MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL JANUARY 26, 2015

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on January 26, 2015 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Invocation by Councilman Higgs.

ROLL CALL
PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker
ABSENT: None
TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to accept the minutes from January 12, 2015 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the claims from January 7, 2015 through January 21, 2015. Claim #319 through claim #550, inclusive.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to amend in claim:

#551	Pepsi Beverage Co.	Mayor's Gaming	$248.46

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)
AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)
AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

(as amended)

PUBLIC HEARING
None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs read letter from Hammond Police Chief Doughty updating him on the position of the Police Department in regards to their participation in Criminal Justice Institute Grants.

Councilman Higgs reads law regarding Rental Registration.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
None

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE
None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

15-01 Amending Ord. 4631 and Title VII of the Code Traffic Schedule III and Setting a Uniform Speed Limit for Hohman Avenue

Councilman Emerson, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee. AYES: ALL

Councilman Higgs - At the previous Council meetings we had discussed making it conform from not only 165th all the way to Wolf Lake but for some reason or other they felt as though it wasn't as important as it is now. So it's important, I guess, that all the speed limits are at a same speed limit from 165th all the way to Wolf Lake versus having one at 35, 25, 45 or whatever they may be. So, I think it's a great idea to have them all set at one speed limit.

15-02 Vacating an Eighty Foot Portion of Sheffield Ave. between 2704 Sheffield Ave. and 2340 Sheffield Ave.

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Public Hearing set for February 23, 2015. AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS
None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to announce an initiative that the community and crime watch groups have taken on. The Hammond community and crime watch groups are showing their appreciation and support for our Hammond Police Department and we're inviting you to join in. Our Hammond Police Officers allow us to sleep at night knowing they are there to protect us. As a symbol of our support for Hammond Police Officers we're asking residents to tie a blue ribbon around your tree, mail box, fence or light pole in front of your house. When our Police Officers patrol our neighborhoods they will be able to see how much we appreciate them. The blue ribbons will be available at the Community and Crime Watch Meetings throughout the city. If you would like to show your support of our Hammond Police Department please be in contact with me or your group leader at the Community or Crime Watch Groups.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to announce the community and crime watch groups that are coming up. On Wednesday, Feb. 4th, Edison Community Watch will meet at Edison School, that is at 6:30 p.m. On Friday, Feb. 6th , Edison Community Watch on the Road will meet at the Golden Manor Senior Apartment Buildings on the corner of 175th and Columbia, that is at 1 p.m. Irving Community Watch, and incidently, Mayor McDermott will be the guest speaker at that particular meeting, Edison on the Road. Irving Community Watch will meet Friday, February 6th, 9:15 a.m. at Irving School and the Mayor, again, will be the guest speaker at that meeting. Jefferson Crime Watch will meet Wed., Jan. 28th at Jefferson School at 6:30 p.m. and the Pulaski Park Neighborhood Association will meet Tues., Jan. 27th, 6:30 p.m. at the American Legion on Gostlin. And that is how change happens, one person, one gesture, one moment at a time.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Hinojosa, moved to send a letter to Board or Works or to whoever is the Inspector in the 2nd District. The 1100 block of State Street there is a stop sign with all kinds of graffiti on it. Well, you can actually send it to the Judge's Office. Maybe they can remove it, you may have to just have the whole sign removed. The 1100 block of State. There's gang signs on the stop sign. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: JANUARY 28, 2015

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

Councilwoman Venecz - Tomorrow evening, which is January 27th, at the Civic Center from 6 to 8 p.m. there will be a celebration of peace. The East Side Community Council and the Hammond Police Community Affairs Department are joining forces to celebrate our youth. In honor of our youth and their good deeds at the weekly East Side Community Council Open Gym Night, the Hammond Police Community Affairs Department will be presenting two brand new basketball goals to support the youths continued non-violence movement and to build stronger partnerships with community organizations. The East Side Community Council Open Gym at the Hammond Civic Center has been going on for three strong years with absolutely no violence from our youth. Many said that it couldn't be done but our youth have proven them wrong. Hats off to our youth, they deserve to be commended and celebrated. And that is tomorrow night at the Civic Center beginning at 6 p.m. Thank you.

Mayor McDermott - I'm gonna come up here and do my Hammond 311 commercial again. Councilman Higgs just gave a complaint about graffiti on a stop sign at 1100 State Street. In the time since he's given that and Councilwoman Venecz was reading, I already submitted it on Hammond 311. It's under my name, the Mayor, 1136 State Street is exactly where the stop sign is, Councilman Higgs, and that's how quick you could do it.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - Instead of waiting 2 weeks for the next council meeting you can just put it right into your smart phone and it's already submitted to the Judge's Office. So, I want to impress upon the council that it's not just the Mayor's Office that needs to sell this product it's you as well. We could all do this. But it was very easy. I did it in about 30 seconds.

Councilman Emerson - I would like to share a resident had called me and wanted to know if we still did shredding since our recycling has now been put out to Republic. So I did some research. We do. She was very happy. I would just like to say it's Thursday only, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 601 Conkey. It's free to Hammond residents. Other people are charged. Their number is 219-359-2885. One more thing, on a recent radio show, actually the gentleman's here that has the radio show, the Mayor, he wasn't there but there was a guest who was Dave Hamm. Dave Hamm put out an interesting statistic that I remembered. Our recycling rate has increased with Republic in the city to over 300% and that's because there's less weight being put into the garbage and that of course lowers our bill. So even if you don't care about the environment, your bill will stay lower longer because there's less garbage being put in the landfill and he had said on the show, if I recall, that it could even be higher. It's actually over 300% increase since we started it, which means money back to the city of Hammond. So I think that's a positive thing. Thank you.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to expand a bit on the shredding at JJS, I believe it is, on Conkey Street. Councilman, they will shred Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It's just if you want to observe your documents to be shredded it's only on Thursday and you're only allowed one box the size

of our old recycling bin. Any more than that they charge $15.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to extend a big thank you to our Hammond Water Department. There have been a couple of water main breaks over the weekend and I know that they were out there late at night in the cold weather making the repairs. So, I just wanted to say thank you to our Water Department. We really appreciate your efforts and the fact that you have to go out in the middle of the night in the cold weather to do your job for us. So, thank you.

Councilman Hinojosa - Before I make a motion, I'd like to suspend the rules. We got a couple speakers that would like to ... so we can either go for it or lay it to rest here. That would like to speak on the moratorium on the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute Grant.

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to suspend the rules. AYES: ALL

Mayor McDermott - What are we talking about? Last time I checked, Mayor's Office was in charge of the Police Department.

Councilman Hinojosa - We have a couple speakers here that would like to speak on that before we make a motion on that.

Mayor McDermott - Who are the speakers?

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Hinojosa - I know I talked to the principal at Morton High School. I had a meeting with him and I think it was after that fight and after they gave the tickets..

Mayor McDermott - Which fight?

Councilman Hinojosa - The Morton High School. They are doing a real good job right now as far as calling the kids and leaving messages on their phones not to jaywalk. I think it was out of control and it's back in control already where it's doing pretty good now. I don't see many jaywalkers anymore. But there's a couple speakers here. We suspended rules so they could speak. You can speak, I can speak, and these speakers can speak about it.

Mayor McDermott - Can I ask a question of the councilmen?

Council President Opinker - Sure.

Mayor McDermott - What's your recommendation? You don't want the Hammond Police Department to enforce jaywalking infractions? Is that what you're recommending?

Councilman Hinojosa - I'd like to hear what the speakers would have to say, personally. Then I'll comment some more on it.

Mayor McDermott - You're a councilman, I'm the Mayor, I have the right to stand here because I'm the Mayor. I'm asking you a question, Councilman. I don't understand what you're trying to do here. Do you just want to bring people up from the audience or do you have a goal here?

Councilman Hinojosa - I already made a motion that I'd like the speakers to speak. Let's hear what they have to say. Maybe you can hear what they have to say also.

Mayor McDermott - The Hammond Police Department follows Indiana State Law. Okay, this is Indiana State Law that they are enforcing. On a grant from the Federal Government, Department of Justice. If somebody breaks a law in a school zone I think it's encumbrance upon the Hammond Police Department to enforce the laws. I support them in that. Absolutely. What are we gonna pick and choose which laws the Hammond Police Officers are gonna enforce. Does that mean if we're not gonna enforce jaywalking, what about is somebody pulls in with Illinois tags, do we get to ignore that also? What is somebody speeds and goes 55 mph through a school zone, do we not enforce that? The Hammond Police Department is doing their jobs. State Law, this isn't a local ordinance we're enforcing. This is State law. I don't understand why we're wasting time. I know why we're wasting time. It's because Councilman Hinojosa has ambitions. It has nothing to do with this is good policy for the Hammond Police Department to enforce the law. Why confuse the issue and politicize with what the Police Officers do. They're under enough pressure already. Like we need to add more pressure right now. They're following state law, passed by the General Assembly, signed by the Governor, on a Federal Grant. I don't know who is in the audience and who could shed light upon this but I am having trouble understanding why we're wasting time on this issue.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Hinojosa - I would agree that the Police Department is doing an excellent job. I think everything that they've done, because it was way out of hand, we must have had after school, probably had like forty, fifty kids that were jaywalking and just the other day I was over there, I think I saw one jaywalker and they are watching them. I talked to the principal. They have people designated throughout the school and they're watching for this. It was out of hand and I agree with what the Police Department was doing. But lets see what the speakers have to say so we can make sure everything is up to par.

