

In The Matter Of:
EAST CHICAGO REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA

ORIGINAL

REGULAR MEETING
March 01, 2022

BOSS REPORTERS
*Gary * Merrillville * Valparaiso, Indiana*
3893 East Lincoln Highway (Rt. 30)
Merrillville, Indiana 46410
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1 STATE OF INDIANA)
2 COUNTY OF LAKE) SS:
3)

4 BEFORE THE EAST CHICAGO
5 REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
6 EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA
7

8 REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had at the meeting
9 before the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission,
10 reported by Kristen K. Stokes, CSR, Notary Public in
11 and for the County of Lake, State of Indiana, taken
12 via Zoom Video-Conferencing to be held at City Hall
13 Council Chambers, 4525 Indianapolis Boulevard, East
14 Chicago, Indiana 46312, on March 1, 2022, scheduled
15 to begin at 5:00 p.m. in the evening.
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APPEARANCES :

- Christine Russell, Board President
- Rodger Gates, Board Vice President
- Christopher French, Board Secretary
- Delainah Valdez-Medina, Commissioner
- Randall Artis, Commissioner
- Frank Rivera, Executive Director
- Shelice Tolbert, Attorney
- Thomas Mesich, Financial Advisor
- Rochelle Rosas, Administrative Assistant
- James Portalatin, Building Commissioner
- and
- Members of the Public

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PRESIDENT RUSSELL: I'd like to go ahead and call to order the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission regular meeting, City Hall Council Chambers, 4525 Indianapolis Boulevard, Second Floor, East Chicago, Indiana, March 1st, 2022, 5:00 p.m.

Please stand for the pledge of allegiance.

(PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE WAS RECITED.)

PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Roll call, please.

SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

Present.

Rodger Gates?

VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Present.

SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Present.

If we can move on to the approval of the regular meeting minutes from February 15th, 2022.

VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Motion to approve, Rodger Gates.

COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Second, Valdez-Medina.

1 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
2 Rodger Gates, second by Delainah
3 Valdez-Medina. Any questions or comments?

4 Roll call, please.

5 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

6 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

7 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

8 Yes.

9 Rodger Gates?

10 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

11 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

12 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

13 We'll go on and move on to the approval
14 of the dockets, Frank.

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Yes. Thank
16 you.

17 Good evening, Mrs. President, Vice
18 President, Secretary and our board members
19 and our distinguished Shelice Tolbert, our
20 attorney, and Kristen from Boss Reporters.
21 Good evening.

22 Okay. We'll start off the day with -- or
23 tonight with the approval of the dockets, as
24 Christine said, the President said, and it's
25 for the City of East Chicago accounts payable

1 warrant report, which is dated 2/23/2022.
2 The warrant number is 030122 RD in the amount
3 of \$30,035.46. If I could have a motion,
4 please.

5 SECRETARY FRENCH: Motion to approve by
6 Christopher French.

7 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Second,
8 Valdez-Medina.

9 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
10 Christopher French, second by Delainah
11 Valdez-Medina. Any questions or comments?

12 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: I do have a
13 question, Madam President.

14 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Sure.

15 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Frank, the
16 2019 invoice is on here, so these are all
17 late payments; correct?

18 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes, they are.

19 MR. MESICH: We had that discussion once
20 before.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Yeah, I think
22 we had that at the last meeting.

23 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Okay. I
24 just wanted to make clear. So is this --
25 give me a second to gather my thought here.

1 Okay. I just wanted to make sure. I was
2 thinking it was for something else and I was
3 going to question that, but I do see it's for
4 Fitzsimmons; is that correct?

5 MR. MESICH: Yes.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Thank you.

8 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Any other comments or
9 questions?

10 Roll call, please.

11 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

12 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

13 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

14 Yes.

15 Rodger Gates?

16 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

17 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

18 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you.

20 We go to the next accounts payable warrant
21 report for the City of East Chicago, which is
22 dated 2/22/2022. The warrant number is
23 021822 RD in the amount of \$45,000. If I
24 could have a motion, please.

25 SECRETARY FRENCH: Motion to approve by

1 Christopher French.

2 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Second,
3 Valdez-Medina.

4 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
5 Christopher French, second by Delainah
6 Valdez-Medina. Any questions or comments?

7 Roll call, please.

8 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

9 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

10 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

11 Yes.

12 Rodger Gates?

13 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

14 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

15 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you.

17 Now we turn our attention tonight to the
18 RMC Harborside Apartments Vendor Aging
19 Report, which is based on a billing date as
20 of 2/23/2022 for a total of \$114,850.87. If
21 I can have a motion.

22 SECRETARY FRENCH: Motion to approve by
23 Christopher French.

24 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Second,
25 Valdez-Medina.

1 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
2 Christopher French, second by Delainah
3 Valdez-Medina. Any questions or comments?

4 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: I do have a
5 question on these but regarding the NIPSCO
6 bill. Is that the same issue that we're
7 having as with the water?

8 MR. MESICH: Yes. This is Tom Mesich.
9 We are still waiting for approval for funding
10 so we can get the NIPSCO and security
11 invoices that are past due. Hopefully, when
12 we have the meeting with the Common Council,
13 we'll get the ball rolling and we can get
14 these paid.

15 (MR. ARTIS ENTERED.)

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Right. And
17 to add a little bit. Tomorrow myself and Tom
18 will be meeting with the Finance Committee
19 and the Common Council here at 6:00 o'clock
20 to go through some of these because we want
21 to make sure that we get these things paid
22 especially security, especially on
23 Harborside.

24 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes, and
25 this building also has 50 percent occupancy;

1 is that correct?

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: I think it
3 has a little more than that. It has
4 something like 67 to 70 percent. It's gone
5 down because, you know, we don't have as many
6 active buildings as we used to.

7 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Okay.
8 Thanks, Frank.

9 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Any other questions
10 or comments?

11 Roll call, please.

12 SECRETARY FRENCH: Randall Artis?

13 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

14 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

15 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

16 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

17 Yes.

18 Rodger Gates?

19 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

20 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

21 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you,
23 Commissioners.

24 Now we turn our attention to something
25 we had had some conversation some meetings

1 ago, but we had Amereco here doing a
2 presentation, and they were pulling out the
3 bids and giving us different calculations.
4 And we said we were going to come back and
5 make a recommendation.

6 And at this point I asked Mr. James
7 Portalatin to come today to give you more
8 detail on what we decided to do as a team.
9 So I'll let him take this over.

10 MR. PORTALATIN: Hello. James
11 Portalatin, East Chicago Building
12 Commissioner.

13 As you may recall, we did have a request
14 for bids for Operation Build Homes in the
15 West Calumet Area November 16th. The bids --
16 and I think everyone did receive the bid
17 tally sheet.

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Yep.

19 MR. PORTALATIN: Okay. So the bids just
20 came out too high, so we decided not to award
21 any of these bids. The reasoning, you know,
22 I don't know, but actually a lot of the
23 materials did go up because of the COVID, you
24 know. So we're looking in to see where we
25 stand. We're still looking and wanting to

1 build in that area.

2 We have proceeded with soil management
3 plans, and we're doing soil borings over
4 there. And you may have seen some action
5 there, so that's -- and that's where we
6 stand. But I wanted to advise that we will
7 not be awarding any of these bids.

8 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Okay. So
9 there's no motion on any of them. Just to
10 let you guys know we're not going to be
11 moving forward in terms of us doing any
12 bidding right now. We will be returning to
13 do another RFP down the road, but we're just
14 letting things settle down right now in terms
15 of cost, because we believe cost was a factor
16 to all of this, and costs are coming down to
17 some extent. We're going to do this at a
18 later date, not too much later, but at a
19 later date in point.

20 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: I'd like to thank
21 you all for turning down the bids because I
22 live in the area, and I agree with you,
23 because, you know, the bids are way too high
24 to go forward. I appreciate you all not
25 going forward.

1 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you.
2 We appreciate that.

3 So we'll just keep moving on on the
4 agenda. And what we're going to do is turn
5 our attention to an action item. That action
6 was to approve an increase in the purchase
7 order for Robert Half for accounting
8 services.

9 The East Chicago Department of
10 Redevelopment has received additional
11 invoices from Robert Half for the accounting
12 services of James Thomas -- I mean Joseph
13 Thomas Mesich for the Redevelopment
14 Department. This represents an amount larger
15 than the available balance on the existing
16 purchase order of No. 220589-00 and requires
17 an additional \$10,000 to be added to it.

18 The full year amount of \$120,000 was
19 previously approved at the January 18, 2022
20 Redevelopment Commission meeting.

21 Action is recommended to approve
22 increasing P.O. No. 220589-00 in the amount
23 of \$10,000 for Robert Half to pay the current
24 2022 invoices and to authorize the Executive
25 Director to sign the necessary documents. It

1 is recommended that the following motion be
2 adopted verbatim.

3 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion to approve an
4 increase in the purchase order for Robert
5 Half for accounting services in the amount of
6 \$10,000 to pay for the current 2022 invoices
7 and to authorize the Executive Director to
8 sign the necessary documents.

9 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Randy Artis, so
10 moved.

11 SECRETARY FRENCH: Second by Christopher
12 French.

13 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
14 Randy Artis, second by Christopher French.
15 Any questions or comments?

16 Roll call, please.

17 SECRETARY FRENCH: Randall Artis?

18 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

19 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

20 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

21 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

22 Yes.

23 Rodger Gates?

24 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

25 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

1 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you,
3 Commissioners.

4 Now we turn to the last action item of
5 the night, and that's to set the value of
6 property located at 1440 Grace Street, East
7 Chicago Indiana.

8 Appraisal reports were completed for the
9 property located at 4140 Grace Street, East
10 Chicago, Indiana. The first appraisal from
11 Vale Appraisal Services is in the amount of
12 \$60,000. The second appraisal from Valuation
13 Appraisal Services is \$72,000. The
14 recommended sale price is \$66,000.

15 Action is recommended to set the value of
16 the property at \$66,000 and to proceed with
17 any offers of sale or proposals of
18 redevelopment of the property. It is
19 recommended that the following motion be
20 adopted verbatim.

21 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Motion to set the
22 value of property located at 4140 Grace
23 Street, East Chicago, Indiana, in the amount
24 of \$66,000 and to proceed with any offers of
25 sale or proposals of redevelopment of the

1 property.

2 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Randy Artis, so
3 moved.

4 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Second,
5 Valdez-Medina.

6 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
7 Randy Artis, second by Delainah
8 Valdez-Medina. Any questions or comments?

9 Roll call, please.

10 SECRETARY FRENCH: Randall Artis?

11 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

12 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

13 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

14 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

15 Yes.

16 Rodger Gates?

17 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

18 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

19 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

20 We'll now move on to public expression.

21 Is there any public expression at this
22 time? (NO RESPONSE.)

23 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: If there is no
24 public expression, may we have a motion to
25 adjourn?

1 COMMISSIONER GATES: Motion to adjourn,
2 Rodger Gates.

3 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Second,
4 Valdez-Medina.

5 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Motion was made by
6 Rodger Gates, second by Delainah
7 Valdez-Medina.

8 Roll call, please.

9 SECRETARY FRENCH: Randall Artis?

10 COMMISSIONER ARTIS: Yes.

11 SECRETARY FRENCH: Delainah Valdez-Medina?

12 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Yes.

13 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christopher French?

14 Yes.

15 Rodger Gates?

16 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Yes.

17 SECRETARY FRENCH: Christine Russell?

18 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Yes. Motion carried.

19 Thank you, everybody.

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Before
21 everybody hangs up, I want to make a quick
22 comment. I will not be here on March 10th.
23 I'm going into surgery. So I will be gone
24 for a couple weeks. Lyvette will be taking
25 over for me.

1 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Who's going to
2 take over?

3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Lyvette Turk.

4 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Oh, Lyvette.
5 Okay.

6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Just to let
7 you all know.

8 VICE PRESIDENT GATES: Did you say
9 Mississippi?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: No, but hey,
11 I do want to tell Christine. There are going
12 to be some sales that we're doing and it may
13 require your signature. So we might be going
14 to your home to deliver paperwork. So we
15 don't want work to stop the show. That's me.
16 I don't want to stop the show.

17 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: That's no problem.
18 And if they call me and I'm out and about, I
19 can always come and meet them in the parking
20 lot. Whatever is needed.

21 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: We'll make a
22 special trip to you.

23 PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Have a quick
25 recovery.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RIVERA: Thank you.

PRESIDENT RUSSELL: Take care, everyone.

ATTORNEY TOLBERT: Good night, everyone.

COMMISSIONER VALDEZ-MEDINA: Good night.

(MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 5:14PM.)

1 STATE OF INDIANA)
2) SS:
3 COUNTY OF LAKE)

4 BEFORE THE EAST CHICAGO
5 REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
6 EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA

7 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

8 I, KRISTEN K. STOKES, CSR, Notary Public in
9 and for the County of Lake, State of Indiana, do
10 hereby certify that I reported in machine shorthand
11 the foregoing proceedings had in the above-entitled
12 matter, at the time and place herein set forth; and
13 I do further certify that the foregoing transcript,
14 consisting of 21 (twenty-one) typewritten pages, is
15 a true and correct transcript of my said
16 stenographic notes.

17 Signed this 3rd day of March, 2022.

18
19
20 

21 KRISTEN K. STOKES
22 CSR# 084-003723
23 My Commission Expires: 8/27/23
24 Notary Public: Lake County, Indiana
25

1 APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
2 OF TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022
3 APPROVED & SIGNED TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022
4

5 _____
6 Christine Russell
7 President

Rodger Gates
Vice President

8 
9 _____
10 Christopher French
11 Secretary



Delainah Valdez-Medina
Commissioner

12 
13 _____
14 Randall Artis
15 Commissioner



Frank Rivera
Executive Director