

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on May 11, 2020 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

Council Coordinator Carmen I. Balboa facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ABSENT: Torres

TOTAL: 8

MAYORS ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - I wanted to talk about a couple of issues in Northwest Indiana today. I'm gonna give basically the same update, if you don't mind, we gave to the Corona Task Force earlier. City Hall has been open today for the first time since mid March. By appointment only, but we did take a couple of people that didn't have appointments because they were desperate and they didn't realize that it was by appointment only. We are monitoring temperatures of everybody that comes in City Hall. We are monitoring the total number of people in the building to not exceed any social distancing recommendations. Stage two recommends that if you are over 65 or you have underlying health issues you should remain at home and we're asking people to keep that in mind. Face coverings are recommended. Many people in City Hall are wearing face coverings at all times, social distancing is being maintained. Gatherings in stage two has gone up from 10 to 25. So you could have 25 people now, legally, without violating the social distancing. Non-essential travel is now allowed. So essential travel restrictions have been lifted. Religious services are now allowed. Even though the Gary Diocese, I believe they said until the end of the month they are not having mass on the weekends. I know a lot of other churches are honoring that as well. But, First Baptist Church of Hammond, this weekend, held services. So they spaced everybody out, maintained social distancing. Church services are allowed in stage two and we actually had some churches participate this weekend. Retailers, they were previously curbside only, now they are at 50% capacity. Retailers like liquor stores, clothing stores, furniture stores, jewelry stores, no longer have to do curbside. They could do up to 50% capacity. So that's stage two. One week from today, May 18, Restaurants, barber shops, salons, tattoo parlors are open next week at 50% capacity, by appointments. Bar seating has to remain closed. So the bars will not be open. Restaurants only, if they have food service. But if there is a bar in the restaurant, that is not open and even after next week (unclear) is still closed, bars and night clubs are still closed, gyms and community centers are still closed, playgrounds, tennis courts, basketball courts, water parks still closed, sports venues still closed, casinos still closed, movie theaters still closed, pools still closed, schools and universities still closed. So that's where we are right now and that's where we're heading next Monday. The budget, we talked last time we spoke, I talked to a few people about the budget. As you all know we make assumptions every year in our budget about miscellaneous revenues that we are going to collect for the year. Like in the Park Department we collect over \$2 million every year in miscellaneous revenue and we plug that revenue into our budget, anticipating that we are gonna get it. Just like gaming anticipation, we anticipate getting x amount of

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - gaming every year. Our property tax revenue, we anticipate getting x amount of property tax revenue every year, and just about every estimation we made is blown to smithereens because of the Coronavirus. Property tax payments are way less that we anticipated, and way later than we anticipated. Miscellaneous revenue, there is none. Everything's closed. Nobody is paying miscellaneous revenue. Property tax revenue was due last week, originally. That was extended two months by the Governor, understandably. So the tax draw that we get next month is going to be significantly lower than we expected. So this presents a challenging situation to the city of Hammond. I don't have to explain that to any of you, you already know this just as well as I. Which is why we froze all non-discretionary spending out of the gaming revenue early on and we're still in that position. I think I only had one claim, or two claims max, in the last council meeting. I don't think tonight's much different. I know you guys have the packet, I don't. We're not really spending much money at all and today I went a step further and ordered all departments to have a hiring freeze until further notice. We don't want to add to the problem. Just because it's in the budget doesn't mean we fill it automatically, so that's my update. It's not a great update but we'll get through it. You know I want to remind everybody that in 2008 and 2009 when we went through the great recession. We got through it, it wasn't fun. We took some sacrifice, we did a lot of hard work and we got through it and we will get through this next recession that is coming and the Coronavirus, we'll get through it. It's gonna take some effort. That's all I got. I don't know if you've got any questions.

COMMON COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING

Presented by Theresa Myerik

BISHOP NOLL

Winner - Litzi Maldonado

Alternate -Angela Luna

CLARK

Winner - Hannah Denys

Winner - Matt Fredey

Alternate - Valeria Mendoza

Alternate -Makayla Underwood

MORTON

Winner - Keandra Thomas

Winner - Autumn Stevens

Winner - Kalie Skalba

Winner - Meagan Marybeth Benson

Winner - Ce'etter Stevens

Alternate - Analyse Wills

Alternate - Trisheena Harris

GAVIT

Winner - Naja Nixon

Winner - Miles Paz de Leon

Winner - Joscelyn Bell

Alternate - Maxwell Wolf

Alternate - Monica Franklin

HAMMOND HIGH

Winner - Jada Diggins

Winner - Indya Lewis

Winner - Jasmin Williams

Alternate - Selina Frances

Alternate - Linda Mendieta

H.A.S.T.

Winner - Romulo Gutierrez

Alternate - Jade Rios

COMMON COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING cont.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would just like to say thank you for all that you have done for this particular Scholarship drawing and for in the years past. Many may not know, but you're retiring at the end of this school year and I'd like to wish you well and thank you for everything, and congratulations to all of the winners.

Councilman Tyler - Congratulations, Mrs. Myerik.

Councilman Spitale - Good luck.

Councilwoman Alexander - Good luck on your retirement, Mrs. Myerik.

Councilman Emerson - Congratulations, Terry. I've liked working with you over the years. I wish you the best.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to accept the minutes of April 27, 2020 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from April 22, 2020 through May 6, 2020. Claim #2136 through claim #2255, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Generally I give a list of upcoming meetings and obviously we have not been meeting. I doubt that we're going to be meeting anytime in the near future. We are looking at doing a Facebook Live meeting within the next couple of weeks. We're also looking at doing a city-wide meeting once we are able to meet with the proper distancing and in excess of a hundred people and all those kind of requirements. That probably won't be until sometime late in June but that's kind of where we are

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz cont. - on the Crime Watch situation. As usual, if anyone have any questions or concerns, please feel free to give any of the directors of the Crime Watch Groups a call. You can call me. You can call anyone of the Council people that are for your particular district and we would be more than happy to address any situations you might be having.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Emerson - I would like to remind everyone that before we meet again, Memorial Day is the 25th, Monday, I believe we meet after that. It is, of course, for the ones that didn't make it back from various wars and as we all know Veteran's Day is for those of us that did. I doubt due to the Covid Virus there won't be many honorary events taking place. But I would like to remind people that in your family or your neighborhood friends, you know they've lost someone in one of the wars to take time to give them a buzz or ring and inform them about that and just kind of remember them in your thoughts. Thank you.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to reschedule the next Council meeting on Monday, May 25th, which is Memorial Day, to Tuesday, May 26th at 6:00 p.m. AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Alexander - Even though it's not a Council issue, before they close the survey for the naming of the schools that we put out a reminder that they can go on the School City's website to get that link to fill out for that survey so no one could say that we didn't acknowledge that survey and participation since we put out that resolution.

Councilman Venecz - During the past several weeks I have not been out much and I suspect that is pretty much the same for the rest of us. On the few occasions that I've had to go out I noticed that people are not observing the social distancing, not wearing masks. If that is happening my suspicion is that they are not very conscientious about cleaning the surfaces that they touch. I would just like to reiterate for everyone's safety, for your own individual safety, for the safety of the people that you encounter, at the very least wear a mask, please. This is a very dangerous virus that could endanger a lot of people and I would just ask for everyone's help in stopping the spread of this virus by washing your hands, wearing your masks, clean the surfaces you touch. Thank you so very much.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Tyler - I would like to echo Councilwoman Venecz's remarks and just another issue is that people are finding it hard to locate PPE items and so I wonder if there is something that we can do as a city to make these items available for the public. So, maybe that's one of the things that we can talk about offline, if there's a possible way for us to secure masks and gloves for individuals that can't find them. I know a lot of stores are still sold out. You really can't find them online. And as we are opening, you know, our city, state, back up, we want people to be able to take those precautions and they are finding it hard to get those items. I think we as a city should look into making it available for them.

Councilwoman Alexander - Just to echo the last two. You know the higher numbers have went up to, I believe it was 401. As a reminder, you know, we want to make sure that we keep our city safe, and keep our individuals in our city safe, that when we expose those numbers that also gives them more awareness to how dangerous this can be in our city. So, I know us as a Council, we're doing our best to continue to provide information but that's just using our platform to make sure they still have those numbers and for them to also check that link at Lake County, Indiana Covid site as well.

Councilman Emerson - Just a question, in general, Councilwoman Alexander mentioned the number of active cases. Do we know the number, unfortunately, of deaths in the city and also the number of hospitalizations from the virus?

Councilwoman Venecz - Yes, this morning I did participate in the Covid meeting and at that time the number of cases in Hammond was 394. Councilwoman Alexander now said 401 so it's obviously gone up since this morning. At this morning's meeting there were 13 individuals in the city of Hammond who have unfortunately perished due to Covid 19.

Councilwoman Alexander - That is correct. That is off the Lake County site currently right now.

Councilman Emerson - And my third question was the number of hospitalizations.

Councilwoman Venecz - That I didn't record, Councilman Emerson.

Councilwoman Alexander - I missed it as well.

Councilwoman Venecz - Anyone can go to gohammond.com Facebook page and listen to the meeting from this morning and all of those statistics along with some helpful hints will be on that particular meeting.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL



Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk.

Time: 6:35 p.m.
cb