPEZ: So that's a term you guys
5 use.

6 MR. BAKOTA: Is that on a radio
7 frequency?

8 MS. GUZMAN: It sits at the tower and
9 comes in. We are at like 99.45.

10 MR. LEE: All the readings are coming in.
11 I'm still like you, I'm still reading up.

12 MS. GUZMAN: So Mr. O'Shane, these Master
13 Meters are from Texas and we get our meters from
14 Ferguson, who is the local distributor for the
15 manufacturer is Texas, which is Master Meters.

16 MR. LEE: We've got some new equipment
17 coming, some pipe, a lot of things coming in, and we'll
18 be in order. I'm excited about that. Nice to have at
19 least a couple things of everything that we have, if we
20 need it. So we are getting there.

21 MR. BAKOTA: Are we in the process of
22 hiring other employees?

23 MR. LEE: I talked to a guy on Monday.
24 Yes, we are going to hire. The Mayor gave us the green
25 light, but we have to find them.

MR. BAKOTA: How many are you looking to
hire?

MR. LEE: I need six full time, besides
the two guys I have.

MR. VENTURA: And what would those
positions be?

MR. LEE: Operator, crew leader, and the
rest would be laborers, one for hydrants, meters and
valves and maybe look for new talent for that. We'll
start off with the boxes and rods, till we get them good
and trained, and then maybe start doing the small main
breaks and work our way up.

1 MR. BAKOTA: Do they offer jobs within
2 the City Workers Group?

3 MR. LEE: They have positions, I don't
4 think anybody took it. We've got to get our wages up.
5 Hopefully we'll get them up and we'll find some people.
6 Everybody is short. Everybody I talked to, everybody
7 everywhere is short. Same thing everywhere, sorry it
8 takes so long, we are short. It's not just us,
9 everybody is short.

10 MR. LOPEZ: I've got one more comment I
11 want to thank you guys and Winna. Every time I turned
12 my water on it was always gray. You had to let it run
13 before it would clear up. I would drink it, but the
14 wife wouldn't. They tested it and everything was good.
15 Now, for the last 2 or 3 months, it's clear. I don't
16 know if it's the pipes or if you're throwing chemicals
17 in there or what, but I want to thank you. It was a
18 distracting thing, that's all.

19 MR. VENTURA: Next we have New Business,
20 report from Legal Counsel.

21 MR. ALLEGRETTI: I was going to
22 supplement Obed's comments. The preliminary estimate
23 for the two new skids, which would be a really
24 significant improvement to the filtration system, it's
25 about three and a half million dollars; and that's very
26 preliminary. Obed and Winna are working on that. The
27 City has 20 million dollars in uncommitted Rescue Act
28 Funds. I was sent as an emissary to suggest that that's
29 eligible for improvement to filtration, new membrane.
30 Filtration would be eligible for use of the Rescue Act
31 money. And I'm happy to report the preliminary reaction
32 to funding, using some of that money, getting three and
33 a half million dollars out of those funds is favorable.
34 It would require an ordinance, appropriation ordinance
35 from the Common Council, which you never know what is
36 going to happen with the Common Council. We are working
37 on it. There is otherwise funding. That needs
38 expansion and would be challenging and time consuming,
39 probably couldn't get debt service included in our rate
40 case because time doesn't permit. So this would solve
41 the problem, as least as far as this improvement to the
42 filtration plant.

43 MR. BAKOTA: That's the membrane skid,
44 right?

1 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes, that would be --

2 MR. PEREZ: It's 40 modules of membranes
3 in one skid.

4 MR. ALLEGRETTI: It would give -- Obed is
5 the person to describe this -- it would give some extra
6 capacity and some backup capacity for maintenance for
7 existing. It would be very important.

8 MR. VENTURA: Thank you. Next, we have
9 Financial, Bill Biller. There's no report, but one is
10 in our packet.

11 New Business, Resolution WD 2021-19,
12 authorizing the write-off of certain delinquent water
13 charges and penalties. That's in the packet.

14 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

15 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

16 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?
17 (None)

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

20 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

21 Agreements: First one is AFC
22 International, Inc., Series Q46H-62/63 residual chlorine
23 monitor, in the amount of \$9,894.00.

24 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

25 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

Next Utility Supply Company, valve
type inventory, CEDIT funds, amount of \$34,738.25.

MR. LEE: As you know, we are stocking up
our inventory. This is some of the stuff we are short
on and it's different valves, sleeves, etcetera, this

1 this covers all those items that you see. I call it all
2 the dressings that go with them.

3 MR. BAKOTA: Utility Supply was the
4 lowest bid here? Do you have any other preference
5 beyond the lowest bid?

6 MR. LEE: It's all the same material.

7 MR. BAKOTA: As far as supply or demand?

8 MR. LEE: I think all three are the same
9 that we have used, I don't see any difference in them;
10 at this time anyway

11 MR. BAKOTA: But what we are voting on,
12 we are going to go with the lowest bid, which is
13 \$34,738.25, right?

14 MR. LEE: Correct.

15 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

16 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

17 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

18 (None)

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

21 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

22 Proposals: Dixon Engineering &
23 Inspection Service; inspection for 1,500,00 gallon
24 radial arm elevated tank, cose of \$5,700.00.

25 MR. ASKOUNIS: I make a motion.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

MR. BAKOTA: I have a question. The bid
on the paper here is 5700, but then on page 5, it says
payment schedule, it has items one through nine, travel
time and preparation of report, lump sum of 4,550. Is
that just the separation of their charges?

MR. PEREZ: Yes, the total of 5700 comes

1 from all these expenses.

2 MR. LOPEZ: So we are voting on the 5700?

3 MR. PEREZ: Yes.

4 MR. VENTURA: Roll call.

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

7 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

8 Adjustments: 3839 Parrish Avenue,
9 remove water penalty of \$0.63 and sewer penalty of \$2.18
10 on bill number 16114.

11 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

12 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

13 MR. LOPEZ: Banks don't make mistakes, do
14 they?

15 MS. GUZMAN: Unfortunately in this case,
16 yes. Apparently they didn't issue it in a timely
17 manner. When we called them in October, October 15th
18 specifically, my office called the bank and they found
19 it after the customer came in and inquired about it.
20 Unfortunately they did make a mistake. They paid timely
21 and it's reflected on the items, so I'd ask the Board to
22 allow me to adjust that account and that bill to remove
23 the late fees and the penalties.

24 MR. LOPEZ: Good customer service, did
25 they tell the customer that the bank made the mistake?

MS. GUZMAN: They probably have. I can
mention that to them.

MR. LOPEZ: The Water Department makes a
mistake and everybody gets blamed. When it's somebody
from the bank says that it's not our fault, that's a lot
better.

MS. GUZMAN: The customer is aware of the
situation.

MR. VENTURA: Roll call.

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

2 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

3 Next we have past due invoices.
MICROBAC, invoice for \$260.00. Reason for delinquency,
4 invoices were sent to the lab tech who is no longer
here. Do I have a motion to approve?

5 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

6 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

7 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

8 (None)

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

10 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

11 Next, under other business, we have
ratify Lot O Fun 2022 F-250 6.5 french doors and this is
12 for \$5600.00.

13 MS. GUZMAN: These are two proposals
actually with Lot O Fun in Schererville. This is to be
14 installed on the two pickup trucks. So this is two
truck items that will be assigned to the Water
15 Department's Distribution Division, as the purchase is
being made by the Board of Public Works. These items
16 were presented and approved by the Board of Public Works
on October 22, 2021. And they're being presented today
17 to request that the Board ratify these two proposals
approved by the Board of Public Works.

18 MR. BAKOTA: The trucks will be Water
19 Department trucks?

20 MS. GUZMAN: They will be assigned title
under the City of East Chicago, but be assigned to the
21 Water Department's Distribution Division, yes.

22 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

23 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

24 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

25 (None)

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

2 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

3 Next we have Bosak, 2022 F-250, 4 x
4 4, SD super cab 6.75 box, 148-inch, WB SRW XL, amount of
\$78,720.00.

5 MS. GUZMAN: So, again, these are two
6 purchases. And the proposal was approved by the Board
of Public Works on October 22, 2021. We are presenting
7 this today for the Board members to ratify this
proposal.

8 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

9 MR. OCHOA: Second.

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

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

13 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
Unfinished Business: None
14 Public Comment: None

15 Next meeting will be November 15,
2021, at 5:00 p.m., East Chicago Council Chambers. Do I
16 have a motion to adjourn.

17 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to adjourn.

18 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

19 MR. VENTURA: Roll call.

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

21 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries. Meeting
22 adjourned.

23 ***** Meeting adjourned *****
24
25

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
November 1, 2021

Approved and signed November 15, 2021

Henry Ventura
Henry Ventura, President

Joseph Ochoa
Joseph Ochoa, Vice-President

John Bakota
John Bakota, Member

Anthony Askounis
Anthony Askounis, Member

Ray Lopez
Ray Lopez, Member

Alysia Dunbar
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 9th day of November, 2021.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR