

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF WATERWORKS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 20, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

BOARD MEMBERS:

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

Reported by: Fissinger & Associates, Ltd.  
By: Peggy S. LaLonde

STAFF:

Joseph Allegretti  
Alysia Dunbar  
Bill Biller  
Winna Guzman

Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Present in Chambers: Joseph Ochoa, John  
Bakota, Anthony Askounis, Ray Lopez  
STAFF Present in Chambers: Winna Guzman,  
Allan Lee, Joseph Allegretti

STAFF Present Telephonic: Bill Biller

PUBLIC HEARING

MR. ALLEGRETTI: Mr. President, as the Board may recall, two meetings ago we had Resolution WD 21-29, a resolution authorizing a revised schedule of rates and charges for services rendered, specifically for the establishment of a meter deposit charge and to add a 12-inch meter base rate was introduced. The process is part of an expedited process to modify our tariff, with permission of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, as directed by the Board of Directors, and in compliance with the regulations of the IURC.

The staff has published legal notices of public hearing for today, published both in the Post Tribune and the Northwest Indiana Times, for public hearing to commence today at 5:00 o'clock.

If you, please, Mr. President, open the public hearing and ask if there are any members of the public or interested parties that wish to speak on the subject.

1 MR. OCHOA: The Public Meeting is now  
open. Is there any public -- I guess not.

2 MR. ALLEGRETTI: In that case please  
3 close the meeting, Mr. President.

4 MR. OCHOA: Public hearing is now closed.

5 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

6 MR. OCHOA: First item is Resolution WD  
21-29, resolution authorizing a revised schedule of  
7 rates and charges for services rendered by the City of  
East Chicago, Department of Waterworks and related  
8 matters.

9 Do I have a motion?

10 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

11 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

12 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

13 MR. OCHOA: Motion carries. Resolution  
has been adopted by the Board.

14 Next, approval of minutes for  
December 20th meeting.

15 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

16 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

17 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

18 MR. OCHOA: Motion carries. Next we have  
approval of warrants, Payroll warrant 010722 - amount of  
19 \$735 - Dates 12/8/21 to 12/31/21. Do I have a motion?

20 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to accept.

21 MR. OCHOA: Is there a second?

22 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

23 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

24 Motion carries. Next 010722, amount  
of \$11,129.47, Utilities Payroll, dates of 12/18/21 to  
25 12/31/21. Do I have a motion?

1 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

2 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

3 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

4 Motion carries. Next 010722, amount  
5 of \$39,354,04, payroll for 12/18/21 to 12/31/21. Do I  
6 have a motion?

6 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

7 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

8 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

9 Motion carries. Next Accounts  
10 Payable, 012022 CD, amount of \$2,449.68. Do I have a  
11 motion?

11 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to accept.

12 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

13 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

14 Motion carries. Next, 011122 WB,  
15 amount of \$135,772.65. Do I have a motion?

16 MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to accept.

17 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

18 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

19 Motion carries. Next, 012022 WB,  
20 amount of \$116,874.95. Do I have a motion?

20 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

21 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

22 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

23 Motion carries. Next is Filtration  
24 report, Obed Perez.

25 MS. GUZMAN: Obed wasn't able to attend,  
but provided a written report for the Board.

1 MR. OCHOA: Water report, Winna Guzman.

2 MS. GUZMAN: I have also provided a  
3 written report on activities relating to the Water  
4 Department. So if you have any questions, I'll be happy  
5 to answer.

6 MR. OCHOA: No questions. Distribution  
7 report, Allan Lee.

8 MR. LEE: We've got the ball rolling to  
9 make that loop, so that's good. We have 118 shutoffs  
10 sitting, and I think we did about 85. I haven't added  
11 them in there, but about six a week. So we'll be  
12 starting on that in the Spring once we start our funding  
13 again, same thing with the valve boxes. You know, it's  
14 been the same thing since August, the inventory. But  
15 inventory is slowly trickling in and I'm happy about  
16 that.

17 I've got most of the big order in,  
18 where we have all the valves and hopefully when we get  
19 funding again we should be able to start on those in the  
20 Spring.

21 Now we are getting down to real  
22 numbers. We have got 32 hydrants that need to be  
23 replaced. We did 34 hydrants last year. We have 87  
24 that need to be repaired and there is 40 that are not  
25 part of the 87, that we are going to repair in-house.  
26 That's our big project for this year as soon as the  
27 weather breaks. Well, one distributor for the hydrants  
28 is saying they will be coming in by the end of February  
29 and the other two distributors are saying April, that's  
30 how far down inventory is. We do have three hydrants in  
31 case of emergency in stock and Core Main had some real  
32 tall ones, about 15. If we had to use those we could  
33 use those to offset with the lower ones. We have stuff  
34 in case of emergency, and then when we get our stuff  
35 we'll be repairing all those.

36 Our inventory, we have a little  
37 hiccup, but we did get about two-thirds of the inventory  
38 ordered that we needed and the other third probably  
39 within the next month or so, as soon as we get our  
40 funding. We are going to find someone to probably fix  
41 the 87 this year. We have also asked Giant -- half the  
42 hydrants got painted. I want to get all the hydrants  
43 painted so they look all the same. I want to get the  
44 other half painted.

45 Still working on getting that flow  
46 report so we know how much water is going out, so we

1 know how much we are losing or is unaccounted for.  
2 That's on our list.

3 As of today we have done 192 jobs  
4 since August, since I took over, that's been repaired.  
5 Still working for the test room for inventory, but also  
6 waiting on parts and some funding, that's coming. Still  
7 have that test bench on my list, it's not going away.  
8 It's on my big board.

9 All the hydrants on Indianapolis are  
10 finished, so they are all tagged, flagged, collared, and  
11 painted. We are hoping to do Columbus and East Chicago  
12 to get those before winter, but the weather sort of got  
13 rough and we have been sort of business.

14 The last page I gave you a little  
15 list of all the leaks. This list here, we have got 30  
16 leaks that we have had since January 1st. 19 of them we  
17 contracted out, 11 of them we did our self in-house, of  
18 course they were little ones. But that's 11 we did, we  
19 didn't have to get anybody to help us. We have 19 and  
20 you can sort of look what is going on. That's what I  
21 got for you.

22 MR. OCHOA: Do you have enough manpower?

23 MR. LEE: Well, we've got some interviews  
24 coming. We're going to be looking at some resumes and I  
25 have a potential crew leader, hopefully we can snag him.  
26 He's got about 27 years experience, so we'll see. And  
27 we have got a lot of resumes coming in. We'll look and  
28 get some young, strong guys -- sorry -- just strong  
29 guys, can't say young.

30 MR. LOPEZ: I've got one question. The  
31 meter box company, are they going to teach our  
32 employees?

33 MR. LEE: Yes.

34 MR. LOPEZ: How many or everybody?

35 MR. LEE: Everybody. I was never in the  
36 Meter Shop. I was in the Meter Shop maybe two weeks,  
37 changing meters for two weeks. It was too slow for me,  
38 so I need to learn too.

39 MR. LOPEZ: That's going to start this  
40 year?

41 MR. LEE: This year. It's on the board.

1 MR. OCHOA: Thank you. Legal Counsel,  
Mr. Allegretti.

2 MR. ALLEGRETTI: No report.

3 MR. LOPEZ: I have a question for legal  
4 counsel. We had a request last month, last meeting,  
5 about that approval from the Board, that somebody  
6 overruled it. Was that ever settled or anything done on  
it?

7 MR. ALLEGRETTI: I guess we are still  
8 figuring that out. I think the problem is being  
resolved and we are going to get Mr. Lee his equipment  
that he needs to perform his functions.

9 MR. LOPEZ: I mean it's not settled yet?

10 MR. ALLEGRETTI: It's in the process.  
11 Apparently there was miscommunication, but we are  
12 solving it.

13 MR. LOPEZ: Let us know about that,  
please.

14 MR. OCHOA: Financial report, William  
15 Biller. (None) all right, let's go to Resolution WD  
16 22-01, a resolution of the City of East Chicago,  
Indiana, Department of Waterworks, Board of Directors,  
approving a debt policy and cash reserve policy.

17 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to accept.

18 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

19 MR. BAKOTA: Joe, can you explain this in  
English?

20 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Our Department -- our  
21 utility is not allowed to file liens. It's about  
22 security for delinquent accounts. We have the power to  
shut off delinquent accounts for nonpayment of water  
23 charges, however, the statute is kind of user friendly.  
It's limited and restricted the times of year and manner  
24 in which the shutoff remedy can be used. So Miss Guzman  
and our financial adviser has recommended that we take  
25 advantage of the statute that permits us to increase  
security deposits for potential delinquent customers,  
people with bad payment history or new customers, to

1 protect us from this sort of thing.

2 MR. BAKOTA: This shows a debt policy.  
3 Resolution East Chicago, Indiana, Department of  
4 Waterworks Board of Directors approving a debt policy  
5 for cash reserve.

6 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Disregard my previous  
7 comments.

8 MR. OCHOA: You want us to table this  
9 matter?

10 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Yes, please.

11 MR. BAKOTA: I make a motion to table  
12 Resolution WD 22-01.

13 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

14 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?  
15 (All signify aye.)

16 Motion carries. Next, we have  
17 Agreements with First Merchant Bank, additional payment  
18 location.

19 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to accept.

20 MR. BAKOTA: Second.

21 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?  
22 (All signify aye.)

23 Motion carries. Next are rate  
24 sheets. Rowell Chemical Corporation, rate sheet for  
25 2022.

MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

MR. LOPEZ: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?  
(All signify aye.)

Motion carries. Next is 2022 rate  
sheet for Bosak Ford.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Motion to accept.

MR. BAKOTA: Second.

1 MR. LOPEZ: Question - I see different  
2 prices here.

3 MS. GUZMAN: Winna Guzman. This is for  
4 Bosak Ford for three vehicles assigned to the Water  
5 Department, new vehicles, and this is the maintenance  
6 agreements to take these vehicles directly to Ford,  
7 which will cover so many oil changes and things like  
8 that.

9 MR. BAKOTA: Preventative maintenance.

10 MS. GUZMAN: Exactly. And this is for  
11 the calendar year -- I believe it's for five years.

12 MR. BAKOTA: The charge is yearly?

13 MS. GUZMAN: No, it's for the five years  
14 we agreed to. So we would take them directly to Bosak  
15 instead of locally like we do with the other vehicles.

16 MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

17 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

18 (All signify aye.)

19 Motion carries. Next is R & D  
20 Construction, 2022 rate sheet.

21 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to approve.

22 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

23 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

24 (All signify aye.)

25 Motion carries. Next Past due from  
Leeps Supply for \$1,252.28. Invoice was e-mailed to Tom  
Uran and I just received it today after I asked him what  
was going on with it.

MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve.

MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries. Next with 2022 City  
of East Chicago vehicle equipment maintenance service  
policy. Do you want to elaborate on this?



1 MS. GUZMAN: So this is outside of the  
2 other maintenance agreement that we presented from  
3 Bosak. This is for the local vendors and this is, as  
4 you see on the attached sheet, these are the vendors  
5 where we would take the older vehicles as needed to get  
6 repaired.

7 MR. BAKOTA: But they all agreed?

8 MS. GUZMAN: They signed off on it  
9 basically, yes.

10 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to accept.

11 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

12 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries.

Unfinished Business: None

Public Comment: None

Our next meeting is Monday,

13 February 7, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. at the East Chicago  
14 Council Chambers, City Hall.

Do I have a motion for adjournment?

15 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to adjourn.

16 MR. ASKOUNIS: Second.

17 MR. OCHOA: All in favor?

(All signify aye.)

Motion carries. Meeting adjourned.

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19 \*\*\*\*\* Meeting adjourned \*\*\*\*\*

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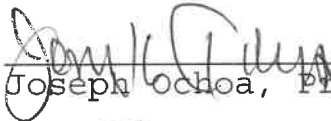
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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of  
January 20, 2022

Approved and signed February 7, 2022

  
Joseph Ochoa, President

  
John Bakota, Vice-President

  
Henry Ventura, 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 25th day of January, 2022.

*Peggy S. LaLonde*



Peggy S. LaLonde, CSR, RPR