

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on June 26, 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 Rakos.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Torres

TOTAL: 8

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of June 12, 2017 and place on file. AYES: ALL

PRESENTATION

Presentation of a trophy to Mayor McDermott for winning the Nancy Snider Memorial Blood Drive Challenge between Hammond and Hobart.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to accept the claims from June 7, 2017 though June 21, 2017. Claim #3579 through claim #4013, inclusive.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to pull claim:

#3597	Ice Miller LLP	Hammond City Court	\$5,000.00
-------	----------------	--------------------	------------

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question would be to Councilman Woerpel, as to his reasoning for pulling this claim.

Councilman Woerpel - As I just passed out, you can see on the claims for the council meeting of May 22, 2017, claim #2903 was to the same firm for the same amount and on the claim that I'm asking to be pulled all it says is services rendered through 5/15/2017. I would just like to know what those services are. Are they to help close the court? Are they to help sue us because we're closing the court? I would just like an explanation of the dollar amount and how many more \$5 thousand claims we'll have from her office.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

Mayor McDermott - I'm here to answer any questions if anybody has a question about Councilman Woerpel's actions.

Councilman Higgs - Call for the vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE (pull claim #3597)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED
(as amended)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs - I just want to personally thank Mayor McDermott, Councilman Markovich and Councilman Spitale, and also I see County Councilman Dave Hamm here, but I have a plaque for the Mayor on behalf of the 3rd District and the councilman of the district, thanking him for his contribution for helping us out with the 3 on 3. It says, "Who's got game; Anthony Higgs in appreciation to the Mayor Thomas McDermott; Hammond 3rd District; 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament; June 17, 2017." I just want to say thank you to you all for your support. Thirteen years strong and it was a huge success. We were able to give away about twenty five bicycles to the kids throughout the entire city and they had fun and it was an enjoyment time and I just want to say thank you. So, here you are.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee - Councilman Woerpel - Brought out 17-16.

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

Pulaski Park Neighborhood Assoc; Tues., June 27th; 6:30 p.m.; American Legion

Please tune in to WJOB tomorrow morning, Edison Community Watch hosts a radio show. We'll be talking about National Night Out that is coming up on August 1st.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

17-16 An Ordinance Creating a New Non Reverting Fund (Fund #222) entitled Bond Monies

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

ORDINANCE NO. 9380 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

17R-23 A Resolution Authorizing the Hammond Police Department to Apply for a 2017 Indiana Criminal Justice Grant to Prevent Impaired Driving

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for adoption.

Councilman Spitale called Lt. Pat Vicari up to discuss the proposed resolution.

Lt. Pat Vicari - A little bit about this grant. This is a yearly grant that we do apply for. I believe this is the fourth year in a row that we've done this. One thing I did fail to mention in the caucus, there's one additional leg but I'll cover that in just a second. The total of this grant is \$50,400. It is all for manpower. It is zero match. So that means all that money's coming to us for overtime. The way it's gonna break down, tentatively, around 560 man hours of DUI roving patrol. Which will be seven days a week. However, I do not allow the officers to start before 6 p.m., because obviously at 10 a.m. I'm not gonna go out looking for drunk drivers. So, there's a time mandate on that. There is an exception that if you do find one prior to that you are allowed to take comp time and claim it as overtime. In addition to that, we've agreed to do four sobriety check points between now and September 30th, which we're going to do. The final portion, which I failed to mention in caucus is about 62 man hours have been set aside for the Clerk's office to process this onslaught of citations that they are about to receive. This is the first time it's been allowed under the grant agreement. So, obviously the first time we are going to do that and they are going to be allowed to use those hours as they see fit. So, that's basically the crux of the grant and if you have any questions I'd be more than happy to entertain them now.

Councilman Markovich - Why 6 o'clock? Don't you think it should be 8, 9, 10 o'clock or something like that?

Lt. Vicari - Statistics have shown that people get off work and like to have that drink after work. So there was some statistical analysis done on this. And you're right, the later it gets the higher the chances, but 6 p.m. started showing that, yes, here we go.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R23 ADOPTED

17R-24 A Resolution of the Hammond City Council Approving Certain Form CF-1's as filed with the Common Council of the City of Hammond as the Designating Body by Applicants Previously Approved for Economic Revitalization Area Deductions from Assessed Value, pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-12.1

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

Councilman Spitale - I'd like to have Africa Tarver please come to the podium.

Africa Tarver, Director of Economic Development - The resolution that you have before you tonight is a resolution that will approve the compliance forms as were submitted to the council. As you know, when companies come to the city and they apply for a tax abatement or a deduction they are required to complete a statement of benefits form. The statement of benefits form reflects the stated benefit of the project. So it will have the estimated amount of the investment, jobs created, or equipment that may be purchased. The compliance form, or as stated, the CF1 form, is the form that states if the complied with the statement of benefits. So the statement of benefits form is the estimated benefit of the project and the compliance form is actually the compliance form. So basically it's a checks and balance system. In an effort to make this a more efficient and more effective process, instead of having them just randomly come in before the council, what we wanted to do was have them all come in before the council and then have the companies come before you so that is you had any questions then you can ask them personally. We have all the companies represented tonight. So if you have any questions they are here tonight to answer any questions you may have. Also, I included a spreadsheet that states the information as it is stated on the statement of benefits form as well as the compliance form for your review.

Councilman Markovich - Could you introduce each one of them that are here for the companies?

Ms. Tarver - Sure.

American Stair Corp. - Gordon Fitzsimmons

Munster Steel Co. - Jeanne Robbins.

Amsted Industries - Courtney Bettenhausen

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Markovich - Amsted, we gave you guys a tax abatement and then right after that you had a lay off or whatever, is that correct? How has that come about or is it because of the springs that they weren't needed for the railroad cars anymore? Or what was the actual?

Amsted Industries - The railroad industry is a very cyclical industry and about every ten years we have a peak and we have a low. So, 2013 we were building for business and we peaked in 2015. Now we're starting the trend down.

Councilman Markovich - How many people did you lay off and did you call any of them back since that time?

Amsted Industries - We've had multiple lay offs. Most recently we've had three separate lay offs and we have started calling a handful back. A lay off in our sense would be ten to fifteen people per lay off and now we've started to make some calls back.

Councilman Markovich - That's good, thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski - This would be for American Stair Rep, thank you for being here. I believe some of the conditions around you getting that property and working with the city was to do improvements, facade improvements, and so I'd like you to tell us what you're going to do and what kind of time frame.

American Stair - Well, we actually worked inside out. Got the plant going, moved the office in. Just this weekend we cleaned up the outside. We still haven't started the remodeling yet and I had planned and anticipated on finalizing the project with the sale of our property in Illinois, which is not going as quickly as I had hoped. So, time frame would be, regardless of the sale of that property would be no later than the second quarter of next year.

Councilman Kalwinski - Alrighty, and you submit plans to Africa.

American Stair - Yes, there will be an artist rendering. There's gonna be a canopy and a facade, we're either going to paint it or clad it, planters, that type of thing to give it a better look. The a little signage on the road also.

Councilman Kalwinski - No later than second quarter of next year.

American Stair - No later than second quarter of next year or my wife will be mad at me.

Councilman Markovich - Did a lot of your employees move from Illinois to Indiana? How far away is your old plant from?

American Stair - We're about 50 miles and many of them did. We also hired a number from the state of Indiana and it's our anticipation, not because I'm standing here but because I think it's reality, that as these employees

RESOLUTIONS cont.

American Stair cont. - come from Illinois and see the living opportunities in Indiana, the value of personal property, housing, things like that, tax situation. I think they'll be moving to Indiana. We've got a lot of guys that have mentioned it to us over the last ninety days or so.

Councilman Markovich - Hoist Industries that does the forklifts, you know, they moved to East Chicago, I mean, he saved a lot of money in taxes just from moving from Illinois to Indiana and he showed their employees how much money they would be saving as far as paying taxes too. So, you might want to get a hold of him and talk to him because he showed them that it's cheaper for them to moved from Illinois to move to Indiana as far as drive time, as far as tax purposes too.

Councilman Markovich - One more question, Munster Steel, we can't leave her out.

Munster Steel - Yes, sir.

Councilman Markovich - Did Hilary help you or not? Or did you help Hilary?

Munster Steel - Neither.

Councilman Markovich - Thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski - For Munster Steel, is some of your parking lot gravel?

Munster Steel - No, none of our parking lot is gravel. We have a truck turn around that is gravel that runs around the back of the facility but we have two parking lots in the front that are both asphalt.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R24 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to send a letter to the Hammond Police Department in regards to the recent robbery that took place at Tanglewood Apartment Complex in my district. I'd like to see extra patrol in that area.

LETTER SENT: JUNE 27, 2017

Councilman Higgs - Just to add to that, before this incident occurred I tried to have a meeting out there. They have new management currently there and for some reason or another she refused to have a meeting with the

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs cont. - residents in the complex. But shortly after, now, we just had a robbery. Hopefully this will open their eyes and realize it takes more than just one person to prevent such these actions that are happening currently. Armed robbery is not good in any location in our city and certainly we need to take preventative measures to try to prevent this from happening again. So, I just wanted to point that out.

Councilman Markovich - Earlier a claim was pulled for the Judge's Office. Anybody planning on asking why, what that claim was for? Should we send her a letter asking her what the \$10 thousand total was for? Just make a motion to the Judge's Office asking her what that invoice exactly is for. I so move.

Councilman Higgs second the motion.

Councilman Woerpel - I would like for her to come in front of us and explain to us what it is.

Councilman Higgs - Certainly we can request her to come. That doesn't mean she's gonna come. The reality of it is if we're requesting an explanation of the claim so that should be sufficient, I think, but if you want to put it in a letter form to request her to attend our next council meeting that's fine too.

Council President Venecz - Councilman Woerpel, you pulled the claim, your pleasure?

Councilman Woerpel - I request that she come and explain it, ask her to show up and explain it. That's a motion.

Councilman Woerpel - Can we amend into the motion asking that she come explain it to us.

Council President Venecz - So, I need a second to the amendment.

Councilman Woerpel - Is that okay with the councilman, with his request?

Councilman Higgs - You make the motion.

Councilman Woerpel - I made the motion.

Councilman Higgs - Second.

Council President Venecz - Okay, motion by Councilman Woerpel, second by Councilman Higgs, to amend the letter to invite the Judge to come to the next council meeting to discuss the pulling of the claim.

Councilman Markovich - Question, you know, several weeks ago we made a request to have the school superintendent or the president of the school board to come here and they didn't show up but they sent a letter so do we want to send them another letter and have them show up. I mean just because they sent a letter...

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Venecz - Councilman, one letter at a time.

Councilman Markovich - This is just discussion. That, you know, they said that because several councilmen attended their school board meeting that gave them enough reason not to show up at the city council meeting. So, I'm just throwing that out there.

Council President Venecz - I do believe they said that they would be in contact with us once they had their so called ducks in a row. So, I just don't think we should be confusing the two.

Councilman Woerpel - The only thing I could say to dispute that is this is a claim that we have to pay. I mean, we're the fiscal body of the council, if we have a question on the claim, I mean that'd be apples to oranges comparison with the school board and them not showing. If she doesn't show we'll deal with it then. I don't know. But, you asked do I want a separate letter asking her to come. No, you can put it in the letter that you...

Councilman Markovich - Well, I'll withdraw my request for a letter if you're gonna make the motion for her to appear then.

Councilman Markovich rescinds motion to send letter.

Councilman Woerpel rescinds motion for amendment to letter.

Councilman Higgs rescinds second to motion to send letter.

Councilman Higgs rescinds second to motion for amendment to letter.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to send a letter for the Judge to appear at the next council meeting which is scheduled for July 10, 2017. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: JUNE 27, 2017

Councilman Higgs - Recently I sent a letter to Code Enforcement about Washington and Garfield, in the alley there's a dumpster where the property owner is not maintaining it so it's still a bunch of debris and all kinds of things sitting around the dumpster.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to send a letter to Code Enforcement regarding Washington and Garfield, 410-412 Garfield is actually the address but it sits behind on Washington.

Councilman Higgs - It's on Detroit, not Garfield, Detroit and Washington. The property is on 410-412 Detroit .

Council President Venecz - On the motion, all in favor? All opposed? AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: JUNE 27, 2017

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Venecz - I would like to announce that on the 4th of July there will be a naturalization ceremony at the Wolf Lake Pavilion beginning at 5 p.m. It's always a moving experience to attend one of those ceremonies and be able to acknowledge the people who want to be in the land of the free.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Elizabeth Rowbotham - Why do rental properties and their tenants get away with not changing their plates from Illinois to Indiana. This has been an ongoing issue with many of the neighborhoods. Nothing's being done.

Garrick Alexander - How do the constituents have more of a voice of how the money is being spent in our communities and district as far as our what we believe our necessities are? I'm just trying to figure out the purpose of this committee.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to return to New and Unfinished Business.

AYES: ALL

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs - Just to enlighten Mr. Alexander on some of the expenditures, the Mayor has a discretionary fund, the Council has a fund, except the at Large, the three at Large get no money. Thanks to Horseshoe Casino, they are a huge contributor to the city of Hammond. Without them a lot of the things that you see currently taking place wouldn't happen. When I initially got on the Council I controlled about \$3.2 million. This is my 4th term, now it's dwindled down to maybe \$1.2. Any money that's not spent for my particular district in a year, I can spend that money the following year but we have to re-appropriate it through the council. But my money is only designated for certain item in my district, unlike the Mayor's money. I can only fix sidewalks, curbs, lighting, parks, that type of thing. I can't go on private property and fix anything. So that money is only designated for that. I can't make a contribution out of that fund. I can only do that out of my promotional fund. So to enlighten you and help you understand that the majority of the funding that is available through the city, the Mayor has the control of that. But, the councilman does designate what needs to be done in a particular district. All the playground equipment that you see in Maywood Park, even the new basketball rims, and all that, that's because Councilman Higgs personally requested that for his district. A lot of the new streets that you see being redone and the alleys being paved in my districts that's because I designated and selected those. Each councilman has a right to decide which areas are good or bad in their district and at that point decide which ones they want to do. With a limited amount of money and resources to do such, it's kind of hard to get everything done in one year. But, to answer your question, I'm spending it as fast as I get it and certainly trying to get as much done as possible in the 3rd District.

Councilman Markovich - How are you gonna address, or we gonna address the lady about the Illinois plates?

Council President Venecz - I will speak to her after the meeting.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Markovich - But in what respect or whatever? Recommendation that all of us should know or what?

Council President Venecz - Anyone who attends a community or crime watch meeting has heard the police officers time and time again talk about the process of reciprocity. They are allowed sixty days, then they have to ticket the individual, then the individual has to go to court, then there are continuances, and there is a fine and the end result the resident a lot of times does not even have to get the Indiana plates. Then the process starts all over again with the ticket and it's all because our plates are higher and Illinois plates, what, \$98?

Councilman Markovich - See, but what they're doing too is getting a visitors permit license plate and then they're sticking that in their window and I don't even know if that individual has a visitors (unclear). Because I have a ...

Council President Venecz - Do you mean the residential only parking areas?

Councilman Markovich - Yes. And they're getting that blue sticker from the police department and it's apartment buildings and I've got three apartment buildings there now and probably six Illinois plates and I got Nebraska and Wisconsin, and they all got the blue visitors permits. So I think we're gonna have to probably change our ordinances or deal with the landlords saying that anybody that when they sign a lease with them and they given them an Illinois plate that they need to say on their lease that within sixty days they have to change their plate of their lease is invalid or so forth. The other thing too is the schools, they don't really care where they live. They just want bodies because when they get a body coming here in the school city they get that \$6 to \$7 thousand that they use and then they I mean, Councilman Emerson will tell you that he works for the school city and he'll go ahead and check addresses and some of the addresses are empty lots. That kids sign up for school that's an empty lot, and that's the end of it. But, the school city wants that money because they need it. But when we went to that school board meeting about this referendum, they've got 13, 1400 kids that are enrolled in the school city of Hammond and they don't even live in Hammond. So, I mean, they don't even do anything about it. But it comes down to money. They want the money. They don't care where they come from. They need a body there and then when the state does their count in the spring and in the fall or whatever then, hey, we're gonna send you a check for that \$6,500. So it's all a matter of money. I agree with you about the license plate because like I says I've got seven to eight cars right there now. You know, and there's no place for us to park because they're Illinois plates. On the weekend they've got all these visitors and it's all Illinois plates. So, yeah, it's a hard thing to do. Councilwoman Venecz is correct, you know, she'll talk to you. I wasn't aware that after going through all this that the bottom line is nothing can be done. So I think something else is gonna have to be done. You know, either with the landlords, that when they sign that lease that they better give their driver's license or they need to submit that lease agreement with the city so we can follow up or have some kind of paperwork because, yeah, they don't want to do it and I'll agree with her, I got several people calling in Hessville about these plates and the policeman says, "Well, you know, we're busy, we can't do this, we don't have that time" and so forth and all of that. So it's a double edged sword. Are you more worried about crime and burglaries or are you worried about Illinois license plates. So, you know, there are priorities.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Venecz - I have never heard a police officer say that they don't have time to address that. There are police officers who are specifically assigned to reciprocity. They will never say that they don't have time.

Councilman Woerpel - You and I had this discussion in the early spring, pertaining to the Knickerbocker apartments that are on Olcott Street. I asked for a reciprocity and I got it. They have sixty days to have their plates changed over. The apartment complex I'm talking about has no private parking lot and it is rented out by students of Purdue. One of the issues that we discussed was should we require these landlords to add an extra layer of paperwork that says you have sixty days to change your plates over. One of the problems with the Knickerbocker Apartments when I talked to the management over there is a lot of those students lease cars from Illinois. So what do you do? When they come off the plane and they get to O'Hare and they got to come to Purdue they lease a car from Illinois and they lease it for 9 months. What do we do?

Councilman Higgs - I have a similar dilemma in my district in Tanglewood as well as in Douglas Points and since I've been on the council I've had to continuously call the police department in regards to Illinois plates. Recently, Kevin Alcoa who works for the Hammond Police Department, a couple weeks before this robbery took place did one out there. Now how many cars were actually ticketed, I don't know. But I know I requested it as I request on a regular basis that they make those residents that move in our city change their plates and it's the law and for some reason or another they move over here and think it's okay to just keep Illinois plates and it's ridiculous. Especially in the apartment complex's. That's something that the Hammond Police Department should really, really, focus on and do it on a regular basis is ticket those individuals in regards to moving here and not switching their plates over. They only have so many days to do it and I don't know why they're not doing it but they are not complying with our city ordinance. They are not.

Councilman Woerpel - The only thing I want to add is, I agree with everything I've heard from everybody, but again, when I looked into it, those are leased cars and the neighborhood that I happen to have, there's no ... when this apartment complex was building, there was no private parking lot. I got the guy that lives right next door to this apartment complex that has to park fourteen houses down. That don't bother him, what bothers him is right in front of his house is four cars with Illinois plates. But if it's a leased car do we still ticket the person?

Councilman Markovich - They probably should still ticket them and then when they come to court then let them show a copy of their lease. That's probably the only way you can really do it. You keep enforcing it.

Councilman Woerpel - I guess my point is, this is something I discussed with you and I've actually talked to the management company of the one particular building and she's like, "Yeah, if you guys want I'll give them a piece of paper that says they have to change their plates over, you know, within sixty days but don't be surprised if they don't because they're leased cars."

Councilman Emerson - What I have seen and what I have experienced, the Hammond Police Department has worked with the School City in doing reciprocity stings at various schools and not only that they've worked with other departments, police departments, and done drug stings or searches with the dogs and everything and they

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Emerson cont. - have found people that there were warrants for their arrests. These are elementary schools sometimes. They have found parents two and three blocks away dropping their kids off and they have adjusted their tactics for that. So they've had success in the parking lots and at drop off times at schools. But it is very difficult. Everybody says it's my uncles car, well it's not registered in your name, I mean they got a million excuses for it but they have made attempts to get to the bottom of it.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to comment that these are topics that are discussed at community and crime watch meetings, at Mayor's Night Out, at Mayor's Radio Show on Friday mornings. There are so many different avenues for us to receive information about how things are handled in the city. I urge everyone to attend one of those meetings. For the gentleman who wants to know about projects in his district. Mayor always says, the squeaky wheel gets the grease. So, these are all things that we find out at Mayor's Night Out and on the radio.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Rakos, move to return to the regular order of business.

AYES: ALL

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

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:00 pm
cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council meeting on July 10, 2017.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*