

**In The Matter Of:**  
*BEFORE THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES*

---

*July 20, 2020*  
*REGULAR MEETING*

---

*BOSS REPORTERS*  
*Gary \* Merrillville \* Valparaiso, Indiana*  
*3893 East Lincoln Highway (Rt. 30)*  
*Merrillville, Indiana 46410*  
*(219) 769-9090*

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THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING  
GARY, INDIANA

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had at the meeting  
before the Calumet Township Board, reported by  
Kristen K. Stokes, CSR, Notary Public in and for the  
County of Lake, State of Indiana, taken at 610  
Connecticut Street, Gary, Indiana, on July 20, 2020,  
scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. in the evening.

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APPEARANCES:

Darren Washington, Board Chairman

Jacqueline Holmes, Board Secretary

James Piggee, Board Member

Kimberly Robinson, Township Trustee

Sherita Smith, Chief Deputy

Romeka Bonds, Executive Secretary

Deidre Monroe, Board Attorney

Rinzer Williams, III, Township Attorney

Steve Dalton, Financial Advisor

and

Members of the Public

\* \* \* \* \*

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(BOARD MEETING COMMENCED AT 6:08 PM.)

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Township Board meeting.

May we stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

(STOOD FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.)

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: I call the meeting to order. May we have a roll call, Ms. Bonds.

MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

MR. PIGGEE: Present.

MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

MS. HOLMES: Present.

MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Present.

With all three board members, we have enough for a quorum.

Item No. 2, approval of the minutes of February 17, 2020. The Chair is making a motion for approval for --

MR. PIGGEE: So moved. I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Is there a second?

MS. HOLMES: I second.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Is there any

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questions by board members or the Trustee about the minutes?

(NO RESPONSE.)

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Hearing none, roll call.

MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

MS. HOLMES: Yes.

MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes.

With three yeas and zero nays, the motion carries.

Item No. 3, Resolution 2020-05, adoption of the Capital Improvement Plan for the years 2021 through 2023.

Good evening, Madam Trustee.

TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Good evening. Good evening. Thank you for finally getting the day together. I think we will talk with -- or we will have Mr. Dalton explain the Capital Improvement Plan.

MR. DALTON: Board members, I think you'll remember we talked about this in February that there was a new law passed

1 that required some townships to pass a  
2 Capital Improvement Plan. We don't think we  
3 fall into both categories, but I'm  
4 recommending we pass one anyway.

5 One, because it's not bad practice to  
6 have one. And two, just in case the State  
7 plays funny with us and changes the rules  
8 like they've done before, we've got a plan  
9 passed, so they can't use it against us that  
10 we don't have one.

11 So I'm recommending a resolution. This  
12 Capital Improvement Plan focuses mostly on  
13 replacement of existing equipment and repair  
14 of heating systems and elevator issues in  
15 this building. It is not an appropriation.  
16 So you know the difference. Appropriation  
17 means you've given budget authority to the  
18 Trustee. This is a plan. It's a rough  
19 sketch of the next three years of capital  
20 improvements. Appropriations will still  
21 have to be approved by the Board through the  
22 budget process or through the additional  
23 appropriations process.

24 I'll take questions or ask for your  
25 approval.

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CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Any questions?

MR. PIGGEE: Can you repeat the last --

MR. DALTON: I would recommend approval of this resolution, Mr. Piggee, or I can take questions, one of the two.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Do you have any questions?

MR. PIGGEE: No, not now.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Not now? Because Mr. Dalton did bring this up at the last meeting. I know it's been a while because of Covid, but he explained it at the last meeting. So if you have any questions right now, you can go ahead, Mr. Piggee.

MR. PIGGEE: No. I'm okay.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Ms. Holmes?

MS. HOLMES: No questions.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay. The Chair would like to make a motion to approve Resolution No. 2020-05, the Capital Improvement Plan for the years 2021 through 2023. Is there a second?

MS. HOLMES: I second.

CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Roll call, Ms. Bonds.

1 MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

2 MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

3 MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

4 MS. HOLMES: Yes.

5 MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

6 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes.

7 With three yeas, zero nays, the  
8 resolution passes.

9 Item No. 4. Good afternoon to the  
10 public. Is there any comments that anyone  
11 from the public would like to make?

12 (NO RESPONSE.)

13 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: All right.

14 Hearing none, Madam Trustee.

15 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Okay. I just want to  
16 go over -- we have not -- like you said, we  
17 have not met since February, March, maybe.  
18 So as you know, a lot has been going on,  
19 including Covid, so thank you for the  
20 compliments on all that we're doing down  
21 here.

22 We had a total disinfectant fog machine  
23 go throughout the whole building, this  
24 building, the NPC. We had floors, removing  
25 from any cloth chairs to anything with



1 leather because we just don't want to have  
2 anyone get sick on our watch. We're still  
3 working 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., a half day,  
4 Monday through Thursday. We are looking at  
5 August 3rd returning to full time, but I'm  
6 not really sure because we're still at the  
7 4.0, 4.5.

8 So the staff has been great in working  
9 over or just being available as they work  
10 from home on the other part of the half day.  
11 We have plenty of PPE. We offer masks. If  
12 we have people come into the building, some  
13 of the customers, because I saw today where  
14 the Mayor is having some kind of demand or  
15 something that says that every city -- every  
16 person in the City of Gary has to be masked  
17 outside of your home.

18 I was wondering if you-all wanted to do  
19 or say something towards that effort for the  
20 Township, but if you notice when you walked  
21 in, we're already there. Again, security --  
22 if a person comes in without a mask, we'll  
23 offer them one for free.

24 What else? We were able to, during the  
25 months of March, April and into May, we gave

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1           away about \$86,207.27 in food vouchers,  
2           purchase orders and gift cards from County  
3           Market and Save More. We're trying to work  
4           with Strack & Van Til's as they have a  
5           grocery store in Griffith. So some people  
6           might prefer that. So we're trying to work  
7           with them to see how we can get them to take  
8           our vouchers.

9           And I think I -- so as Steve stated, our  
10          capital improvements all of a sudden just  
11          now -- I guess they knew we were having this  
12          meeting, because we're getting a bill from  
13          the elevator people for repairs. We're  
14          getting a bill from Bloomfield for repairs.  
15          These are all needed. We had to get new  
16          servers. We had to get a new telephone  
17          system. Because since we've been here -- we  
18          have a letter from Bloomfield that even  
19          stated since '15 we were telling you that,  
20          you know, you needed this, because our  
21          heating and our air on the first floor is  
22          very hard, but we need new coils. The new  
23          coils are replaced in a room in the basement  
24          that I had never been in. And we had to  
25          remove the asbestos first.

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1           So we have a lot going on, but we're  
2           maintaining because -- someone did tell us,  
3           also, at the beginning that they had done a  
4           great job with the aesthetics of the  
5           building, but because the bones underneath  
6           are not well, and so like what do you think  
7           we should do? And he's like, can you move  
8           somewhere else?

9           So I know that, you know, the public  
10          would tar and hang me if we thought about  
11          even building or something or -- you know,  
12          so we've just got to, again, work with what  
13          we have. We're working very hard. Again, I  
14          thank my staff for, you know, being helpful  
15          and, you know, considerate.

16          I think that's it. Yeah, I think that's  
17          it. Any questions?

18          CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Any questions?

19          MR. PIGGEE: Yes, can I make a comment?

20          TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Sure.

21          MR. PIGGEE: I have to take my hat off  
22          to you and your staff for the vouchers that  
23          you gave out. I came down, and I mean, I  
24          was very impressed the way you were doing it  
25          and the way it was done. When I came in the

1 building, you took my temperature. You put  
2 the little gun next to my head, and I was --  
3 I really have to take my hat off to you.

4 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Thank you.

5 MR. PIGGEE: You and your staff did a  
6 heck of a job.

7 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Is that it?

9 Ms. Holmes?

10 MS. HOLMES: Well, I had an opportunity  
11 to come down and shadow some of the workers,  
12 and I was very, very pleased with the way  
13 they handled situations. People, you know,  
14 with everything going on, their  
15 temperatures, was like, "I need this fast.  
16 I need to hurry up." They trying to rush.  
17 But all the people that I shadowed, they  
18 calmed everybody down, talked to them. And  
19 later that person apologized, you know,  
20 but I can understand what they're going  
21 through.

22 So I just want to commend the employees  
23 for the nice job that they did and just keep  
24 up the good work.

25 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Thank you.

1           CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yeah, I want to,  
2           first of all, commend the Trustee and the  
3           staff for the excellent job that you-all did  
4           in getting food baskets out to the elderly.  
5           That was awesome. And the staff has done a  
6           tremendous job working from home. I'm  
7           hoping with the technology that we're able  
8           to keep people at home more.

9           As you know, folks -- and I'm just being  
10          honest, they will spend \$1,000 on an iPhone  
11          before they do on something that they need.  
12          So most people should be technologically on  
13          target for being able to provide more and  
14          more services from home.

15          And Madam Trustee, let me say this, you  
16          and your staff assess the probability of us  
17          having to do something with this building or  
18          either having to move. I don't think the  
19          public would be upset with you because,  
20          again, you moved into this building. You  
21          didn't select this building as your place.

22          So if it's going to save lives and  
23          prevent people from getting hurt, then you  
24          do what you need to do to look at that  
25          possibility. We're not closed to that

1 possibility.

2 Okay. And the last thing I want to  
3 bring up briefly, I was a little bit -- I  
4 talked to my attorney about this, and I know  
5 we've had discussions on how, especially  
6 during this time, we have stepped up and the  
7 Trustee has stepped up to pay NIPSCO bills,  
8 electric and gas bills.

9 And it just made me a bit -- that I  
10 don't know if you-all saw this, but there  
11 was an A.P., Associated Press, article that  
12 came out a couple weeks ago where all of the  
13 power and light companies, the utility  
14 companies, went before the Indiana Utility  
15 Regulatory Commission and had the nerve to  
16 try to increase the rates because -- the  
17 electric rates because people were not  
18 eating at restaurants. And their forecasted  
19 benefits and profits they would have  
20 received from that, they wanted to charge  
21 that back onto us, knowing well, number one,  
22 that that price increased because people  
23 spend more time at home, using the internet,  
24 using electricity.

25 Number two, I guarantee you -- and I'm

1           doing the research, but I know the majority  
2           of those companies received money from the  
3           CARES Act to keep staffed. And believe you  
4           me, I guarantee you before the end of the  
5           year or early next year there is going to be  
6           a request to the IURC to increase rates.

7           And I was upset by it because the staff  
8           and the Trustee is working hard to make sure  
9           that people have their gas and light bills  
10          paid, and the utility companies had the  
11          nerve to be upset because they couldn't  
12          shut people off. And I talked to a  
13          representative early last week, and he said  
14          they were trying to -- they were trying to  
15          go to the court to try to end it August 1st,  
16          but they are pushing the Citizens Action  
17          Coalition to move it out even further  
18          because we've heard what happened in Florida  
19          and other places.

20          We think we had over 500 new cases in  
21          Indiana. So until people get themselves  
22          together and calm down and wear their masks  
23          and do six feet, it's going to continue to  
24          grow. But I say this for me, God is in  
25          control, and we are blessed by the

1 (inaudible) of Jesus. That is the end of my  
2 comments.

3 The Chair would like to make a motion  
4 for adjournment after Ms. Robinson makes her  
5 comments.

6 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Yeah, I just forgot  
7 to mention, most of what we said we are  
8 considering Covid-related, and we spoke of  
9 the CARES Act. The county is where we  
10 applied for our reimbursement, and I've  
11 spoken with Auditor Petalas about that. So  
12 he's all good for that.

13 And also, President, when NIPSCO -- they  
14 had a representative on WLTH, and then I did  
15 call in. And I was like, look, we have not  
16 stopped paying, so please don't go up  
17 anywhere. And you probably could write that  
18 off. It's just your profit, your near  
19 profit obviously that you're worried about,  
20 but the Township has not stopped paying  
21 anybody's bills no matter what because we  
22 just did not want those people to pile up.  
23 So please, you know, forgive me for not  
24 understanding why you are going to go up on  
25 me who has to pay a bill, you know. So



1           yeah, I'm with you on that.

2           MR. PIGGEE: Mr. Chair, I got a  
3           question.

4           CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Mr. Piggee and  
5           then Attorney Monroe.

6           MR. PIGGEE: Ms. Robinson?

7           TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Yes.

8           MR. PIGGEE: The vouchers that you gave  
9           out to pay a few months ago, is that money  
10          coming out of your budget or what?

11          TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Yes, it comes from  
12          our budget that we have for food because we  
13          do that anyway. So it was a good portion of  
14          people who had not ever received our  
15          services. And then when it became -- you  
16          know, people, just everybody. We were  
17          trying to really start with seniors, and  
18          then it became everybody. So then we cut it  
19          off with you have to apply like a person, be  
20          under the guidelines or at the guidelines.  
21          We were just doing those for extenuating  
22          circumstances. So yes, they did come out of  
23          our budget, but we can be reimbursed.

24          MR. PIGGEE: Okay. I just wanted to  
25          know that because when I came down, there

1 was lines all the way around the corner.

2 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Yeah, for about a  
3 week. And it was interesting because we  
4 joke about what we call our Chinese  
5 telephone down here, but I think it was the  
6 week before Easter, every day we were just  
7 deciding more and more to do so, we said for  
8 this week we're going to cut it off at 65  
9 apps per day, and we were going to stop that  
10 Wednesday because we were giving a 24-hour  
11 turnaround. You come today. You get your  
12 voucher tomorrow.

13 And the last Wednesday before the  
14 Thursday before Good Friday we told  
15 everybody out there because we, too, had no  
16 place to park. It was lines both ways  
17 around the building, the parks. So we said,  
18 you know, today is the last 65. And we knew  
19 that, you know, there might be people in  
20 sprinkles trying to -- there was nobody.  
21 They had got on the phone lines just as  
22 quick as they had told people to come. It  
23 was so amazing. We were like, okay,  
24 Thursday we're going to have to turn people  
25 away because we're done. The only people

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1 that showed up were like people that, oh,  
2 they told me to come back today to get my  
3 voucher.

4 So I understand that, you know, some  
5 people are going through a hard time, but  
6 between every church, every giveaway, the  
7 Northwest Indiana Food Bank, Calumet  
8 Township, North Township, people have been  
9 serviced.

10 MR. PIGGEE: Yeah.

11 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: And you know, none of  
12 that has stopped. So it's just -- you know,  
13 it's frustrating when you get people who are  
14 just more greedy than needy so --

15 MR. PIGGEE: Only thing I have to say is  
16 I think Gary has given away the best baskets  
17 in the country. Everybody is giving them,  
18 the churches and then the different  
19 organizations as well. And they're not  
20 being greedy with them.

21 All right, Mr. Chair.

22 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Attorney Monroe?

23 ATTORNEY MONROE: Attorney Williams, did  
24 you have anything?

25 ATTORNEY WILLIAMS: Just the public.

1 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Before we close,  
2 are there any comments by the public that  
3 want to be made today before we leave?

4 All right. Anything else, Madam Trustee?

5 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Oh, we want to say  
6 happy birthday to our Attorney Rinzer  
7 Williams.

8 ATTORNEY WILLIAMS: Thank you.

9 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Today is his  
10 birthday, and yesterday was Mr. Dalton's  
11 birthday.

12 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: I can tell from  
13 Mr. Dalton's face, he's been celebrating.  
14 Congratulations and happy Mother's Day.

15 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: The chair would  
17 like to entertain a motion for adjournment.

18 MR. PIGGEE: So moved.

19 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: All in favor  
20 signify by saying aye.

21 BOARD MEMBERS: (Collectively) Aye.

22 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Zero nays. The  
23 ayes have it. The meeting is now concluded.

24 TRUSTEE ROBINSON: Thank you.

25 (MEETING CONCLUDED AT 5:48 PM.)


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

3  
 4 THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING  
 5 GARY, INDIANA

6  
 7 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE  
 8

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

17  
 18 Signed this 23rd day of July, 2020.  
 19

20   
 21 \_\_\_\_\_  
 22 KRISTEN K. STOKES, CSR  
 CSR# 084-003723

23 My Commission Expires: 8/27/23  
 24 Notary Public: Lake County, Indiana  
 25


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STATE OF INDIANA )  
                              ) SS:  
COUNTY OF LAKE )

THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING  
GARY, INDIANA

These minutes of the Calumet Township Board  
meeting held on July 20, 2020, were approved by the  
Board of Trustees on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of  
September, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Darren Washington, Board Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jacqueline Holmes, Board Secretary

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James Piggee, Board Member

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