MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL AUGUST 17, 2020

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on August 17, 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, Venecz, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel
ABSENT: Spitale, Kalwinski
TOTAL: 7

READING OF THE MINUTES

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

Councilman Kalwinski is now present.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from July 24, 2020 through August 5, 2020. Claim #3463 through #3723, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)
AYES: Alexander, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Spitale
Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS
None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, I wanted everyone to mark their calendar for Saturday, September 19th . The Hammond Parks Department and the Hammond Public Library are partnering for an outdoor movie at Dowling Park that will begin at seven at the park. We'll open at seven, the movie will start at 7:30, and it is a Tim Burton film called Miss Peregrine's Home for the Peculiar Children. Uh, the cost is free and uh, concessions will be available.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Tyler- Yes, I just wanted to announce that the Mayor is offering the Hammond Household Flood Protection Program, the Sanitary District will contribute up to 50% of the cost to install the appropriate flood protection device with the maximum contribution of a $1,000.00 dollars per household. I know that a lot of residents who are asking about this, coming after the end of the May flood that we had, so I wanted to make all the residents aware if they're interested, in terms of learning more about the program or applying for. They should reach out to Caitlyn Sherman at 219-853-6413, ext 515. I also wanted to share that Hammond Sportsplex is hosting a youth hoops registration. It's open now and I believe it ends August 21st,with practices starting the week of September 7th. The fee is $110 per child and that's for children, it looks like five to fifteen. Also, the Dowling Fishing Derby will take place on Saturday, August 29th from 8 am to 11 am at the Dowling Park Pond, which is next to the Jean Shepherd Community Center. Um, if you... there will be a raffle drawing for children ages 16 and under uh, of course, while supplies last. If you're interested in fishing, you can call 853-6378 for more information. And then lastly, at the Civic Center, Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and the Hammond Parks and Recreation are once again hosting the Autumn Colors Craft Show on Saturday, October 3rd, 10am until 4pm. If you're interested in being a vendor or crafter, you can reserve your spot for $45 dollars before August 31st. For more information contact Selena at 853-7705. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, as everyone knows, since the lock down in March, the Crime Watch groups have had difficulty getting together. Not only for safety reasons, but also for uh, um, uh, lack of space to have our meetings so, uh, we all got together, the leaders of the crime watch groups, and uh, we decided that we're going to try and have some virtual meetings. We're looking to set up the first meeting on August 27, which is a Thursday at 6pm. It will be on Facebook on the Hammond Indiana Police Department Facebook page. And we did one back in May and it was rather successful. So we're going to give it a whirl again. There are a couple of groups that are able to meet, however, and I wanted to let everyone know about that. The Whiting Robertsdale Crime Watch group has gotten the go-ahead from Calumet College and they will be meeting on Thursday, September 10th at 6:30 pm at Calumet College. The seating will be on a first come, first serve, basis so they will be able to observe the social distancing. Also the South Hohman Ave. Crime Watch will have their meeting coming up on September 24th, which is a Thursday, beginning at 6:30 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church on the corner of 173rd and Hohman, and social distancing will be available. And if there is an overflow, they'll be able to go into the church. So we're moving along, so if anybody has any question, as always, feel free to give me a call.

ORDINANCE 3rd READING - FINAL PASSAGE
None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES
None

RESOLUTIONS
None

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Scott E. Miller, Superintendent of Hammond Schools- Good to see everyone. Councilman Tyler had mentioned in a conversation about me being able to come on and update the Council, when appropriate, on what things are happening and certainly this is a big push for us as school starts in Hammond on this Wednesday, the 19th. As you likely heard, School City of Hammond will be starting the 1st Semester, um, or doing the 1st semester in a full time E- Learning environment. Uh, let me explain what that is, because it is a little different for those of you who have school- age relatives or school age children, then what happened in the Spring. In the spring everything was pretty much a rush. Just like most of you, we were very reactive. But we've had some time to plan and prepare for this and so school will be like a traditional school day. So, for elementary that is 9:15 to 3:15, they will have their teacher there supporting them for the majority of the day. And for secondary it's 7:30 to 2:30, and they will be switching classes just like it normally is if they were at school. We do have a built in time for social emotional learning, to make sure the kids are doing well, check in with them, be able to provide advisory and support. But it is much more like a traditional school, just from a remote location, than it was in the Spring time. Any questions on that? That's another part of this too, I know you guys get asked questions about the schools all the time and if I can equip you with the right answers, that's great.

Council President Woerpel- Mr. Miller, what are these safe schools, can you explain that?

Scott Miller- Yes, so we realize that for certain members of our community that the move to full time E-Learning was gonna be a difficult task, and maybe out of budget, maybe just not work for certain people. So we designated, you know, the plan was to have four schools that would be a safe zone. Students would still be doing E- Learning, but we could use some of our support staff and paraprofessionals to just supervise kids in a socially distance, no more than 10 kids in a classroom. So it's not like they're getting teacher support face to face in this. It's not like we're doing school. It's still through the E-Learning, but they have adult supervision for them. We ended up having about 375 people signing up for that, which again, we're gonna split across Maywood, Irving, and Harding. And for the older kids, at Gavit, just to provide that resource for the community at no cost.

Council President Woerpel- So, as you can see my hair has gotten grayer since March, my grandkids signed up for that and they haven't heard anything back. Is there a process that where the people will be notified or how does that work?

Scott Miller- Sure, the registration just concluded on Friday. So to be quite honest, this week we are focusing on getting school started. We will be letting everybody know, cause the safe space isn't starting until the day after Labor Day. We needed to see how much interest there was. We needed to staff it appropriately. And some of those things needed a little more time to make sure we do them right and make sure everyone is safe.

Council President Woerpel- So, just because someone hasn't heard anything doesn't mean they were accepted or denied?

Scott Miller- No, at this point, actually, assuming we can staff it appropriately, we will... I can announce this, there is enough seats for everyone who registered, um, but we still need to make sure we can staff it appropriately. Much like the City, we do have people taking advantage of federal benefit programs and taking

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont

Scott Miller cont- leaves of absence and those do affect our ability to safely run in a safe zone.

Councilman Tyler- Scott, I know hunger and access to food is a big issue for a lot of our residents, can you talk about that?

Scott Miller- Absolutely, the reason we were able to serve anyone prior is that we had a waiver from the USDA that allowed us to serve meals whether a person was from Illinois, School City of Hammond, a private school, it didn't matter. Unfortunately, nationwide, they have not issued those waivers for the Fall. So it only means that our food pick-up and drop-off sites, that only registered School City of Hammond children will be able to go through the line. So a child who is enrolled in HAST, or perhaps Bishop Noll, or St. Cas, they will no longer be able to pick up food from us. But all School City of Hammond children certainly will be able to get breakfast and lunch. Essentially, they pick the day's lunch and it has tomorrow's breakfast with it. For right now, we're gonna have eight sites starting on Wednesday, but after Labor Day, the plan is expand to 17 of our 19 sites. Only Hammond High, because of the construction, and the ACC, because they don't do lunches there, will not be serving lunches. But you also don't have to go to the School that your kids are enrolled in. So what ever school closest. For example a student might attend Gavit, but might be closest to O'Bannon, they could just go pick it up at O'Bannon, they don't have to walk all the way to Gavit to get that. We are also exploring, and this is a potential that to do delivery, and being able to deliver 5 days worth of food at their house. That would be amazing if we could pull that off, but that's still in the exploratory stages, but that would allow us to basically... people would be assigned a day and we would come and drop off 5 days worth of food, lunch and breakfast at your house. So hopefully we'll be able to do that. That's not 100% guaranteed yet, but we are working toward that. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- Mr Miller, can you talk to the audience about picking up the laptops and things like that, if they're still going on?

Scott Miller- Yes, last Thursday and Friday... Well let me say first, we are not asking anyone who was issued a laptop in the Spring to bring it back. If you have your laptop from the Spring, you can continue to use it. We did hand out an additional 3,000 Chromebooks on Thursday and Friday at the ACC and Scott. But for anybody who missed that window, you go to the School City webpage, there's an article right on the page that says Technology Update, and a Google form where you can request a Chromebook. It can be for every child now in the Spring it was one for every two children, but now we do have enough to issue one for every child. And we're actually looking at delivering those either to the neighborhood or door to door to make sure they get in the hands of kids at this point. Same thing with hot spots, by the way, we do have on that same form where a parents that doesn't have reliable internet access for their kids, they can request a hot spot.

Councilman Tyler- Not a question just one more thing I would like to add. I know that the newly renovated Boys and Girls Club right here in the 3rd District, is going to be offering up space for students throughout the day. I'm not sure about the details about that, but if any parents are interested, they can reach out to the Boys and Girls Club. Scott I don't know if you have any information that?

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont

Scott Miller- I do, so I just got the tour last Friday, and it is incredible. They completely redid all of the spaces inside, gutted a lot and redid it. Looking to put my own daughter, Hope, there a few days a week. But it's really an amazing space and we shared their program flyer on the School City of Hammond Facebook page today if people are interested. The subsidized amount for a full week of E- Learning support is only $45 dollars. I mean, that is incredible amount, those of you who have kids in child care know what a steal that is. $45 for a full week of child care in a really great space too.

Councilman Torres- Thank you. I finally got on. I've been screaming at you, is there anything going on with the vacated Lafayette and Columbia School?

Scott Miller- So, we do have some interest for the South Shore expansion people to take residence for 5 years in one of the vacated schools, I believe it's Lafayette. They're looking for a headquarters and they like, you know, Lafayette would be geographically a really good place for them. For Columbia, we talked about a lot of different things, maybe even re-purposing it for School City purposes as a welcome center, uh, maybe the District IT Department. But we're keeping it up. I mean, if you notice we even put down new mulch and we're keeping the trees trimmed. I mean it does look nice out there if you've been by.

Council President Woerpel- Mr. Miller, thank you, cause you've answered a lot of questions I've been receiving. I appreciate your time and don't be a stranger. Thank you.

Scott Miller- I won't. Feel free to reach out, anyone of you. A lot of you have my number. Barry feel free to share it with the group, please. Thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski- I've got some sad news to share with everybody. Gerald Kray, who many of you will know was involved with the Hammond City Court, passed away this past weekend. He was a young man and his time came much too soon and I got to know Gerry when we were in high school playing Ice Hockey for the Hammond Mohawks. He also attended and graduated from St. Casmir School in Hammond. Uh, he also went to Bishop Noll, and attended Valparaiso University, and then graduated from Valparaiso University's Law School. He had a law practice in Griffith. He was appointed by the Indiana Supreme Court as Judge Pro Tem in the Hammond City Court upon the death of City Judge Jeffery Harkin who we also miss. Judge Harkin had appointed him special judge in the Court while he dealt with his own health issues and prior to that Jerry was a Referee and Judge in Judge Harkins Court handling criminal cases. Gerry had a zest for life. He was an avid sportsman, loved to hunt and fish, and entertained conversation related to sports, politics, and the City of Hammond, with much gusto. Condolence to his extended family. And Gerry will be missed by the North Hammond Pulaski Park neighborhood. A very accomplished young man who's time has come much too soon. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- This update is only until August 12th. In 46320, we had 12 new cases. In 46327, we had 7 new cases. In 46324, we had 46 new cases. In 46323 we had 18 new cases. In 46394 we had 11 new cases. So, that takes us to about 94 new cases. I'll give a new update from the 12th to, um, on Monday.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

Councilman Tyler- I just want to give an update on the 2020 US Census. There's about 44 days left to complete that in Hammond. Our average response rate is 62.1% for the entire city. We do have areas that are much lower than that, so areas are only at 45%-46%. There's gonna be bigger push, a mailer is gonna be going out soon. I know the City Council, we all have items to distribute across the City, those are in council headquarters. So it's really important that residents complete the Census, so if you haven't, you can go to 2020Census.gov. You can also complete it by mail. You can also call and complete it over the phone too. There's a lot of money and resources tied to the complection of the Census. So we're urging everyone to complete that. The other update that I have is that there's been talk in the Kenwood neighborhood, around Kenwood Elementary, about safety issues concerning Cleveland Street and Stateline, and Kenwood Street and Stateline. So residents have come together and are hosting a community meeting on Thursday, August 27th at 5:30pm to discuss a couple options, either closing down the streets or changing them to One Ways Streets, cause we have a lot of cars speeding through not minding the speed limit. Sometimes they'll be individuals sitting in their cars, and some illegal activity taking place, so the residents are coming together to figure out what we can do to kinda slow that down. So if you want to attend that meeting, its's gonna take place, once again, on Thursday, August 27th at 5:30 pm in Kenwood Elementary parking lot. We will be practicing social distancing, masks are required, and if you have a chair, please bring it, we're not going to be able to provide chairs for everyone. Thank you.

Council President Woerpel- I have a question on the Census for you, I saw, and I've also got a few calls, are they going door to door?

Councilman Tyler- They started to, yes, and they're gonna continue doing that in some of the high priority areas across the city. They haven't been getting a great response rate. People are still concerned about COVID and opening up their doors, but they have been going door to door and they'll continue to do that for over the next 44 days.

Council President Woerpel- Now I've gotten a couple of calls of someone walking around with a mask and clipboard is that Census more than likely?

Councilman Tyler- Yes, I believe so.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION
No one spoke.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to adjourn. AYES: ALL

Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:30 p.m.
dw

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk