CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BOARD MEMBERS

Grayling Gordon, President
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President
Eugene Austin, Member
Joseph Fernandez, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 9, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:04 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present in Chambers: Grayling Gordon, Eugene Austin, Joseph Fernandez

MR. GORDON: We do have enough for a quorum.

STAFF: Present in Chambers: Vanessa Hernandez-Orange, Genesis Gary, Jewell Harris

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes: April 25, 2023

Motion to approve April 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes made by Eugene Austin. Second by Joseph Fernandez.

Motion Carries.

Approval & Signing of Payroll: April 28, 2023

Motion to approve April 28, 2023 Payroll made by Eugene Austin. Second by Joseph Fernandez.

Motion Carries.

Approval & Signing of Warrant: 050923PB $93,398.78

Motion to approve Warrant 050923PB made by Joseph Fernandez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Motion Carries.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

MR. GORDON: We'll move on to New Business. We have Director of Parks and Recreation, Miss Vanessa Hernandez-Orange.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Hello, everyone. Missed you guys. You haven't seen me. Ask me where I was.

So basically I am here before you guys today just to discuss the contracts for our volleyball coaches for our Invasion Volleyball Program as well as the coaches. I mean the referees for the Invasion Volleyball Program.

I'm asking for the approval of the contracts. We have basically the same contract for our Baseball/Basketball Programs. This is just now our Volleyball Program.

Unfortunately there's not as many girls as we had boys playing basketball or there's not as many participants for volleyball as it is basketball. So we only have three coaches right now and two referees.

So the good thing is that we're staying true what we're saying. We have invited our high school coaches to participate as well as we are paying referees through our high school students.

So I'm glad that we're continuing that effort of making a connection between the schools and the City.

So that's it. Just asking for approval of the contracts.

MR. GORDON: As Park Board President I would like to say thank you personally for everything you do. We think it's great for the City. And the people are saying that pretty much.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Thank you.

MR. AUSTIN: The insurance, we don't have any. The school, would they be protected by their school or we got to protect them about what they do here?

Just want to know that. We don't want nobody to come and get hurt.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Right. So we're City self-insured. This is a City program. So this is all insured. It's all insured by the City.

When students sign up, they fill out paperwork saying that we won't hold -- basically if something happens they're not suing us for it.

So yes, we have language for insurance.

And it's not like the school is coming here to play. It's East Chicago residents wanting to play outside of their school activities. They're coming to participate in our program.

MR. HARRIS: In the Referee's contract there are a couple of blanks that we left because it depended upon how many games they officiated.

So I just wanted to point that out that there are blanks there that later you will fill out.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yeah. We're hoping that there's the possibility to add on I think it was one or two games depending on the numbers. The numbers have not increased.

MR. GORDON: I think we did this last year. We approved this last year. Mr. Austin, this is the same as last year.

MR. AUSTIN: I still have, you know, concern about that.

MR. HARRIS: We have a much better contract this year.

MR. FERNANDEZ: Is there a reason it's only once a year, not multi year?

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct. Well, two reasons. One, it's depending on who is participating as coaches. That would be one thing.

For instance the young ladies who are our officials they are seniors currently. So obviously next year they

won't be here.

So then let's say there's a coaching change the preference for myself is to give it to the coaching staff at the high school again. That would be the appropriate connection.

So for some reason it changes then obviously that contract will change. Someone obviously would come off, come in.

For these programs let's say, you know, we don't want to do volleyball anymore. Well, then that's a different contract which we'll have to do.

MR. GORDON: Once again thank you and thank you for the correction.

Motion to approve Volleyball Coaches and Referee Contracts made by Joseph Fernandez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Motion Carries.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's all we have from me today. But I did want to give you guys a couple updates.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

MR. GORDON: Go right head because we're going to move on to Public Comments.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: First thing is that we had started our plant giveaway. Not giveaway. Our plant selling.

So we started that off today. We're able to sell plants Monday through Wednesday at our Greenhouse.

So you just come to the Greenhouse. We have staff that's available. We do that from basically 9:00 to 3:00 because we have to shut off our batches to make sure we get the money to the bank. So Monday through Wednesday.

But we also do first of the month sales for Fridays for our senior citizens because we know that they can't always get to the Greenhouse.

So sometimes, you know, Fridays kind of works for them. It worked last year.

Our greenhouse is completely full. You'll see how we spanned through a lot of our plants that we have there, our vegetables that we have that are grown.

As usual we're continuing with the giveaways on the third Wednesday of the month.

And we are signing up right now. And actually we're full. We now have a waiting list for our Ladies' Senior Brunch.

So currently we have 121-25ish people signed up for our Ladies' Senior Brunch that's here at Roxana on May 25.

People are starting to like our events. So they are trying to get on our waiting list to come. And we try our hardest to accommodate everyone.

So if you know of anyone who is still interested, please tell us. Tell us now because we have a list already going, a waiting list.

We have our trip to Four Winds Casino. That is going to be on the 11th. We have about 25 people that are going at this point in time.

We started off with about 45 and then now 25. But we wanted to see what was going to work and what was not going to work.

And we are currently putting together our Summer Program. So we worked on the MOU that you guys approved with Mr. Dahl and his Summer Program.

We have too many things actually happening. We have a Code 10 Women's Group that you guys also approved. So that's happening through the summertime.

We have Mr. Dahl's group that's coming in. We have Community Schools. We're partnering with them. We have all MOUs that you have already approved.

But we're just giving different options as to what you can do for the summer.

And we also have our Sports Camp that has been in the works. I've solidified a couple dates. Probably four so far.

And we're going to do once again a Special Learners Week where we have special education kids come to the park and kind of enjoy that, go through our greenhouse and get some hands-on stuff happening also.

And then we are working on Special Events. So Special Events is in full gear as you can tell at our parks.

We have signed up already for the Rhythm and Soul that's going to take place as well in June. And then we have July for the Salsa Fest.

So we are in full force in the Parks and Recreation Office.

And I know that the main question that you talked about is the pools.

We are not opening the pools this year just like we said for the past couple years.

We did not receive funding or appropriations for the past two years from the Council. And that is why we don't have our splash pads up and ready to go.

Hopefully the Council will approve appropriations for the splash pads for this upcoming year. For this year so that we can actually be able to have it done for the upcoming year.

I seen it many times. The more we wait the more money it's going to cost us.

So every year it's at least a 10 percent increase what the cost will be.

We want to be able to give the communities a location where they can go and enjoy water. And, you know, the reasons we cannot have a pool is because we don't have the staff for it. So it monetary.

We also know that it's probably going to cost us about the same thing for fixing the pool as well as getting a splash pad.

So just wanted to let you guys know because I know that's something that's been out there.

As you guys know and if you guys want to go see the

baseball team, and Mr. Gordon does know, they're in full effect. They're using all of our facilities at Block Stadium, the games.

I get nothing but positive responses back from the people who come in to see the beautiful stadium.

We also ended up doing Tod Park for softball. Again positive responses.

Parks, you'll see they're getting cut. Cutting started last week. They're getting cut.

They're preparing a lot of the issues that we had for the playground. The mulch is getting put back in to the playground.

So last week was the first week. And I didn't have staff. So I'm going out this week to make sure that, you know, what we spent is being respected.

So I want to make sure that every swing actually works. I want to make sure that the mulch is to the correct level so that if someone falls or something there's enough padding for it.

The projects are getting put in.

Finally we have confirmation of the tower projects for Riley Park. We have four installers coming in. That's actually going to be fully installed in June, early June.

And we finally finished at Riley Park the awnings for shade, the shade awnings. So we're moving.

And they actually gave us a day when the project finally started, the demolition of the baseball batting cages at the ball course.

This is step one to the bigger project of getting our event center over there.

So very exciting that we're moving and shaking in Parks and Recreation.

MR. FERNANDEZ: I was going to ask about the batting cages and I forgot what park it was.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: It's at the golf course. And the

plan is a twofold plan.

So the twofold plan is to have those removed and taken back to the baseball complex where they're off the field.

So eventually put them out there. And then that would be just an event space. So we do have like a gazebo that's out there.

So people are saying, well, yeah, it's nice to have that gazebo. But if I want a wedding or quinceanera, I can't have it there and then go to another venue. Why not have a venue that's there.

And we also have golfers who have asked if there's no space to like kind of hang out after I go golfing.

So this will kind of go along with that.

MR. GORDON: We see the excitement. Thank you. We can see the excitement with what we're doing in the City. Very nice.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Thank you.

MR. GORDON: Any other comments?

* Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers.

Motion to adjourn was made by Joseph Fernandez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Motion Carries.

* Meeting ended at 5:23 p.m.

Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
Tuesday, May 9, 2023
Approved and Signed _____



Grayling Gordon, President

Rick Rodriguez, Vice President



Eugene Austin, Member



Joseph Fernandez, Member



Genesis Gary, Recording Secretary

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, 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 said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 16th day of May, 2023.



Lisa Pena
Notary Public Porter County
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number 084-003483