

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO  
BOARD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

BOARD MEMBERS

Milton Reed, President  
Richard Trembczynski, Vice President  
Thomas Davis, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, August 28, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.  
Reported for Fissinger & Associates  
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present: Milton Reed, Richard Trembczynski,  
Thomas Davis

STAFF PRESENT: Olga Cosme, James Portalatin, Kevin  
Smith

MINUTES: Regular Meeting August 14, 2023

Motion to approve August 14, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes  
made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

CORRESPONDENCE: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Building Department:

Demolition Orders

MR. REED: We will now have the Report from the Building  
Department.

MR. SMITH: Good evening, Mr. President, Board. Kevin  
Smith on behalf of James Portalatin, Building Commissioner.

1           Before you tonight we have several properties that  
2 are new before you for demolition. I do have a binder with  
3 photos. May I approach?

4           MR. REED: Please do.

5           MR. SMITH: Mr. President, the tab that you see in that  
6 binder corresponds to I believe the order that you see on the  
7 agenda. So tab 1 should be 4731 Baring.

8           4731 Baring Alejandro Martinez is the owner. He  
9 did appear earlier. He left because he has entered a Rehab  
10 Agreement with the City.

11           It is a pending rehab. So what we would like to do  
12 is enter the Order today and set it for status October 25.

13           415 Broad the owner is listed as Secretary of  
14 Veterans Affairs. We do have good service.

15           The photos do show a two-story stone home with  
16 garage in significant disrepair. Holes in the roof. There  
17 are no gutters present, soffits. Windows are open to the  
18 elements. There's junk in the backyard. And eaves and roof  
19 failing.

20           No one appears. We request the Order be entered.

21           5014 Indianapolis Mr. Santos, Arthur Santos is the  
22 owner. And he is present here today, this evening.

23           Do you want to be heard, Mr. Santos?

24           The position of the City is that the photos show a  
25 large two-story brick building with ladders. Very unsafe  
along the outside and scaffolding that appears unsecured and  
unsafe.

          The roof is in disrepair. The windows are open to  
the elements and significant structural concerns. Junk is  
piled on the side of the house.

          It is the City's position that the Order should be  
entered.

          Mr. Santos has discussed this matter with  
Mr. Portalatin and has indicated a desire to fix up the  
property. But to do so I believe Mr. Portalatin wishes an  
inspection so that we can have better control over the

1 methods at hand.

2 MR. REED: Mr. Santos, if you could step to the mic and  
3 state your name.

4 MR. SANTOS: Arthur Santos.

5 MR. REED: And address.

6 MR. SANTOS: 5014 Indianapolis Boulevard.

7 MR. REED: Anything you would like the Board to take  
8 into consideration?

9 MR. SANTOS: Yes. The property I'm repairing myself  
10 from the inside. I started to do it from the outside with  
11 scaffolding. Apparently I cannot do it. So a lot is  
12 happening.

13 I'm changing it to the metal scaffolding to put it  
14 up and do the repairs on the holes on the lower part of the  
15 roof, the brick.

16 I want to change the structure. Put a dormer in  
17 and take the roof out at a 45 degree angle.

18 So right now the inside is all supported. So now I  
19 am just going to start removing and start to replace it. In  
20 the meantime now that it's supported I'm going to go ahead  
21 and start doing it and laying the brick.

22 So that's where I am at right now. It's just a  
23 matter of time. If you can give me an extension and I can  
24 show you the progress that's being done.

25 So within 30 days if you're saying I should a hire  
a person, a contractor that's more qualified, then fine.  
Just give me 30 days to complete the framing of the upper  
level and roof.

MR. REED: Thank you for coming out. Definitely keep in  
touch with Mr. Portalatin.

MR. SMITH: James, do you want to say anything about how  
the Building Department is going to move forward?

MR. PORTALATIN: James Portalatin. Mr. Santos entered  
an Order for us to enter into a Rehab Agreement.

1           We do have the discretion, the Building Department,  
2 because of the conditions of the property and because it has  
been presented here before the Board as safety.

3           And part of the Rehab Agreement does require that a  
4 licensed contractor pull the permits and get this property up  
to par because it's so unsafe. So we do require that. But I  
can answer any other questions.

5           MR. SANTOS: Can I do any repairs on my own? I own the  
6 own home. So I at least want to be able to repair my own  
home. It's not I'm renting. I live there.

7           As a matter of fact I have certain plans that I  
8 need to get the location more up to par and because it's  
going to be my headquarters.

9           I'm asking for a 30 day extension to show the  
10 progress I have done.

11          MR. REED: Here's the thing and I want to explain this  
12 for anyone in the room. You are not obligated to enter into  
a Rehab Agreement.

13          And by our action today with the Demolition Order,  
14 that is only the start of the process. There's no demolition  
that's going to happen in 30 days.

15          Certainly I can't advise you what to do or what not  
16 to do. I will make a suggestion. But if you want to go at  
it alone for 30 days, you don't have to enter into a Rehab  
Agreement. But the Demolition Order will stand.

17          But certainly if things happen, anything is up for  
18 consideration. But if you do enter a Rehab Agreement, you  
would have to follow those parameters. But that definitely  
19 gives you a little more window.

20          I just wanted to give you a reference.

21          MR. SANTOS: He explained it here today.

22          MR. REED: Thank you for coming. Thanks for coming out.

23          James, I do have one question. Obviously from the  
24 pictures the ladder it seems like a good strong wind it would  
come down.

25          Has this been dealt with on an emergency type

1 situation? Are these ladders still up? Is it a threat?

2 MR. SANTOS: I secured the property.

3 MR. REED: And again what I am asking, James, is if the  
4 Building Department is comfortable so I am. But just from  
5 looking at it I don't know how it's secured. It looks pretty  
6 dangerous.

7 MR. PORTALATIN: It is.

8 MR. REED: If a good wind comes, we need to protect the  
9 public safety.

10 I'm not in construction. I appreciate it. James,  
11 I would like this to be confirmed by the Building Department  
12 for whatever safety measures need to be taken because now  
13 we're aware.

14 MR. SMITH: Today we're not asking for emergency.

15 MR. REED: It may not be an Emergency Order to Demolish.  
16 It may just be an Emergency Order to take this situation in  
17 hand. So please. This makes me a little nervous.

18 But if you say you have it covered, I'm not  
19 doubting it.

20 MR. SMITH: I think the issue is the ladders.

21 MR. SANTOS: Well, I haven't taken the ladders down  
22 because I need to put the scaffold up because I can't do it  
23 off the ladder.

24 MR. REED: I don't want to get into the technical  
25 aspects here.

MR. SANTOS: As a matter of fact they're going to  
probably be down. Thank you.

MR. REED: Thank you for coming out. We definitely  
appreciate you.

MR. SMITH: Mr. President, the City's position is that  
we enter the Order.

4902-04 Ivy Street. Lefray Beale is here along  
with some family members and reporters.

1           We have had an opportunity to speak with  
2 Miss Beale. She has made an extremely great effort in  
3 getting the property into her name alone. She presented  
4 James with a recently recorded deed.

5           And it had to do with the fact that the original  
6 owner, Ulie Alford, was a first relative of Beale. There  
7 were several different potential heirs to the property. And  
8 she recently got that worked out.

9           She wants to fix the property up. She eventually  
10 wants to live there. James went over in great detail the  
11 process for obtaining a Rehab Agreement. I believe that's  
12 what she is going to end up doing.

13           However we did mention to her that it is important  
14 for the City to keep the process going. And then the City  
15 would request given the condition of the property, the photos  
16 are present. You can see that.

17           They show a one-story brick structure with signs of  
18 aging especially at the windows and gutters. The rear has  
19 boarded up windows. Tree appears to be falling on the roof  
20 at least at that time. And the rear and the back is boarded  
21 up and both appear to be in poor condition. And the windows  
22 on the west side are boarded up.

23           So given the condition of the property and we  
24 presented to the Board the fact that we do have service we  
25 request that the Demolition Order be entered.

          Of course Miss Beale is here if you would like to  
speak to her or if she would like to say something.

MR. REED: Would you like to come forward? If you  
wouldn't mind just stating your name and your address.

If you could speak into the mic.

MS. BEALE: The address that we're speaking about today  
is 4902 Ivy Street in, East Chicago.

MR. REED: Anything you would like the Board to hear?  
You have an open mic right now.

MS. BEALE: Like I said my name is Victoria Beale. And  
I'm here for the property at 4902 Ivy.

Originally it was owned by my father, Ulie Alford,

1 who died August 24, 2016. This house is all I have left of  
2 my dad.

3 Some may not understand why I'm fighting for the  
4 property. But I was born at that actual address, into that  
5 home. It is my dad's residence. It's all I have left.

6 The last three to four years have been the hardest.  
7 And everything was taken from me. And I suffer from  
8 depression, anxiety. And the only thing that's really been  
9 keeping me afloat is trying to get this home.

10 I know it seems like it's a lot of work. And it  
11 is. I don't have the money right now to do it. But I'm  
12 trying.

13 And I know he said it's going to be \$10,000 to  
14 reach the Rehab Agreement and I have to do a lot of work  
15 within the next couple months. But I am just asking for an  
16 extension so I can achieve what's needed so I can be able to  
17 get the house up to par and be able to live there.

18 MR. REED: I appreciate that. Definitely appreciate  
19 that. What I can say is that this is just the start of the  
20 process.

21 One thing I encourage you to do is keep in touch  
22 with James.

23 We have a meeting twice a month. Come before this  
24 Board. Keep in touch with us. Let us know I'm making  
25 progress, this is what's happening, this is my next step.

Our goal is not to shut down. Our goal is to just  
keep it motivated, keep it moving. So we definitely have the  
same goal to bring the property up to speed. So  
communication is very very key.

And avenues will open up financial or otherwise.  
But whatever you're doing even if it's a baby step let it be  
known and documented. All that comes into consideration when  
we come down to the subsequent months.

So I appreciate you coming out. I see you have  
some family support in the back too. So just keep doing what  
you're doing. This is a good first step.

MS. BEALE: Thank you.

1 MR. SMITH: Thanks, Mr. President. So again the City's  
2 position in reply is that we request the Demo Order be  
entered.

3 James, did you want to set this for status in  
4 October or did you want to just let it go based on  
Miss Beale's representation?

5 MR. PORTALATIN: In October is fine.

6 MR. SMITH: So we'd like the Demolition Order entered.  
7 But then we'll set this over for status on 10/23.

8 Mr. President, the next matter is 4834 Kennedy.  
9 The owners are listed as Arthur Marion and Rodney Pratts both  
of Downers Grove, Illinois.

10 There was a tax sale purchaser named Jose Ayala I  
11 believe. And his representative is here. We've spoken with  
her and indicated to her that tax sale purchasing takes a  
long time.

12 Their redemption period I believe ends in  
13 September. Probably won't have a deed for another 90 to 180  
days.

14 Given the condition of the property you can see the  
15 garage is in significant disrepair, falling over. It's  
basically like a lean-to.

16 The small home is also in disrepair showing fascia  
17 and rotted roofing. Gutters in disrepair, downspouts in the  
yard. The concrete in the porch is beginning to deteriorate.  
18 There's significant rotting of the wood on the porch and  
gutter area. Foundation venting is covered with wood  
19 planking. There's been an entry of rodents into the building  
as well. No screens on any of the windows.