Mayor McDermott - Mr. President, there's public expression.

Council President Opinker - Exactly, that's where it will be taking place. Under Public Expression. I need a

motion to go back to the regular order of business.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to return to the regular order of business.

AYES: ALL

Councilman Higgs - Now we all know that this is a political year. No need to fight. Just get on the campaign trail and do what you need to do. The city of Hammond and the Black History Coalition Committee presents a Black Celebration. Honoring Tim Bishop Memorial Times African American Male Athletes of the year. Thursday, Feb. 5th, 2015 at the Hammond City Hall first floor lobby, 10 a.m. Thomas M. McDermott, Mayor of the city of Hammond; Ronald Mullins, Chairman of the Hammond Relations Commission; Owana Miller; Director of Department of Community Development.

Councilman Higgs - You know I'm just gonna say this, you know, I've been very, very low key for the last month or so and that's not normally who I am. But the reality of it is that some of the things that go on in these Council Chambers. Disrespecting one another and all this back biting and back stabbing, it's not professional. You guys need to cut it out. Allow one another to speak to the issues as it relates to the constituents. Everyone's entitled to their own opinion. We can agree to disagree. But to be disrespectful and mistreat one another is unacceptable. I'm praying that this year is better than last year. Because it was just despicable. That's all I have to say.

Councilman Hinojosa - I know I missed the last meeting and maybe you have the paperwork up there that you can give me copies of but we did make a motion on Nov. 18th or the letters went out Nov. 18th that we get copies of how much the consultants and the lawyers made in the City, and the Water Department, Port Authority and I still haven't received those. Do you know if you got those already, Mr. President?

Council President Opinker - No.

Councilman Hinojosa - Mr. Mayor or the City Controller, do you know when we're gonna get those?

City Controller Garay - I did respond in a letter form to you prior to the end of the year. The city's financial system does not have the ability to single out vendors as by that type. I can't just look for consultants. I can't just look for attorneys. I could print you the list of all the vendor payments that were done during the period requested. It is a large list so I wanted to verify that's what you wanted before I printed several copies of that.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Hinojosa - It was just for lawyers and consultants.

City Controller Garay - But I can't search just for that. I can't go into the system and put in a search for

just lawyers or consultants under the vendors. I could do it by vendor name. I could do it by the fund. I can't do it by just look for consultants and lawyers.

Council President Opinker - How big is this document? How many pages?

City Controller Garay - It's gonna be several hundred. I can print it. I didn't know how many copies you wanted.

Council President Opinker - One would be sufficient.

Councilman Hinojosa - One will be good.

City Controller Garay - Okay, will do.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Dan Walczak - Was at a festival in Hobart. They had a dunk tank using the Hobart Cops. They were in the dunk tank. In Hammond, at the summer events maybe we could take it further and have the Councilmen, the Mayor, the Chief of Police or whatever in the dunk tank and donate the proceeds. Regarding roundabouts, I don't know if that's a good idea. I hope you did your research.

Carlotta Blake-King - Glad freedom of speech exists. Regarding the moratorium people are requesting, we are in the process of putting out a petition. We are asking for a moratorium on the grant, not the law. Why aren't the people coming into this building ticketed for jaywalking? The Youth promise Act gives us the opportunity to work with preventive measures for our youth. Certainly not punitive measures. We should not criminalize our children for jaywalking. They should be educated.

Mayor McDermott - We've done some research on jaywalking. To be jaywalking it has to be through a controlled intersection. Not two stop signs.

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Markovich, moved to adjourn. AYES: ALL

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Michael Opinker, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting of February 9, 2015.

Time: 6:35 pm

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

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Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk