

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on May 22, 2017 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Invocation by Councilman Higgs.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

DISTRIBUTION OF COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Presentation by Mrs. Terry Mayrik.

<u>Clark H.S.</u>		<u>Bishop Noll H.S.</u>	
Daisy Diaz	1 st Winner	Ashley Kubacki	1 st Winner
Mercedes Salmeron	2 nd Winner		
Eliee Guido	3 rd Winner		
		<u>H.A.S.T.</u>	
<u>Gavit H.S.</u>		Gerardo Munoz	1 st Winner
Esmeralda Alvirde	1 st Winner		
Claire McDaniel	2 nd Winner	<u>Morton H.S.</u>	
		Destiny Doby	1 st Winner
<u>Hammond H.S.</u>		Leilah Hicks	2 nd Winner
Annisa Saucedo	1 st Winner	Jeremy Starkey	3 rd Winner
Te'Aire Storm	2 nd Winner	Joseph Colvin	4 th Winner
Britany Comiskey	3 rd Winner	Mariah Higgins	5 th Winner

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of May 8, 2017 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from May 3, 2017 through May 17, 2017. Claim #2894 through claim #3228, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (approval)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

17-12 Amending Ord. 7431, known as Section 91.036 of the Hammond Municipal Code, as it pertains to Bees

Dustin Voris - Beekeeper. Discussed the importance of bees to pollination.

Charles Snyder - Beekeeper. Asked council to table this and have another meeting and discussion on the ordinance.

Christopher Mordus - Beekeeper. Thanked council for responding to his request so quickly.

George Stoya - Questioned whether homeowner's insurance provided anything for this type of activity.

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Police & Fire Committee - Councilman Rakos - Brought out 17-11.

Community and Crime Watch - Councilwoman Venecz - Announced upcoming meetings:

Tues., June 6; Harrison Park C.W.; 6:30 pm; VFW

Tues., May 30; Pulaski Park Neighborhood Assoc.; American Legion; 6:30 pm

The city will once again have the security light program. Qualified applicants will receive a free dusk to dawn security light.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

17-11 An Ordinance Amending Ord. 7685, 8200, 8564, 8630, 8645, 8718, 8754, 8755, 8854, 8930, 9017, 9061, 9194 , 9252 and 9359, also known as Section 36.005 (B) (1) of the Hammond Municipal Code, as it Pertains to Approved Uses for Public Safety

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for passage.

Councilman Spitale asked that the City Clerk read the proposed ordinance.

City Clerk Golec read the proposed ordinance in its entirety.

Councilman Spitale - This is a great opportunity for the Hammond young adults. Most families don't have the \$3,000 to \$4,500 it costs to go to the Police Academy. It is a great thing that Chief Doughty is pushing to get this to go through. Also too this will also help bring in more minorities to our police department.

Councilman Markovich - It says in the ordinance "60% of gaming funds to be used for Public Safety, which includes appropriations to the Hammond Police and Fire Departments". I'm looking at the ordinance 36.05, Expenditure of revenue from riverboat gaming, unless it's been changed, it says, "60 percent of all gross revenue shall be used for infrastructure work. Infrastructure work shall be defined as follows: streets, curbs, sidewalks, alleys, trees, lighting and access walks. The 60% shall be dedicated as follows, each of the six districts shall receive 10%, which amounts to the 60%. 10% shall be used wholly or in any of the six districts for infrastructure work provided this 10% may be also used to fund the 10% match of sewer improvement repairs when infrastructure work is being done." We had a discussion in the caucus about the collapsing of sewers and people have to pay for that. So when it's coming from the main sewer line to whatever that boundary line of that piece of property, that's gonna be taken care of by the Sewer District. So it says, "the remaining 30% of gross revenues shall be used for one or more of the following purposes: neighborhoods, alleys, lighting and the like, citywide economic development, city and public safety capital programs, matching federal and state programs, non-reverting rainy day fund, park and recreation activity, and bond retirement. The total percentage allotment for each of the above listed purposes shall be determined by the mayor with city council approval. The mayor with the approval of the city council shall annually establish an itemized non-reverting budget to include annual revenues to be received", and it carries on. But, like I said, unless this ordinance has been changed, this 17-11 says, "60% shall be used for public safety which includes police and fire departments", according to the ordinance here it doesn't state that. It says 60% is supposed to go for each district, 10% each, and 30% listed for those seven items that I listed and city and public safety programs. So that's the only place that it says city and public safety programs. So I don't know if this ordinance is in error or if we need to change the gaming ordinance or if it has been changed. I took a copy out of our ordinance book, unless it was updated and changed, I don't know if this is a valid ordinance because it states 60% will be used for public safety and according to the ordinance it doesn't say that here. So, I think we probably should put this back into committee, Police & Fire, and let's get an answer on this for sure. Because I don't know where Councilman Spitale came up with the 60% to be used for public safety. Because the gaming ordinance only says you can use 30% and that's split seven ways. So that's only like 4 1/2% can be used for public safety and not 60%. So, I would make a motion that we

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - would refer this back to the Police & Fire Committee until we can get an answer exactly what is correct on these percentages where the gaming money can be used for. I so move.

Motion dies for lack of second.

Councilman Woerpel - This is a good ordinance. It's, in my opinion, the correct use of gaming dollars. I think what my colleague is referring to, it doesn't say it has to be used, it says it allows 60%. If it would make him happy we could amend that in this ordinance to say 30%.

Councilman Spitale - Councilman Markovich, in caucus, first was talking about the age, they were kids. Now he came up with this part of the 60%. Basically, it sounds like he isn't in favor of this ordinance at all.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Markovich, moved to amend the ordinance in the second "Whereas" where the "60%" is changed to "30%".

Councilman Spitale - Can we have Atty. Kantar come to the front please and kind of set everybody straight on what's going on here please.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question would be, this is the Mayor's gaming so I'm wondering why the numbers are being changed in the sequence of the ordinance itself.

Corporate Counsel Kantar - It's under the public safety. If there is a typo in it, it is under the public safety portion of the gaming ordinance. Because this would improve public safety in that it would have more neighborhood inclusion in our police department. Everybody who lives in the neighborhood knows who the bad guys are, who the good guys are, it's public safety. So if there is a typo in there I do apologize for it. But this is something that the police department was in a very large hurry to have happen because there is some retirements coming up at the end of the year and there is a new group and the academy is starting, I believe, some time in June or July and they were at a press for it. So I'm sure a lot of eyes looked over it and didn't see the typographical error. But it is under the section that deals with public safety.

Councilman Spitale - So the 60% needs to be corrected? Is that what you're saying?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - If the public safety is under the 30% then it needs to be under the 30%. The ordinance numbers are right, it's probably just a typo.

Councilman Kalwinski - Just a question, maybe you can help me with it. Is this just for people who want to be police officers or does this go to people who want to be corrections officers too?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - This is for training for the Northwest Indiana Law Enforcement Academy and it is designed to replace police officers who are retiring from the city of Hammond in the coming six to eight months. We have a lot of officers who have entered into the drop program and we have some of these drop dates

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Corporate Counsel Kantar cont. - coming up at the end of '17, beginning of '18, and we would like to replace those officers with a little bit more diversity and inclusion and there's a lot of people who are good candidates they just don't have the \$4,500.

Councilman Spitale - Do we have any vacancies right now?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - At the moment no, but there are some who are going to be leaving at the end of the year. It's usually as it gets closer to the end of the year, depending on anniversary date. But there is a new academy starting, I think it's either at the end of June or the beginning of July and we're trying to get three recruits into the academy as sponsors so that they will be academy trained by the time the vacancies become available.

Councilman Spitale - How long's that academy last?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - 15 weeks.

Councilman Kalwinski - Is there a projection in the next five years of how many officers we may be needing?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - I don't have it in front of me but I have seen the drop list at the last pension board and it's a substantial list. We do have a large number of officers at the more experienced level and they will be falling off in the next two to three years. So this is something that is right now just for three but I could see in future it going forward. It could also be expanded to include EMT's to go into the fire department because we do have some firefighters who are going to be retiring at the end of this year, beginning of next year as well.

Councilman Kalwinski - Are we approving this for five years, ten years, limited years?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - Actually, we will only need it when we have a vacancy. So if there is no vacancy then there will be no cadets sponsored.

Councilman Higgs - So the correct language should be 30% versus 60%.

Corporate Counsel Kantar - Correct. Whatever section was with the public safety. Like I said the police were in quite a hurry to get this done so it was done hastily but the "Now therefore" part, I'm sure is correct.

Council President Venecz - So, Atty. Kantar, the amendment on the floor right now is to change the 60% to 30%, and that would be valid?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - In the "Whereas", correct.

Councilman Markovich - So all the other seven items are not gonna get any money then? Neighborhoods, citywide economic development, matching federal and state programs, rainy day funds, park and recreation and

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - bond retirement. If all 30% is going for public safety then the other six departments aren't going to be eligible for any of this money.

Corporate Counsel Kantar - Well, they'll have \$12 thousand less. I think we'll just have to move things around.

Councilman Woerpel - This is the Mayor's Gaming money, correct?

Corporate Counsel Kantar - Correct.

Council President Venecz - Clerk Golec, roll call vote on the amendment to change 60% to 30%.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9375 PASSED
(as amended)

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

17-13 Amending Various Ord.'s known as Section 34.231 of the Hammond Municipal Code, pertaining to the Addition of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity to the Powers and Duties of the Hammond Human Relations Commission

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Human Relations Committee. AYES: ALL

17-14 Amending the Hammond Zoning Ordinance, for purposes of Rezoning Property at 6600 Indianapolis Blvd to Planned Unit Development District (PUD) and Adopting a Planned Unit Development District Ordinance for Hammond Sportsplex Planned Unit Development District as a Supplement to the Zoning Ordinance

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Finance and Council as a Whole Committees with an Intent to Consider on June 12, 2017. AYES: ALL

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

17-15 Amending and Fixing the Schedule of Sewer Rates and Charges to be Collected by the Hammond Sanitary District from the owners of Property Served by the Sewage Works of the District

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to suspend the rules to allow Marty Wielgos, Sanitary District Manager, to discuss 17-15. AYES: ALL

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - As in the packet that I passed out earlier in the caucus room, the District is coming to the Council tonight to talk about its need for a rate increase. The current rate is \$1.55 per thousand and an average family of four in the city of Hammond uses about 5,000 gallons a month, with an \$11.25 administration charge, and being billed bi-monthly because we bill every two months instead of every month, that current charge is \$26.75 for that family of five. We're looking to raise that rate by \$6.57 per month. So the \$26.75 bi-monthly charge would go to \$39.89. This amount is needed to sustain the district. Our late rate increase, basically, was in 2009 and like any other business I have to account for increases in costs of running the plant. I'm sure all of you know, we run 24/7. We never have a day off. And so these are increases that I sat down with my staff, our accounting consultant, and feel very good that these rates should sustain us for several years. But like any other business, you will see me coming back in years to come because of the fact that our entire operation is sustained by rates. We're not sustained by taxes and a lot of people think that we are, but we are not. The Sanitary District is run by rates and rates only. The only thing that's sustained by taxes is the Sewer Department, which falls under the Sanitary District but it's a separate wing and it sustains itself by taxes and taxes alone. So, I'm here tonight to ask you to approve on 1st and 2nd reading a rate increase that will go from \$26.75 bi-monthly for a family of four, I should say, in the city of Hammond, to \$39.89. Once again, that's an increase of \$6.57 per month.

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - If I could just add, as most people in this room know, we have customer communities. That means communities that this District services that are not part of the city of Hammond or the town of Munster. That's the city of Whiting, town of Highland, and the town of Griffith. They are our customers and we looked at the rates and said they are paying far too little, based on what Hammond residents are paying and Munster residents. Munster pays the exact same amount of Hammond because they are a partner in our District. In what we knew, because we had long term contracts is that I went to my board and asked them to make a really difficult decision. This was about three and a half years ago. I said to them these contracts are wrong. The District needs more money and we need to do something about it. We took the very difficult step in having them authorize me to write letters to those three communities, canceling their contracts. Now even though I knew I was unable to, I had to try and do something to get them to the table and talk about what they were paying because I knew I would have to come back to you all and ask for more money because of the fact that the District needed more money. But I felt in my mind that I wouldn't be able to do that until I got them to the table and to have them pay more. I can tell you successfully, after three years of battling with them and after many court cases and all the way down to the Indiana Supreme Court, we lost. But, we awoke the sleeping dog,

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos cont. - and they did come back to the table. With the help of the Federal Government, the USEPA, the Dept. of Justice, they knew our plea and helped twist a few arms to get them to the table. Both Highland and Griffith had come to the table. We've agreed on a settlement and they've agreed to pay more. In my opinion, now a fairer rate than what they were paying. And a contract that they had that would have taken them another five to ten years locked into the old rate. So, we accomplished, somewhat difficultly, but we accomplished our goal in getting our customers to pay more and so now I'm here tonight to ask you to fill in that gap of what we still need to run the district.

Councilman Higgs - This is a mandate from the Federal Government, am I correct?

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - To be honest with you, we have two things with the federal Government. We have since 1999, as along with all Sanitary Districts across the United States. We've been negotiating with the Federal Government on two things. One, the first thing, would be a consent decree. What that is is a document that says that the federal Government does not want us to dump and contribute any of our waste water untreated back into their tributaries. Ours is the Grand Calumet River. That's where our plant's located. That's where we would overflow into. The Federal Government decided to do that because of the fact that they felt that they had no control over districts across our country that would dump anytime that they felt like, raw sewage into these tributaries. So they decided to do something about it. What they decided to do was come and meet with all of us and they met with the Hammond Sanitary District, it started back in 1999, Bob, you may have been on the Council at that time, mandating that we no longer can act in that way. Once again, not only us, but all districts across the country. If you think about it, it really makes sense, although it's a hard pill to swallow. But, you know, any raw sewage that we would dump into the Grand Cal ends back up in Lake Michigan. Where do we get all of our drinking water, Lake Michigan. So, we look at it and we say, you know what, the right thing to do is to try to figure out what improvements we need to do to the plant so that we eliminate and cut down the number of times that we actually have to go into the Grand Calumet with raw sewage. That's what the Federal Governments goal was. With us, under our agreement, we're looking at about four times a year now that we will legally be allowed to dump into the river without any great fines or penalties. That's the reason many years ago, about four or five years ago, we came to this Council and asked for bond money, about \$73 million to be able to construct the basin off of Columbia Avenue that we have which holds 33 million gallons of raw wastewater and storm water. So that we can let the plant slow down during heavy rainstorms and then treat that by draining it back into the plant so that it's treated, other than in the old days, that would have all gone into the Grand Calumet untreated. So that's the whole goal, Councilmen, between what the Federal Government wants. This rate increase that I'm talking about today gets the plant flush. The Sanitary District flush in the black. We have seventeen years to accomplish the goal set out by that consent decree. The number really hasn't been fully confirmed yet on what that dollar amount's gonna be. But, I have been talking to all of you for over a year now that that is coming and it will probably be coming in a few years from now on a scheduled plan of different things I need to do to the plant to meet the federal guidelines that that consent decree that we signed, my board approved, our board president signed, to be able to accomplish those goals. So, to answer your question, this rate increase is to get the District into the black for the next three years, four years. Then after that I will come to you with a plan layout for the next seventeen years of how much money we have to spend each year and what that will relate to in rates at that time.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Kalwinski - The current Hammond rate, how does it compare to other municipalities in Indiana?

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - Included in the packet that I had handed out to you earlier in caucus, we currently are the lowest in the state of Indiana and with this rate increase that I'm asking for tonight, you will still be the lowest in the state of Indiana. We're very blessed in running a very efficient plant. We, like our sister Water Department, that charges you .46¢ per thousand, as you know, they are the lowest in the state. So between the Sanitary District and the Water Department, we two are the lowest in the state of Indiana. Even by this rate increase, we will still be the lowest in the State of Indiana. I think I just need to mention that that's current, with this rate increase, current today. These other communities are in the midst of their own rate increases as we speak. So the chart that I handed out to you today, we updated, in another year or two you will see now just how much farther they've jumped up and where the Hammond Sanitary will always be the lowest in the state of Indiana. I can literally triple the rate today and we would still be the lowest out of all major communities throughout the entire state of Indiana.

Councilman Torres - The ordinance here says, "the operation, maintenance and replacement", you stated that you're just gonna be in the black. In other words, 2nd District has got a lot of crumbling sewers and you can see a lot of streets that have a lot of patches that they keep patching up because there's some kind of problem with the sewers, they keep on sinking. You're not gonna be able to repair some of the sewer systems in the city are you?

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - Councilman, what we do in the budget that I put together every year, I set up, usually, about a half million dollars aside out of my budget for what I would call emergency repairs. That's minimal. As you know, a whole block could cost you more than that. But, it's what we have to work with and currently we have an emergency repair that we're doing right now up in the 1st District on Myrtle Street. That entire block, eighty homes, affected. Because the sewer system is so old it's collapsed and falling apart where it won't allow any flow or minimal flow, back into our system. So, we don't do repairs like you're asking for, Councilman Torres, we do emergency repairs. Even though the District is struggling, I had to go to Councilman Kalwinski to help with that. That repair on Myrtle Street is a little over \$300 thousand. It's a lot of money. If you look at I'm putting a half a million dollars aside to cover the entire city for a year. I would have to be coming in to meet your request at a much higher increase in rates and I don't think I feel comfortable in doing that at this time. And as you know when gaming came around, street repair, sewer repair, water main repairs on those blocks as the street was being done were all covered and gaming paid for all that. Well, those days are coming to an end. I understand it and the Water Department understands that. But our city is very old and it was put together in pieces over the last hundred plus years and our system is old. The water mains are, in parts of the city, just as bad as some of the sewer mains. So, we understand that. I know you and I had a really good conversation several weeks ago on that subject. It's just something that's a part of reality. We're gonna have to figure out how we address that. But the days of having the excess funds that used to go to repair those when you're doing a street, are just no longer there anymore. So we're gonna have to figure a different and better way to do that.

Councilman Spitale - With the equipment that you have now, as far as pumps go, for the volume that we're using, will we have to increase the volume on the pumps, bigger pumps to do what we need to do with this or are the ones you have adequate?

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - It's a good question. When we came to you several years ago, when we were getting ready to build the basin, the initial cost estimates came in at about \$73 million. Because of the downturn of the market at the time and just things becoming less expensive, that basin ended up costing \$43 million. A substantial savings to the taxpayers of the city. I was approved through this council the \$73 million, which is part of a bond issue. So I have a little over \$10 million left out of that bond that I can start some of these major improvements. Part of the plan that I have laid out with the staff was the start of headworks, and to increase those pump sizes so that we could pump more water into the plant. But you have to remember our plant is only rated for 43 million to come into the plant. At any given time when we have these, what I call monsoon rainfalls, we can get up to 100 million coming into the plant. We can sustain that for about an hour and a half before the plant starts telling us it can't handle that volume anymore. So that's when we start going into the basin and start filling the basin and getting creative and doing a variety of other things. We actually would flood the plant before we ever think about ever flooding a basement. I just want to say that we've had some very heavy rains here the last several months in very short periods of time and we have had zero basement back-ups, not a one. So I think it goes to show that what we are doing is working. I'm very blessed to have people work for me that have been with me twenty plus years. Jeff Massey, who's sitting in the back, is a part of that major plan. He's been almost with the plant 20 to 25 years or so. It's because of that knowledge and these guys who work really hard surely makes my job a lot easier. Makes your job a lot easier that you're not getting those calls about, "my basement", and surely it makes the Mayor very happy that he's not getting calls to the Mayor's Office. But all the things we're talking about are things that have to happen because of the fact that our plant is so old. It can't continue to go without regular maintenance that the kind of facility that we have that was started in the late thirties, early forties, with what I call headworks, it was a pump house that was first built to pump everything to one section, to pump it then directly to the river. So it got it out of everybody's homes. That's how it was originally designed. Then as time went on different processes were added for treatment. The plant grew as we added on customer communities, the town of Munster. We just kept expanding but those expansions were over decades of different time periods. So, as most of you have taken a tour through the plant, which I always welcome, you had a chance to see just what we do. We take in the most dirtiest water you can ever imagine, from across this great city, Munster, Highland, Whiting and Griffith, and through the process, by the time we put it back in the Grand Cal it is crystal clear, as you have all seen. It's phenomenal because it's been so clear, and we do have been doing so well that we actually have trout that come up and spawn, almost trying to get into the plant through the outflow. They come back every year. It's truly, truly, a change from what I remember as a kid growing up here and what that river used to look like. So, I feel that we all have a very important responsibility to do things now and over the next seventeen years with this mandate by the Federal Government so that thirty, forty, years from now the people who come after us will say, "You know what, they did their job. They made very difficult decisions but they did their job where they're not dumping into the river and back into Lake Michigan where we draw our water." As you know, the Hammond Water Department is a tremendous asset to this city. It has far more customers than I do at Sanitary District and it makes a tremendous amount of money on that return by selling to those customer communities. Especially those customer communities that are across the state line in the state of Illinois because they're not regulated by a fixed rate. So, why would I want to continue to do things to pollute it or why would we want to do things to try to pollute it? It all makes sense to me but I know it's painful sometimes and I know that anytime you see me standing here at this podium you know it's not going to be good because I'm gonna be asking for money but we're doing all the right things and

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - we have a great plan. And I know you've all had a chance to see it in its operation. So, tonight, I'm asking for just enough money to get me through the next several years to stay flush and also have some surplus money to continue to do the emergency repairs and then as we move ahead I'll be coming back before you and Mayor McDermott to talk about what our future looks like and what we need to do in base of this consent decree and probably at that time and negotiate a long term control plan.

Councilman Woerpel - If we decided we didn't want to go from the lowest rates in the state to the lowest rates in the state and didn't pass this, what would happen?

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - Well, if you don't pass this rate increase that I'm here talking about tonight, the District would continually go farther into the red. Right now I am shuffling things around to make things work but it would get worse and I'd be coming here next time to tell you that not only do I need now a much larger rate increase, I'm so far in the red we have major problems and I never want to be the District Manager that comes to you to tell you that. I'm not like that. I won't do that. I would rather address the problems as they are approaching me, come up with a solution to be able to give it to you and tell you exactly what I need to do the things I need to do at this plant. We are the only entity in the city of Hammond, the only entity, that is rate based for what we do. If you look at our budget, we're almost at \$20 million. Compare that to the city budget. What we do there is phenomenal and we're a great asset to the city, just like the Water Department. These communities, to try to get a permit to build a wastewater treatment plant is never gonna happen. The Federal Government will not allow any more wastewater treatment plants. They want the current ones that are in place to become not only more efficient, but to handle more volume and that's exactly what we're being asked to do. So, 46 million was rated when we were twenty, thirty, years ago. We've grown. We have heavier rainfalls, and we collect pretty much all of that water. I mean, we're not completely separated in the city as all of you know, but a part of my plan with this long term control plan is to start looking at that and to spend money to be able to do that because the more storm water I take out of the stuff I have to treat then I end up paying less to treat stuff I shouldn't be treating, like storm water. But when it all gets mixed in I have to treat everything. There's no way to separate it. I have to treat every 100% that comes to the plant. Just like when it starts to overflow into the Grand Cal, when that basin is filled with 33 million, Federal Government says you got to chlorinate that. We just don't want to go in raw, even though all of the solids have already floated down to the bottom of the basin. It's just a liquid now flowing in as compared to years ago it was everything flowing in. We still have to chlorinate that. So, everything that we have done, we have come a long way in a very short period of time of meeting these requirement. And you got to remember since 1999, when Mr. Golec sat on the Council, we have been in negotiations with the federal Government. We are one of the last districts to sign a consent decree. Because I wanted to make sure that I was able to come to you and the Mayor and say Mayor this is the best deal we could get and here's how long we've been working on it. Many hours in Chicago. Many of hours in the plant meeting with all of these agencies and believe me when you're sitting across the table from the Department of Justice you listen very carefully what they're saying because it's not a game. So, tonight I hope I have your support and I think that we've whittled the numbers the best we can, the District hasn't spent foolishly, it's not over staffed, we have a lot of automation that's been put in over the last ten to fifteen years and the plant's gonna grow because of having to accept more water and to hold more and dump less into the Grand Cal. So these are things that I'm gonna have to need to do but this first rate increase is just to get us back into the black.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Woerpel - Just so you know you got complemented, I took it as a compliment, when at the solid waste we were discussing this at the Solid Waste District and we were told, as the three of us on the Solid Waste thing that Hammond has the cleanest sewage in the state. So, take that as a compliment.

Sanitary District Manager Wielgos - We do. As I said, you all saw what comes into the plant, you see what we put back into the Grand Calumet and it's crystal clear. Mayor told me one day, I said, "Mayor, it's so crystal clear you can drink it." He said, "I'll tell you what, you take the first glass, I'll take the second." but, yes, it is. Once again, thank you for allowing me to come up here and plea our case for the District. I hope I have your support.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to return to the regular order of business. AYES: ALL

Council President Venecz - On the motion for 1st and 2nd reading of 17-15, referring to Council as a Whole with a public hearing on June 12th, 2017. All in favor? All Opposed? AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to Redevelopment to identify any of their lots on the 1200 through the 1500 blocks of Sherman and Summer Streets. AYES: ALL

Council President Venecz - Identify ownership?

Councilman Torres - See if they own them or not, yes.

LETTER SENT: May 24, 2017

Councilman Torres - I need to call a Streets & Alleys Committee meeting. I ask for the presence of the City Engineer and also the Public Works. If I may have it on the 31st, which is a the Wednesday from this Wednesday at 5:30.

Council President Venecz - That evening is the Mayor's Night Out.

Councilman Torres - Oh, yes. I rescind the motion.

Councilman Markovich - This past May, a couple weeks ago, they had referendums for school boards in Munster, Lake Station and East Chicago and last Wednesday I was at a meeting, Hessville Democratic Club and

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - Councilman Rakos was also there. About thirty five to forty people. We had the three members from the School Board there, Deb White, Mamala and Murphy, and I asked the question if Hammond was planning on doing a school referendum and didn't really get an answer other than the fact that they were hiring a consultant. Now you know, in the past, when they hire a consultant, like they did in Munster, they hire what they call a hired gun. They pay somebody like \$100 thousand to organize a referendum so they can get it passed in their favor or against them. So, want to send a letter to Deb White, I guess she's the Chairman or President of the School Board, and have her attend the next Council Meeting and give us any and all information whether they are planning on doing a school referendum in the city of Hammond. If and when they are planning on doing it. I'm hearing rumbles on Facebook and somebody said they saw something in the newspaper Sunday, I couldn't find anything. But you know how Facebook and social media work that you start a rumor and sometimes those rumors become true. So maybe we need to find out for sure if that's what they are planning on to do because I can recall last year for the election for the School Board they got up there and says we're financially fit, we don't need any money and so forth and I just want to know. I want to hear it from the horses mouth if in fact they're planning on doing a school referendum. So, I would like to have a letter sent to Deb White to appear at the next City Council Meeting and bring any and all information regarding if they are planning on doing a school referendum and keep us informed on what their plans are and what's going on. I so move.

Councilman Higgs second.

Councilman Woerpel - My only question is, do they have meetings on the same night we do?

Council President Venecz - That I don't know. I think they do sometimes.

Councilman Woerpel - Is it every two weeks like ours, Mary Ellen?

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to suspend the rules to allow Mary Ellen Slazyk to speak.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Markovich, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos

NAYS: Venecz

ABSENT: Spitale

Motion carried

7/1/1

RULES SUSPENDED

Marty Ellen Slazyk - For clarification, usually their meetings are the opposite Monday's of the Council. But for this month they did schedule them in conflict and I just came from it. There was nothing on the agendas at the past few meetings about any kind of referendum but I have been hearing rumors that there will be. They are saying that they are good, but then they're not good, financially. It's very conflicting. I am keeping an eye on it. I do attend all the School Board meetings, that's why I am late tonight, I was at the School Board meeting at Jefferson. Supposedly they do have extreme money problems, but yet there is the problem with the consultants.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Mary Ellen Slazyk cont. - It's a constant thing, which in my opinion is a waste of money. If something does come up and I do hear something definite, I will definitely let this Council know because this affects everybody in Hammond. It doesn't affect just children in school, their parents, it affects all the taxpayers and I certainly do not want to see my property tax go up. But right at this time there is nothing in the works from what I can tell and from what is on the agenda and from the inside information that I am getting.

Councilman Markovich - In that letter, for clarification, if in fact that for some unforeseen reason that Deb White can not attend that the School Superintendent or another representative would appear at the Council meeting to give us information.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to return to the regular order of business.

AYES: ALL

Council President Venecz - We have a motion on the floor by Councilman Markovich, second by Councilman Higgs, to have a letter sent to, Councilman, tell me if this is right, Dr. Watkins, Debra White, President of the Hammond School Board, or any other representative from the School Board to attend the June 12th City Council meeting to discuss the possibility of a referendum.

Councilman Markovich - Correct.

Council President Venecz - All those in favor? All opposed?

AYES: ALL

LETTERS SENT: May 24, 2017

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to schedule a Streets & Alleys Committee meeting on June 7th at 3 p.m. and invite the City Engineer and the Public Works Director and the Committee of course.

LETTERS SENT: May 24, 2017

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to announce that coming up this Wednesday, May 24th at 5:30 p.m. at the Police Station, 509 Douglas or in the event of rain, at the Civic Center, there will be the annual Police Memorial Service. This is an opportunity for our local State Police Officers, survivors of fallen officers' family and friends, officials, media and community members to take part in prayer and reflection regarding fallen Hammond police officers killed in the line of duty throughout history and officers nationwide who lose their lives daily as a result of their bravery and service to their respective communities. The inherent risk that officers experience by pinning a badge onto their chest is something infrequently understood outside of the law enforcement community. The memories of our fallen brothers and sisters continue to live in our hearts each time we head out into our respective communities to do the job they once did. Their spirits are with us during every shift.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Emerson - I'd like to point out that a week from tonight is Memorial Day and Hammond Mohawk's Parade is every Memorial Day in North Hammond from the Cavalier Inn to St. Casimir. Just a reminder that Memorial Day is for everyone that was killed in our many wars that we've had and we honor them. November 11th is Veteran's Day and that is for people like Councilman Spitale and myself.

Councilman Woerpel - A couple of weeks ago I was asked by yourself to find out what happened to the shredder that we had at the Recycling Center. It's my understanding that the attorney for the Solid Waste District will be sending us a letter but basically the explanation was when we had the Recycling Center on Conkey a quarter million dollar shredder was purchased by the Lake County Solid Waste District. I don't know how it happened, I wasn't on the board but somehow it got put in that building. When that building got sold the new owners of the building, it's my understanding kept it there for a while and then didn't want it there no more so the Solid Waste District took it and took it out to Crown Point. The reason they took it to Crown Point, the Government Center being more centrally located. I asked what the chances of that being brought back to Hammond, basically it's not a Hammond item. It was something the Solid Waste District did and we agreed to take it when we had the Recycling Center. So, the moral of the story is if you have something you would like shredded you can take it out to Crown Point but I was also told that it could be collected at our Public Works Department and that the Solid Waste District would come and pick it up on a routine basis. Now, I'm assuming they mean whatever documents you got, we'll collect them here and shred them later, so I wouldn't recommend that.

Council President Venecz - Do you happen to know were in the Government Center and what the phone number would be?

Councilman Woerpel - I can find that out for you. The attorney will send the Council a letter to explain all that but I was responding to a question that was asked.

Council President Venecz - Because Staples will shred at a dollar a pound. Quite expensive.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Charles Snyder - Here because of the bee ordinance. Implored the council to shelve that ordinance and have further discussion.

Jason Hawkins - I believe Jesus Christ is the lord and savior of all people and that his message includes inclusion of all and equality of all. In regards to 17-13, you guys never cease to amaze me. I am proud of you guys for having this ordinance for the Human Relations Committee and I hope you guys pass it.

Col. Antonio Daggett - It occurred to me that I had not come back and thanked this council for its quick response. Some time ago I came before this Council in regards to some of the things that were happening in my home and I was so thankful to all of the departments that got involved and really assisted in what was going on there. The professionalism was just amazing. I received a thoughtful letter from Mr. Button. Sanitation people were just excellent. The proficiency was there. I'd like to present this 2nd Calvary coin to Councilman Higgs for his willingness to help a veteran in need. Also thanked Councilman Markovich and the Mayor.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Gary Baker - I would like to ask the City Council to reconsider closing all the pools and maybe leaving one pool open. My wife, who is disabled, that pool has been a godsend to her. She's got spinal stenosis and it helps her immensely. My grandsons who always go with her to help her can not go to the Civic Center with her. We can spend money on other things, keep one pool open. There's nothing for the elderly in this town, everything is for young people. Which is fine but I can not afford to pay for her to go to the Munster pool. There are a lot of other people who feel the same way.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:40 pm

cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting on June 12, 2017.