20 So given the condition of the property we request  
21 the Order be entered.

22 If Mr. Ayala's representative wants to say  
anything, come up.

23 MR. REED: State your name and address.

24 MS. ANGELES: My name is Adrienne Angeles. I'm here for  
25 the address of 4834 Kennedy Avenue in East Chicago.



1           As he mentioned the property was purchased at a tax  
2 sale. And I understand. But if we can maybe hold on the  
3 Order until at least we get the deed and maybe that would buy  
4 us some more time.

5           We travel all the way from Indianapolis. And I  
6 don't know how or when the next meeting will be. But as soon  
7 as we get time to get the deed we'll start working on it.

8           MR. REED: Thank you for coming out. Definitely thank  
9 you for sharing the information.

10           Attorney Smith, the pleasure of the Building  
11 Department would be to enter the Order?

12           MR. SMITH: That's correct. As I explained to  
13 Miss Angeles we would notify them if it gets bid out. And  
14 they would have another opportunity to come before the Board,  
15 speak to the Board at that time.

16           But again and of course we try to get to everybody.  
17 But I explained this to her that people from out town they  
18 buy something on tax sale and they flip it right away. So we  
19 may not be dealing with the same people six or eight months  
20 from now. So we want to keep the process moving forward.

21           MR. REED: Let me further explain. And again this is  
22 just for benefit. I didn't know who would be here today.

23           But you have to understand the City of East Chicago  
24 has a sense of urgency in dealing with dilapidated  
25 properties.

          There is a revitalization going on. We have to  
take into consideration the neighbors that live on this block  
and residents that are here.

          And I know it had nothing to do with you. It was  
not your fault at all. But just consider living next-door  
and rodents are setting up shop and things like that.

          So we have to create a sense of urgency even though  
it may not be the best for your investment.

          You had good intentions when you saw this property.  
But we have a different set of situations we have to adhere  
to.

          So we will enter the Order. We'll take the

1 recommendation. But as aggressively or Plan B if you can  
2 come up with something. That is fine.

3 But because of the urgency we can't really slow  
4 down the process on a property like this because the  
5 residents are suffering.

6 MR. SMITH: I would say even if it's a tax sale purchase  
7 you do usually have the ability to clean up the outside.

8 MS. ANGELES: Yeah. I was going to say I know during  
9 the financial period we're not allowed to go in there. But  
10 if we are allowed to at least take care of like the board up  
11 or clean up the property, I mean we're willing to do that if  
12 that buys us some time.

13 I understand that we still have a chance to come  
14 back and claim that we are going to clean or we're ready to  
15 clean and such.

16 It's just that we don't mind driving all the way  
17 over for another meeting. But I guess once we get the deed  
18 we won't feel as pressured.

19 MR. SMITH: I would talk to your attorneys to see what  
20 you can and can't do while you're waiting. And if you can do  
21 something like clean up the outside, that's going to go a  
22 long way.

23 So check with your attorney or whoever is working  
24 on the deed process and ask them. And either that person can  
25 get in touch with me or James. And we'll try to work with  
26 you on the process.

27 MR. REED: Again I'll say keeping in touch with the  
28 Building Department specifically James or Attorney Smith  
29 would be the best route to go.

30 Thank you for coming out. We really do appreciate  
31 you taking the time out to talk to us.

32 MS. ANGELES: Thank you.

33 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, next point of business is 506  
34 Spring Street garage only. Miss Gonzales who is the daughter  
35 of Arturo and Araceli Gonzales is here.

36 She did indicate that she got in contact with Code  
37 Enforcement. Mr. Portalatin would like to time to check with

1 this Code Enforcement Officer and to confirm whether or not  
2 there is a consistent plan in repairing this garage which as  
you can see in Tab 6 is in some significant disrepair.

3 So we request that the Order be entered given the  
4 state of the property, condition of the garage only, the fact  
that we do have good service on the current person who lives  
5 there. And we would request that it be set for status on  
9/25.

6 That concludes our new Demolition Orders. So I  
7 request the relief requested, finding on each of the  
properties as set forth.

8 MR. REED: Thank you for sharing that. I think we will  
9 take the entire Building Department Report as one for our  
motion to approve.

10 Is that good for the Board? What do you prefer?

11 MR. SMITH: I mean, Mr. President, you're running the  
12 meeting. So I defer to you. But of course it might be  
easier for the record if there's an action on each set of  
13 items.

14 MR. REED: Is there a motion to accept the Building  
Department Report and Request for Demolition Orders as listed  
15 on our agenda?

16 Motion to approve Building Department Demolition Orders made  
by Thomas Davis. Second by Richard Trembczynski.

17 Questions/Comments: None.

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

20 Properties for Status

21 MR. REED: Now we go to Status.

22 MR. SMITH: Yes. 4854 Alexander. This is a property  
that at last meeting had an appearance. They had pulled  
23 permits.

24 I want to, number 1, have the Board affirm the  
Demolition Order and then Secondly refer to James for a  
25 report on any status.

1 MR. PORTALATIN: There was a permit issued. They had  
2 done some work on the roof. However the property is not up  
to par. And so this property will probably be sent out to  
bid.

3 MR. SMITH: Next property, Mr. President, is 4409  
4 Arbutus. This is similar. Last meeting we had was June.  
5 There was permits issued. It was set over for status for  
today.

6 I want to, number 1, have the Board affirm that  
7 Demolition Order then give to James for status.

8 MR. PORTALATIN: This one in fact permits have been  
issued. But there has been no activity on the property.  
9 So it will be also sent out for bid.

10 MR. SMITH: Last property on Status, Mr. President, is  
4842 Kennedy. Attorney Scott Hale was here earlier. He  
11 represents the bank who is in the act of foreclosure.

12 Last time that we were here in June he indicated  
that they were working with the property owner on a loan  
13 application that fell through. So now they are moving  
towards foreclosure sale.

14 He is aware of the requirements and has indicated  
to James that he would like to enter into a Rehab Agreement  
15 possibly, but they need to get a handle on the property  
first.

16 So the Order has been entered already. We would to  
17 set it over status for October 23. And it will most likely  
be sent out for bid.

18 MR. REED: I want to make sure. Status is one thing.  
19 But we need to get it out because it's already been a few  
months.

20 MR. SMITH: That's correct. So it will be on our bid  
21 list.

22 So I request the Board to accept the Report of the  
Building Commissioner and affirm those two Orders on 4854  
23 Alexander and 4409 Arbutus.

24 MR. REED: Is there a motion to accept the Report of  
Property Status, affirm the first two and approve being a  
25 good Report of Property Status?

1 Motion to approve Building Department Properties for Status  
2 Report made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

3 Questions/Comments: None.

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

6 Demolition Lien

7 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, the next order of business  
8 for the Building Department for tonight is Demolition Liens.  
9 You'll see ten in front of you.

10 And first of all I want to thank Olga for her hard  
11 work today. It was kind of I don't want to say last minute.  
12 But we were puzzling to get these in front of you. And I  
13 appreciate all the work she did on these.

14 So what these are is a confirmation by invoice for  
15 the Building Department of the work performed on the property  
16 for demolition.

17 Under the Unsafe Building Act the demolition needs  
18 sets forth the requirements. We brought that information  
19 before you. And these are the liens.

20 These will be recorded on the properties showing  
21 the amount, the work performed pursuant to this Board's  
22 previous Demolition Order.

23 And I request all the demolitions listed there,  
24 606 143rd Avenue, 3815 Alder, 4802 Alexander, 4858 Alexander,  
25 1000 East Chicago Avenue, 3718 Elm, 3916 Evergreen, 3731  
Grand, 4833 McCook and 3812 Main, all be entered as  
presented.

MR. REED: Is there a motion to accept this Report of  
Demolition Liens?

Motion to approve Demolition Liens made by Richard  
Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

Emergency Order to Vacate:

1 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, the next order of business is  
Emergency Order to Vacate on 4853 McCook and 3520 Fir Street.  
2 Mr. Portalatin is going to give the report.

3 MR. PORTALATIN: 4853 McCook. This property we  
conducted an inspection there. We had a case of a bed with  
4 children. And upon conducting an inspection we noticed the  
property does have substantial violations. And so we had to  
5 issue an Order to Vacate because of the condition of the  
property.

6  
7 Same thing with 3520 Fir. It was also a call. And  
so upon conducting an inspection there we noticed that the  
8 rear unit was in pretty bad shape. So we had to do an Order  
to Vacate on that property as well.

9 MR. REED: Is there a motion to approve the Emergency  
Orders to Vacate for the two properties we have on our  
10 agenda?

11 Motion to approve Emergency Orders to Vacate made by Thomas  
Davis. Second by Richard Trembczynski.

12 Questions/Comments: None.

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

15 Rehabilitation Agreement:

16 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, next order of business is the  
Rehabilitation Agreement at 3920 Elm Street.

17  
18 Mr. Portalatin and the Building Department request  
approval as presented to the Board.

19 MR. REED: Is there a motion to approve the  
Rehabilitation Agreement for 3920 Elm Street?

20  
21 Motion to approve 3920 Elm Street Rehabilitation Agreement  
made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

22 Questions/Comments: None.

23 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
24 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

25 Order to Rescind and Release Order to Demolish:

1 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, next order of business is the  
2 Order to Rescind and Release Order to Demolish.

3 I'm happy to report on both 4728 Magoun and 4121  
4 Ivy, these were matters before the Board in late June. 4121  
Ivy has been self demoed. And 4728 Magoun has been repaired.

5 So we request the Orders to Demolish be rescinded  
6 and released so that we can report those on the properties  
and the property owner can no longer have that on them.

7 MR. REED: Is there a motion to rescind and release the  
8 Orders to Demolish for these two properties?

9 Motion to approve 4728 Magoun Avenue and 4121 Ivy Street  
10 Order to Rescind and Release Orders to Demolish made by  
11 Richard Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

12 Questions/Comments: None.

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

15 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, before the Board is  
16 Resolution 2023-44 which is a release of several liens that  
17 was previously entered by the Board on 4007 Carey Street.

18 This property is being sold and the liens have been  
19 satisfied according to the records we have.

20 I spoke with Mr. Morrisroe who is still in the  
21 hospital this morning. And he asked me to prepare this  
22 report this evening.

23 Again I want to thank Olga for getting it ready to  
24 go after it was sent over this afternoon.

25 So I request that the Board considers the  
Resolution and approves it as presented to the Board. We  
will then record the releases and give that to the title  
company.

MR. REED: Is there a motion to adopt Resolution  
2023-44, 4007 Carey Street and Release of Lien?

1 Motion to approve Resolution 2023-44 made by Richard  
Trembczynski. Second by Thomas Davis.

2 Questions/Comments: None.

3 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
4 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

5 MR. SMITH: Mr. President, thank you. That concludes  
6 the Building Department Report.

7 MR. REED: Thank you.

8 OTHER/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

9 \* Next Regular Meeting Date: Monday,  
10 September 11, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.

11 Motion to adjourn made by Richard Trembczynski. Second by  
12 Thomas Davis.

13 Questions/Comments: None.

14 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.  
15 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

16 \* Meeting ended at 6:31 p.m.

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1 Approval of the Meeting Minutes of  
2 Monday, August 28, 2023

3 Approved and Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
4

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
6 Milton Reed, President  
7

8 \_\_\_\_\_  
9 Richard Trembczynski, Vice President  
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11 \_\_\_\_\_  
12 Thomas Davis, Member  
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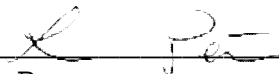
14 \_\_\_\_\_  
15 Olga Cosme, Board Secretary  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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 8th day of September, 2023

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

