The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on March 8, 2021in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Two things I wanted to go over that I thought some of you may be interested in, and if you have any questions, of course, I'm available to answer them. One of them regards the water tower. It's technically in the 3rd District, however, it doesn't matter, the water tower services everybody. It services, especially, the Woodmar section of Hammond and South Hammond. It's a very important tower that's been under repair for a long time. The contractor damaged it last summer. We were hoping to have this thing done last summer but the contractor damaged a very large piece that was on top of the water tower and it cocked into the water tower. It sort of like, they had to like literally lift it out and put it back into place and it cost us the rest of the summer, basically. We're going through the damage litigations or remediations with that contractor which it was clearly their fault what happened. But it cost us a summer. We do expect this water tower to be completed by July. It's already been repaired and then it will be primed and painted. You'll see that process taking place as the weather gets warmer. So I think that's good news, I know there's one resident of the 3rd District, a good friend of mine, who has reminded me constantly about this tower and she's right. Councilwoman Venecz has been constantly asking me about this and I'm very happy to report it will be done this summer, barring unforeseen acts. So, I know Councilman Barry and I spoke last Council meeting about Station 5, Hammond Fire Department Station 5, which is the house that's located on Hohman Avenue. It's forty five seconds from Central. Everybody, I'm sure you remember on one of those really cold days about a month ago, a really cold day, it was below zero, wind chills minus thirty, Hammond Fire Fighters were called to a scene of a large fire in a building just south of Station 5, and it burned, basically, through two shifts. They put so much water on the building it was an icicle, obviously, because it was so cold out. As it melted the water went right into our Fire House. It basically ruined the Fire House. Estimated a couple hundred thousand dollars worth of damage to the Fire House. It will all eventually be covered by insurance. That does us no good with the Fire Fighters that are stationed in that building. Obviously, we had to make a decision on the fly. What we did was stationed Engine 5 at Central, which we've done response times on how long it takes to get from Central to Station 5, it takes forty five seconds. Obviously, every second counts in an emergency situation. Obviously. We didn't anticipate Station 5 becoming flooded and rendering it useless. So I think this is the best we could do right now. We are talking with the Fire Department and trying to master plan a fire response in the City of Hammond. I think there's an

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - opportunity that's presenting itself with this situation with Station 5 and we're analyzing if we could do fire fighting better. We'll be working closely with the Council, if this comes to fruition, when this comes to fruition. The big question we're asking is do we just go ahead and build Station 5 again in the current location or do we think about it differently? Make like what we did in Hessville, Station 8, which is gorgeous and beautiful. Do something like we did in Hessville in South Hammond. So, we're really dreaming big right now. But anyway, Station 5 is out of service for the time being. I imagine indefinitely. If I had to make a guess, I don't think it's coming back. It's a hundred year old station, by the way. So we have a couple hundred thousand dollars of damage to an old station. So, we're going through that process. Obviously, we'll keep the Council in the loop and if you have any questions, when I get done I'm available to answer them again. Tomorrow I've got a meeting with Munster Town Manager, Dustin Anderson, in regards to the pedestrian bridge that we're building between the Town of Munster and the City of Hammond. I'm very happy to report that about two weeks ago a former colleague of yours, Dan Repay, who was the 5th District Councilman when I was elected Mayor, he now runs the Little Calumet Basin River Authority and they agreed to donate a million dollars towards this pedestrian bridge that we're building between Hammond and Munster, which is outstanding. I want to thank former Councilman Repay, current Executive Director of the Little Calumet River Basin Authority; Bill Baker, the Board Chairman; and everybody on the board that worked to donate significantly towards this project. We agreed to work with them on giving access to pedestrians that wanted to use the river if they wanted to kayak and stuff like that, but I think it was a great deal. And I appreciate Dan, he really spearheaded that. So, thank you again to them. The meeting with Munster tomorrow is on this same thing, you know, obviously this is a Hammond Bridge, but just being good neighbors this is the front doorstep of Munster, so I want to make sure they are comfortable with what we are talking about as well, tomorrow. Last time I met with you I told you at this meeting you would have the water settlement wholesale rate before you. I'm sorry it did not happen. It's not that we're not trying, it's just a complicated issue. Right now we have the wholesale if you have any questions we can get into it. I don't think I need to rehash the whole litigation, but the wholesale rate was the proposal to settle the entire case. The wholesale rate, eventually, is gonna have to be approved through the Hammond Council, the Water Board first, the Hammond Council, the City of Whiting, the Town of Highland, the Town of Griffith, the Town of Dyer, the Town of Munster, but every town is gonna have to approve what you approve. If they don't approve it ... If you don't approve it, it's a quagmire, no offense, I'm not trying to put you on the spot but it's just the settlement would be out the window. If they don't approve it, I think they're basically saying they don't want to be customers of Hammond Water. If they make that decision, that's fine. Because we'll sell that water in Illinois at a higher price. So, right now we're planning on bringing the ordinance before you, the wholesale ordinance, on March 23rd would be 1st reading before the Hammond Council. The notice at that time will have to go out to all users of the Water Department. So we'll have to put it out in the paper, just like we did when we advertised the change in the retail rate and we're looking for a public hearing, obviously, if you all agree to cooperate, around April 13th and then set it for 3td and Final Reading at that time. So that's the track that we see it going through. I know that the Hammond Water Board has already dealt with this issue. They did pass a resolution. The next step is Hammond Council and then each of the individual town councils will have to pass the exact same resolution that you pass and if that happens, we have new twenty year contracts with set rates, set in stone. Which is good for all parties. Rates set in stone for twenty years. That's good for all parties. It's good for the towns that buy water from us and it's good for us.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Emerson - I just have a comment. I want to thank Mr. Repay too. That's a good start and that abuts the 4th District in Hammond and Munster. I'm very happy about that. I won't comment anymore because, you know, given the year with Covid and everything, but that is positive note.

Mayor McDermott - That is all that is in the 4th District, but that is one of the more dangerous crossings in Northwest Indiana because it's just the way the cars shoot off the highway there. You're taking your family and your life in your hands almost every time you cross it, some car can come around the corner doing seventy and you're right there. So, it was a letter from a Munster resident that prompted this whole thing. I find that funny. But it's really cool we're getting close to where we could actually start doing things.

Councilman Rakos - Mayor, is Engine 5 running out of Central right now?

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir.

Councilman Rakos - Personally, as a retired Fireman, thirty seven years, that is a natural place to go with that. I mean, Engine 5 coming out of Central. I mean, ideally they want to lose that forty five seconds with that station there, but that station is demolished. I think that's a real ... that's something I've thought for quite some time.

Mayor McDermott - I agree, Councilman.

Councilman Rakos - And having the engine with the truck may add a couple seconds here or there but the reason we had Engine 5 is because of railroad tracks which have been gone for thirty years, forty years. But, it's safer for the Firefighters to be coming out of the same house. Especially if they'd be on a situation where they got to go (unclear) or they got to rescue.

Mayor McDermott - Councilman Scott knows a lot more about this than I'll ever know as a career firefighter and I appreciate his perspective totally. You know, I agree, Councilman Scott, forty five seconds is not the end of the world but if my Corporate Council lives in that area, I think if you talk to his neighbors they would tell you that forty five seconds is a long time if you're having a heart attack. So, we trying to and I totally appreciate and respect Councilman Scott's opinion in this totally, but we're also saying, "Hm, maybe there's another house that is old and we can do better and if we combine two houses into one mega house in another part of the city. Maybe we could surround the city, so to speak, with fire houses". And I'd love to bring you in, Councilman Scott, and get your perspective and looking at a map and talking about it like that because this is sort of like we were dealt a good hand, sort of. I mean we had a hundred year old house and we're gonna get the insurance back for it and I think that we definitely should think about what's the next step for the Fire Department and we were gonna go another step, how would we pay for it and where would we put it? That's sort of where we are right now. But I appreciate your perspective, Councilman Scott.

Councilman Rakos - I understand what you're saying, Mayor. I also understand you looking into combining another situation and I'd be happy to be part of the discussion on that.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Tyler - Mayor, as we spoke too, I would love to be a part of those conversations too, just from a District Councilman perspective and wanting to bring the voice of my constituents to the table, any questions they might have if we do lose that fire house. So, if we do have those conversations, please add me as a part of it too.

Mayor McDermott - Thank you, Councilman Barry, I appreciate that and I know the Fire Chief is getting ready to take you for an inspection of Station 5. But I appreciate your perspective as well, Councilman Barry.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of February 22, 2021 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from February 25, 2021 through March 3, 2021. Claim #784 through claim #1072, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None ABSENT: None Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

21-04	To Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for Economic Development Purposes in 2021
21-05	Appropriating the Proceeds of the Annual Action Plan and Dealing with other matters pertaining to the Expenditure of Plan Proceeds for Program Year 2021
21-06	Appropriating the Proceeds of the CARES-ACT and Dealing with other matters pertaining to the Expenditures for Round Two (2) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES-ACT) Program
21-07	Appropriating the Proceeds of the CARES-ACT and Dealing with other matters pertaining to the Expenditures for Round Three (3) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities Act (CARES-ACT) Program
21-09	To Appropriate Monies into the 2021 Gaming Fund

PUBLIC HEARINGS cont.

21R-11 Re-Establishing the Cumulative Capital Development Fund Rate Pursuant to IC36-9-15.5

No one spoke.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Alexander - I'm gonna give the COVID numbers. I know that last meeting we were not able to give the COVID numbers because the site was down. They were not updated. So these numbers are from the February 8th meeting to the March 8th meeting. So, that's a month of numbers so that people do know, versus my two week numbers. For 46320, we have an additional 53 cases; for 46327, we have an additional 40 cases; for 46323, we have 90 cases; for 46324, 92 cases; 46394, 48 cases. That's 323 cases. Cases are trending down. I'm hoping that's because people are getting vaccines. We were in the cold weather so a lot of people were not out. Weather was good, but I still want to encourage people to wear their masks, wash their hands and continue to social distance as much as possible. Due to the weather getting better now, I saw a lot of kids out at the park today, some with masks some without. So I do want to encourage people to still do what's right so that we can continue to work our way out of the pandemic. Vaccines are now available for those that are 55 and up. Get those vaccines if you can, they are not charging your insurance.

Councilman Tyler - I just want to wish everybody a happy International Women's Day. I know, personally, women have played a significant role in my life and in providing me, of course one, with life. And just kind of being there every step of the way and guiding me, my mother, my sister, of course my wife who just gave birth to our two beautiful sons. So I want to thank everybody, every woman, for their contribution to our society. Of course, we would not be where we are today without the contributions of women in every single aspect of life. So thank you for always guiding us and most of the time being the voice of reason in the room too and keeping us on the right path.

Councilwoman Alexander - I forgot one thing. I do want to say congratulations to the Hammond Boys Basketball Team for their 4th straight sectional win and give them a "Good Luck" at regionals this weekend on Saturday. We're rooting for them to go ahead and try to get to State and bring that trophy home.

Councilwoman Venecz - I'd like to thank Councilman Barry for the acknowledgment. I just wanted to say thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Spitale - Brought out 21-04, 21-05, 21-06 and 21-07.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz - At our last meeting there was discussion regarding a project on Schneider Street. There was a request for lights on 171st Street between Tapper and Calumet from a resident. Funding was approved for the 2020-2 Community Crossings Grant for Sibley from Hohman to Sohl and 169th Street from Kennedy to the Boulevard. Approved change orders for the Chicago Street Phase One Project. The next meeting will be March 15th with a Work Study at 4 p.m. and a meeting at 5 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - The are no upcoming meetings other than Hessville Crime Watch on March 18th at the Jean Shepherd Center. Now that the weather is getting warmer I'd like to remind everyone to please protect yourself and your property when you are working out in the yard. Be sure your doors and windows are locked and don't leave your garage open. Be sure to carry your cell phone with you in case you run into any problems while working out in the yard. NIPSCO has advised that there are scam calls and texts coming in. NIPSCO does not operate that way. One more thing, the Hammond Police Department is offering a Women's Self Defense Class. This is on March 19th from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at the Jean Shepherd Center. Call 852-2917 with questions or registration.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Emerson - I was on the agenda for the 4th District. I presented the wish list of projects I want to see completed in 2021. Among those were overlays in alley on 173rd Place and Calumet to 174th, I believe. And a lighting project on State Line which was asked for by the residents over three years ago.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE

21-04 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for Economic Development Purposes in 2021

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for passage.

Councilman Spitale- This comes before us every year the City of Hammond Economic Development Department requires the uses of moneys in the Innkeepers tax for marketing purposes for promotional events and advertising. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None ABSENT: None Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9498 PASSED

21-05 An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of the Annual Action Plan and Dealing with other matters pertaining to the Expenditure of Plan Proceeds for Program Year 2021

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for passage.

Councilman Spitale- This budget comes before us every year for the annual action plan, which is the CDBG and ESG and HOME funds. Thank you.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None ABSENT: None Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9499 PASSED

21-06

An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of the CARES-ACT and Dealing with other matters pertaining to the Expenditures for Round Two (2) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES-ACT) Program

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for passage.

Councilman Spitale- I had someone ask me a little bit about this one. If a renter has a house that he's living, staying in, and the landlord either sells the house or loses it by foreclosure, then they have to try and help this individual find a place. I got a bunch of phone calls, two landlords, try and get them to get in this program. The program will give the landlord 6 months, month by month rent during that 6 months, the person that is taking this rental should have a job by that time and move out on their own. It does take a lot of work to get these people to try to get into this program. So I appreciate that and what they do.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None ABSENT: None Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9500 PASSED

21-07

An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of the CARES-ACT and Dealing with other matters pertaining to the Expenditures for Round Three (3) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities Act (CARES-ACT) Program

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for passage.

Councilman Spitale- This program pays for children to be at child care at the YMCA. There was a question asked whether or not anyone else is into that program, the Boys & Girls Club could be, but they did not apply for it this year the kids can stay for a day or a whole day. Also the Economic program pays for utility bills for those who need help for their bills and also the CDBG. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9501 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

21-09 An Ordinance To Appropriate Monies into the 2021 Gaming Fund

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Torres, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Committee Meeting on March 22, 2021 at 5:15p.m.

AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz- This Ordinance will appropriate money from 2020 to 2021accounts. It's broken down by district park improvements and closed PO's from previous years, so it outlines all of the money that will be coming to the particular district.

RESOLUTIONS

21R-11 A Resolution Re-Establishing the Cumulative Capital Development Fund Rate Pursuant to IC36-9-15.5

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Torres, moved for adoption.

Councilman Rakos- This is reestablishment of a fund that's basically used to help the City buy equipment and vehicles. The fund... the States says we can have the proposed rate up to 5 cents for every \$100 of assessed valuation. This will not take effect until the end of 2022. I know somebody's gonna worry is that gonna affect my taxes anybody that is under the 123 tax cap will not see any raise in their taxes. This is a way to get specific for capital improvements out of the taxes that is already collected.

ROLL CALL (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/0/1 RESOLUTION NO. R11 ADOPTED

21R-12 A Resolution Authorizing the Hammond Police Department to Apply for a 2021 Save Pedestrian Safety

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for adoption

Councilman Spitale- This grant, which is being requested in the amount of \$30,000 is for the Stop Arm Violation Enforcement safe program that we had last year and the year before. I appreciate that they're talking about the buses. Thank you.

ROLL CALL (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

AIS. None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/0/1 RESOLUTION NO. R12 ADOPTED

RESOLUTIONS cont.

A Resolution Recognizing Teachers as Essential Workers and Urging Policy Makers to 21R-13 Prioritize these Workers in the Covid-19 Vaccination Distribution Plan

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for adoption.

Councilwoman Alexander- Can I be added as a co-sponsor to this Resolution?

Councilwoman Venecz-Yes, I would like for Clerk Golec to read the Resolution in it's entirety please.

City Clerk Golec read 21R-13 in its entirety.

Councilwoman Venecz-Thank you, Clerk Golec. Obviously in the State of Indiana vaccines are available for individuals age 50 and over. No specification made for our teachers or child care workers. If anyone over the age of 50 wants to schedule an appointment they can go ourshot.in.gov teachers and school staff and child care workers in K-12 are now eligible through the federal pharmacy program to get vaccines you can go to vaccinefinder.org. Apparently for teachers and child care workers Walgreens and Walmart and Meiers are some places that teachers can go to get their vaccines through the federal program, but it would be most beneficial for our teachers and our support staff and out students for the State of Indiana to make the vaccines available immediately. Therefore I ask for passage of Resolution 21R-13. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- Just want to correct Councilwoman Venez on the actual locations. It's Kroger, Walmart and Meijers, not Walgreens yet.

Councilwoman Venecz-Councilwoman, I did find that on the website the Federal website. So that's where I got my information.

ROLL CALL (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R13 ADOPTED

A Resolution Re-Appointing Angel Ojeda to the HVAC Contractors Board 21R-14

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Torres, moved for adoption.

Councilwoman Venecz- I would like to introduce Angel Ojeda he has already served one term on the HVAC Board, and Angel, if you have anything to say be my guest.

Angel Ojeda-Good evening everybody my name is Angel Ojeda. I did serve one term on the HVAC Board for the City. I enjoy contributing to the City, as well the safety and maintain of the City. And that's pretty much it. I

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Angel Ojeda cont. - wanna make sure our City is running well, so I've been with the HVAC company for a couple of years. I enjoy contributing just for the safety of our City.

ROLL CALL (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R14 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz- I just wanted to compliment the Department of Community Development and the Black History Coalition Commission and the Hammond Human Relations Commission for and outstanding program for celebrating Black history month, it was just outstanding and if anyone to go back and watch if you happened to missed out please do on Gohammond.com. It was an outstanding program. Thank you

Councilman Tyler- I just want to go on the record too and congratulate Hammond High like you and Councilwoman Alexander did on the their 4th Sectional Championship in a row. It's an outstanding feat just given some of the competition they've played in the consistency that they've played in the last 4 years. Being that this is the last year that Hammond High will be open. It's also a great story and a great way for them to go out hopefully they can go down State and bring home that home championship. I know I'll be supporting them in South Bend this weekend. I also want to give my condolences to the family of Irv Cross who passed away last weekend. For those that don't know Mr. Irv Cross was a professional football player for the NFL. He was a two time pro bowl, but then later on, he became the 1st African-American sports analyst on national television. He played football at Northwestern of course he graduated from Hammond High. So it was sad to hear about that, but he had a great career and was a pioneer in broadcasting for the African-American Community across this Country. So I wanna give my condolences to that family once again. I also want to congratulate one of our City of Hammond employees, Michael Coles on being... he will be inducted into the Hammond Sports Hall of Fame. Michael was a 2001 graduate of Hammond High School. He played football, baseball and basketball there. Then went on to Purdue and Parkland University and played baseball and then had an 8 year professional career as a baseball player. So congratulations in all his success and to the rest of the inductees this year, I know the program will be virtual. So hopefully everybody will tune in and support. I think there is 6 or 7 people who are being inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame this year.

Councilman Torres- I met with the Controller and the Chief of Staff a couple of weeks ago. I'm happy to report that the District is not in a deficit, but in a surplus of \$98,000 and plus there is at least \$38,000 of unspent money in the Park Department plus unspent money in the sidewalk program. So I promptly submitted some projects to the Engineer and hoping to get some street ornamental lights by the end of the year. So the District is not in a deficit and I wanted to report that to my constituents. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- I too want to give me condolences to the family of Irv Cross. And also to Michael Coles and the rest of the Hall of Fame awards for their contributions to our City. Thank you.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

No One Spoke.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

ATTEST:

Dave Woerpel, President Hammond Common Council

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:55 p.m.

cb/dw