

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 6, 2022, 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: Winna Guzman,
Allan Lee, Obed Perez, Lilia Ramos

STAFF Present Telephonic: Joseph Allegretti,
Bill Biller

MR. VENTURA: First item on the agenda is
election of officers for year 2022. I'm going to open
nominations first for president.

MR. LOPEZ: I nominate Henry Ventura.

MR. VENTURA: I decline. I nominate
Joseph Ochoa for president. Nominations for president
are closed at this time. We are going to take a vote.
I am going to poll the members.

(All voted yes.)

Okay, Joseph Ochoa will be the new
president for 2022. I am now going to open up
nominations for vice-president.

MR. OCHOA: I nominate John Bakota for
vice-president.

MR. VENTURA: Are there any other

1 nominations? (None) I'm going to close the nominations
2 for vice-president and going to poll the members for a
vote.

(All voted yes.)

3 John Bakota is our new
4 vice-president. As far as secretary, I don't think
Alysia Dunbar is here, but we are going to go ahead and
5 nominate Alysia Dunbar for secretary. I will go ahead
and poll the members.

(All voted yes.)

6 Alysia Dunbar is the secretary for
2022.

7 There are no minutes for approval,
so we are moving on to warrants.

8 WARRANT 122221 - \$12,025.47 - Utilities Payroll
Dates of 12/4/21 to 12/17/21

9 Do I have a motion to approve?

10 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to approve.

11 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

12 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

13 (None)

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

15 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

16 WARRANT 122221 - \$38,272.90 - payroll
Date of 12/4/21 to 12/17/21

17 Do I have a motion to approve?

18 MR. OCHOA: Motion to approve.

19 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

20 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

21 (None)

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

23 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

We'll move on to reports.

24 Filtration Report: Obed Perez.

25 MR. PEREZ: No report.

1 MR. VENTURA: Water report, Winna Guzman.
2 MS. GUZMAN: No report at this time.
3 MR. VENTURA: Distribution report, Allan
Lee.

4
5 MR. LEE: By the end of January we'll
6 start on the 24-inch, but we'll see at the end of
7 January. We still have 118 shutoffs that need to be
8 repaired, and we still have 81 valve boxes. Those
didn't get done because of inventory, getting the
inventory. You have got to get the inventory before you
start fixing the stuff that needs fixing. There's a big
line for inventory.

9 32 items have been replaced or
10 repaired. There's 34 now that are out of service.
11 There is 87 that badly need to be repaired, and 40
hydrants that we will do in-house. There is 600
hydrants. At least there is more good ones than bad
ones.

12 There is big mixup a little bit on
13 inventory. We did get some of our inventory order, so
we got two-thirds of the inventory needed. Hopefully
this year we can get that taken care of.

14 We are going to be looking to maybe
15 contract out those hydrants to get fixed and we have
about 300 hydrants. We painted half the hydrants. We
have about half of those that still need to be painted.

16 We've done 160 jobs since August, so
17 there was a little bit of valves, curbs, hydrants,
B-boxes. We did get a little work done. I'm happy we
did that. You can only do one thing at a time.

18 If you drive down Indianapolis, up
19 and down, those hydrants are done. If you take a look
you will see a flange and collar, and numbers are on
them. Hopefully we can get to Columbus and East
Chicago, depending on the weather.

20 And so for only six days into the
21 year, we have had four main breaks, Columbus, Catalpa,
Riley, Homerly. Hasse was called on those, but they
were not able to do them, so Calumet Plumbing are the
22 ones that repaired those leaks or in the process of
repairing.

23 I'm a little upset, so I'm going to
24 vent a little bit. So, you know we got money from the
Mayor to buy equipment. This Board and another Board
approved the purchase. At that time I gave my word to a
25 gentleman to hold that equipment for two months. That's

1 the part I'm not too happy about. It's more about where
2 I was raised and giving somebody your word means a lot
to me. I come from down south.

3 So, at the time that Jalen Robinson
4 came back to work, he canceled the PO on me and now I
look not too good because that gentleman held that
5 equipment two months. We ordered that trailer and now
the PO has been canceled and I have to start over on
6 that. We have a lot of problems -- we have got internal
problems and I'm very upset about it.

7 MR. BAKOTA: Was that the truck trailer?

8 MR. LEE: That was the bobcat trailer.

9 MR. BAKOTA: So it's been canceled? The
money has been canceled?

10 MR. LEE: He went and canceled the PO.

11 MR. OCHOA: Did he say why?

12 MR. LEE: He said he will decide what
equipment I get, and that's not going to go with me.

13 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Who are we talking
14 about?

15 MR. LEE: We are going to have a meeting,
but I'm still not too happy about the equipment. When I
16 give somebody my word, that's the way I was raised.

17 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Who are we speaking of?

18 MR. LEE: We are talking about Jalen
Robinson, who was in charge of fleet maintenance or the
19 vehicles. He left for three and a half months because
he had a better offer. I guess it didn't work out. He
20 came back and took over all the equipment.

21 We were trying to do the best we
can. He wasn't here and I am not happy with what he's
wanting to give me at all. So I plan on -- I just don't
22 think that's right. I know he got the equipment sold
really quick, but somebody else gave their word for me,
23 you know. The Mayor did give me the money. Then I did
say, hey, I got the money. You hold it for me. And,
24 you know, I got the PO. It's the point of, you know,
giving my word. Luckily there's shortages out there and
25 he sold it quickly. I'm sure if it ended up where he

1 was holding a piece of equipment for a couple of months
and not selling, I'm sure for him that would be
2 upsetting. All I can do is apologize, but still I'm
upset about it. This Board approved that and the Mayor
3 approved that. The other Board approved it. It was
approved and we had a PO number, and that shouldn't have
4 been canceled; that's what I think

5 MR. BAKOTA: One question, if the two
boards approved it, who held it up?

6 MR. LEE: I was still in the process of
7 getting the check, and he came back and he canceled it.

8 MS. GUZMAN: It wasn't held up.

9 MR. BAKOTA: So it was canceled.

10 MR. LEE: Yeah, he canceled the PO.

11 MR. LOPEZ: After the Board approved it,
who gave him the authority to cancel?

12 MR. LEE: I don't know, we are going to
13 find out.

14 MR. LOPEZ: I'd like to find out too. If
somebody can go in and cancel, someone other than the
15 Mayor, what is the use of us doing all this.

16 MR. BAKOTA: Why don't we ask our lawyer.

17 MR. ALLEGRETTI: John, I promise I will
look into this.

18 MS. GUZMAN: This occurred in just the
19 last couple of days, we haven't really briefed Joe on
it.

20 MR. VENTURA: Thank you, Mr. Lee.
21 Any report from legal counsel, Joe
Allegretti.

22 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No report.

23 MR. VENTURA: Any report from Financial,
24 Mr. Bill Biller.

25 MR. BILLER: No report.

1 MR. VENTURA: Thank you. Next we have
2 New Business. We have resolution WD 21-25, Water
3 Utility Construction Fund, 0605. This is a resolution
4 appropriating East Chicago Water Utility Construction
5 Fund 0605 monies for the purpose of defraying expenses
6 of the East Chicago Water Utility Construction Fund 0605
7 for the fiscal year beginning January 1st, 2022, and
8 ending December 31, 2022, including all outstanding
9 claims and obligations, and fixing a time when same
10 shall take effect.

11 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

12 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

13 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions?

14 (None)

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

17 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
18 Agreements for Water. First agreement is De-Vine
19 Landscaping and Snow Removal. This is the 2022 proposed
20 rates.

21 MS. GUZMAN: Winna Guzman, Water
22 Department. Just for the Board, this is for year 2022
23 for snow removal services only and requesting that the
24 Board approve the same as submitted. The landscaping
25 proposal will be submitted at a future meeting. Thank
you.

MR. BAKOTA: Winna, are you satisfied
with the way they remove snow or is there some
shortcomings?

MS. GUZMAN: They're pretty good. The
price is better than what I have seen before, but they
are pretty good considering we are short staffed as
well.

MR. VENTURA: Any other questions for
Winna?

MR. LOPEZ: What is the total amount or
does it vary?

MS. GUZMAN: It's a rate sheet, so as it

1 snows and as it meets the conditions on the proposal.

2 MR. LOPEZ: So from one to 5 inches is
3 one price and five to 8 is another price?

4 MS. GUZMAN: Yes, additional cost.

5 MR. VENTURA: Plus on the amount of salt
6 and all that?

7 MS. GUZMAN: They salt, yes. They have
8 vehicles that come around.

9 MR. VENTURA: No other questions for
10 Winna, do I have a motion to approve?

11 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

12 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

15 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
16 Agreement with Luke Oil, car wash
17 2022 agreement/ratification. This is for Water and
18 Filtration.

19 MS. GUZMAN: This is the agreement for
20 car wash services for the Water department's vehicles.
21 It's recommended that the Board ratify the Public Works
22 action and approve the agreement as submitted.

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

25 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

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

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

MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
Next agreement is People's Bank
2022 agreement.

1 MS. GUZMAN: This is the annual agreement
2 with People's Bank to provide acceptance and processing
3 of water utility payments on behalf of the Water
Department, and it's recommended that the agreement be
approved as submitted.

4 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

5 MR. OCHOA: Second.

6 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions
7 on the motion? (None)

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

9 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

10 Next we have Mechanical Concepts,
emergency work for rear building due to no heat, and the
11 amount is \$1,250.00.

12 MS. GUZMAN: Again, this is Mechanical
Concepts. This was for emergency repair services as the
13 heating unit in the rear building was inoperable and the
work has been completed, so we are requesting that the
Board approve.

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

16 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

17 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

18 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions
19 on the motion?

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

21 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.

22 Next is proposal from Hamady's
Services, 2022 proposed restoration rates.

23 MS. GUZMAN: This is for restoration
services for 2022 for the Water Department. We are
24 requesting that the Board approve the rates.

25 MR. BAKOTA: This is for street repair?

1 MS. GUZMAN: Dig outs, whenever there is
2 openings or restoration of grass, public right-of-way.

3 MR. BAKOTA: Did we get any East Chicago
4 contractors to send proposals?

5 MS. GUZMAN: Yes, we have. Yes, we have
6 R & D as well. They have -- they do those services as
7 well for the Water Department.

8 MR. OCHOA: Do we have a rate sheet on
9 them?

10 MS. GUZMAN: No, that's forthcoming. We
11 requested that from them, but they haven't submitted as
12 of today.

13 MR. VENTURA: Are those the only two?

14 MS. GUZMAN: Hopefully by the next
15 meeting we'll have that.

16 MR. BAKOTA: This is just a proposal of
17 rates.

18 MS. GUZMAN: No, this is for restoration
19 services.

20 MR. BAKOTA: You are asking for a motion
21 on this?

22 MS. GUZMAN: That's a rate schedule for
23 that company or that vendor.

24 MR. BAKOTA: We wouldn't necessarily go
25 with them if there is another proposal from an East
Chicago contractor that comes in with a lower rate.

MS. GUZMAN: No, it's going to be -- so
we can select Hamady, or R & D, or Calumet City Disposal
as well.

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

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

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

2 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
3 Next adjustment for 3826 Ivy Street.

4 MS. GUZMAN: This is relating to 3826 Ivy
5 Street. The two accounts that are reflected on the
6 documents submitted, the deposit collected was
7 inadvertently applied against the incorrect account
8 number 15206. The correct account that the \$40.00 was
9 to be applied towards is actually account number 151246.
10 We would recommend that the Board approve the adjustment
11 as referenced in order to correct both accounts.

12 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to approve.

13 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

14 MR. VENTURA: Any comments or questions
15 on the motion? (None)

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

18 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries.
19 There are no past due items.
20 Unfinished Business: None
21 Public Comment: None

22 MR. OCHOA: I'd like to ask Mr. Lee a
23 question. Out of this 81 valve boxes, are any of them
24 leaking?

25 MR. LEE: No.

MR. VENTURA: Next meeting there will be
a public hearing on Thursday, January 20, 2022, 5:00
p.m., and there is an attached publication regarding
that meeting in your packet; that's for your
information. And then our regular meeting will be held
same date, 5:00 p.m., East Chicago Council Chambers.

Do I have a motion to adjourn?

MR. LOPEZ: One more question. Can you
follow-up on when we pass these motions and then they
are not followed through, who has the authority to
overrule the board.

1 MR. ALLEGRETTI: You know, there was a
2 disconnect here, Ray, and I don't know what it is. This
3 is the first time I have heard about some problem with
4 the bobcat. You would think corporation council would
5 call me. Winna and I talk briefly every day. I totally
6 was ambushed by this. Jalen Robinson does a good job.
7 I don't know if Mr. Lee solved these problems -- I don't
8 understand, but we will get to it.

9 MR. LOPEZ: I appreciate it. It makes us
10 look bad.

11 MR. ALLEGRETTI: I don't know where the
12 disconnect was, but Winna and I will get to the bottom
13 of it.

14 MS. GUZMAN: This just occurred. We'll
15 call you tomorrow.

16 MR. VENTURA: Any other questions?
17 (None) Entertain a motion to adjourn.

18 MR. OCHOA: Make a motion to adjourn.

19 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

20 MR. VENTURA: Roll call.

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

23 MR. VENTURA: Motion carries. Meeting
24 adjourned.


25 ***** Meeting adjourned *****

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
January 6, 2022

Approved and signed January 20, 2022

Henry Ventura, President

/s/ HENRY VENTURA


Joseph Ochoa, Vice-President


John Bakota, Member


Anthony Askounis, Member


Ray Lopez, Member


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 10th day of January, 2022.

Peggy S. LaLonde



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR