

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on September 25, 2023 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Scott Rakos presided.

Council Coordinator Carmen I. Balboa facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - Nice to see everybody. I know everybody is here to talk about an event that occurred on August 17, I'm gonna hold up until the end of my report to give that part if you don't mind so that we could just flow right into it. I imagine there's questions. To start off, I met up with the Hammond Firefighters recently in the Central Fire House. I met with all the Chiefs, I met with the members of the shift that were on, as well as the administration, had a good discussion about the upcoming contract negotiations and some other challenges faced by the Fire Department, especially in regards to the recently closed hospital and how that's affected the members of the Hammond Fire Department. Especially members of the ambulance crews. I met also with the Police recently, with all the Captains and above, to discuss the High Tech Crime Unit and other matters that were important, as well as upcoming contract negotiations are soon to take place. I recently met with the Chairman of the Indiana House Ways and Means Committee in Indianapolis, Chairman Jeff Thompson, to talk about the upcoming legislative session, how that impacts the city of Hammond. Introduced myself and my team. I thought it was a very good meeting. Recently met with Executives from Johnson Controls, which is a big firm that was visiting Hammond in regards to an upcoming economic development project. That was a very good meeting. I can't really talk too much about it at this time, but it will be unveiling shortly and I'll be discussing that with you at that time. Attended the soft opening for the Ninja Kids Action Park in Hessville at the Ice Kube Sports Complex, which was very nice. I think it's officially open now. It's really nice for the youngsters. I also met with NIPSCO recently in regards to upcoming economic development projects where the city of Hammond needs NIPSCO's help. I know the City Controller, Megan Flores has forwarded it to you all and you've all been discussing the following dates for the adoption of the '24 budget. I think we're all on the same page in regards to the dates. If you have any questions, I'm available to answer them. Gas station ordinance update. As you all know, we passed a gas station ordinance that says that all gas stations in the city of Hammond have to shut down between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m. We do have exceptions and parameters for gas stations that wish to stay open past midnight. At this point, we're receiving requests for hearings before the Hammond Board of Public Works and Safety. We have received four requests from gas stations across the city to stay open past

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Mayor McDermott cont. - midnight. The four locations are 3350 Calumet; 7453 Indianapolis; 7305 Kennedy; and 2300 Indianapolis. Those hearings are set before the Hammond Board of Public Works and Safety, in this chamber, on September 28th; October 5th; and October 12th. If you have any questions, Council members have questions, any members of the public, you could appear before that or submit your questions to the Board of Public Works and Safety. Recently held a job fair which was attended by over 900 people. We had over 65 businesses. It was a completely self funded event, which is nice, with \$8,500 worth of sponsorships and over twenty people left the event that day with a brand new job and plenty of other second interviews and I'm happy to say we even received quite a few new job prospects from that as well for the city of Hammond and all of our different agencies. You have before you today, a resolution to approve a joint interlocal cooperative agreement with the Lake County Government, particularly the Lake County Council. Lake County Council members Dave Hamm and Lake County Councilwoman Christine Cid, together, donated \$2.1 million of their discretionary ARP funds to be used for the construction of Fire Station #2. The County Council has passed a similar, a mirror, resolution to the one that is before you and hopefully you guys will consider that and pass that and help us construct Fire Station #2, with the help of County Councilman Dave Hamm and County Councilwoman Christine Cid, and I want to thank both of them for their help in financing this important project for Robertsdale. On October 17th, this is in regards to the severe rain event that occurred across North Hammond. On October 17, the North Hammond section of our City experienced a severe rain event. Here's a brief overview. 4.24 inches of rain fell in the impacted area, I'll mention what the impacted area was in a second, I know you all know it, but what we described as an impacted area. The intensity of the rainfall was 1.05 inches in the first fifteen minutes and the intensity of the rainfall was 2.06 inches in an hour. Just for some quick references, Two inches of rain across what we consider to be around three square miles is a hundred and eight million gallons of water. We received 4.24 inches in that section alone, which is a couple hundred million gallons just for that three square mile area. Our waste water treatment plant has a design capacity of 68 million gallons a day. Hammond Sanitary District Waste Water Treatment Plant was running at a rate of 100 million gallons a day that day, and it still wasn't enough. The CSO basin, which we spent \$50 million of our money on, the Hammond Sanitary District spent over \$50 million designing the new CSO basin which is located right there on Columbia Avenue right by the plant, was discharging, during the storm event, at a rate of 468 million gallons a day and that's a reportable offense. It has to reported to the EPA, because we did discharge. It's called a CSO event. We discharged, basically, into the river passing through the CSO, which will catch the solids, but it's not completely treated water that goes in to the Grand Calumet River which ultimately makes its way into Lake Michigan. As a frame of reference, when I first became Mayor, we had about ten CSO events a year and now the goal of the USEPA and with the Consent Degree we signed with the federal government, the goal is to have zero CSO events a year. One at the most. My father was Mayor of the City in the 1980's and the 1990's, these were regular occurrences. CSO events were part of the strategies to combat storm water. It was just dump it in the river. Dump it in the river. We can't do that anymore. Unfortunately, when you dump it in the river it makes its way into Lake Michigan and that causes problems on its own. I'm not making excuses, these are just the facts. All of Hammond, we experienced four inches of rain during this event. That's over 470 million gallons of water just in North Hammond, three square miles in North Hammond section alone. All the Hammond Sanitary Districts equipment functioned completely properly. There were no failures. Most of the heavy rain fell in this impacted area. We described a heavily impacted area as bordered by 137th Street to the north, Detroit Street on the south, Stateline on the west, and White Oak to the east. That's the area we described as the impacted area. That's the

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Mayor McDermott cont. - area we were measuring. That's the area we describe as getting, on its own, 468 million gallons of water. As of 9-25-23 at 10 a.m., a total of 467 residents experienced basement back ups in that area. Many ranging from complete loss of personal property, loss of a lot of the possessions in their basement. Rain rates across the city of Hammond vary greatly during this event. It was really just the impacted area, 4.24 inches, as I mentioned. Just to give you an idea, 115th and Atchison, during that same event, had only 1.34 inches of rain. Kennedy Avenue and Michigan had 1.5 inches of rain. Columbia Avenue and 177th had .8 inches of rain. This was a very localized event. But all that rain across the entire city goes to the same plant. A lot of people in the community talk about the flood gates weren't open. There are no flood gates. There are no pumps. They weren't running backwards. These are fictions that are created and spread around the internet. Everything is automated in the Hammond Sanitary District. It's just like a sump pump that you have in your basement. If water level hits this high, this pump turns on, and everything was working properly. We had about six or seven times the amount of water hit the Hammond Sanitary District that it was rated for. Our system completely filled up. When that happens, it's unfortunate. We have basement backups. I've had basement backups in my house. I didn't have it this time. We had hardly any rain were I live. But I've had basement backups before. And we will have basement backups again. Now, things that you could do to protect your home against these types of backups are getting back flow preventers. We have a system, we have a program offered through the Hammond Sanitary District. I'm embarrassed to say my home does not have one. So I preach about this and I don't even have a back flow preventer in my house, and I'm combined in my house. So my house is at risk of suffering this like I have had before. I preach it the road, get a back flow preventer, get a back flow preventer. I was talking to the Engineer today, I don't even have one in my own house. So, what I'm preaching would fix the problem, and if I flooded in my basement, it would be horrible, and I have had it before, and I know there's a lot of people that are suffering right now. And I want to point out that right now we are talking about North Hammond, but I'm looking across the Council right now and I know a few other District Councilmen have had this very problem in their District as well. This is a problem, and it's not fun, and I apologize to everybody that is effected by it. It's a horrible thing. But there's nothing the City of Hammond could have done to prevent that. There's nothing we could do to prevent it from happening. When we get hit that hard there's nowhere for the water to go. I've heard some concerns from the community and I want to address it. First off, I was going on the National Weather Service, talking to a lot of people that know a lot about water, I just said, how much is two inches of rainfall? What do you consider, National Weather Service, such intense rainfall rates can lead to rapid accumulation of water and pose several risks including flash flooding, especially in areas with poor drainage or in urban areas with limited permeability. Another question, how big should a typical waste water plant be for a community of 81 thousand people? They said for a community of 81 thousand people, your peak flow should be right around 38 million per day. Ours is rated for twice that. I realize we have customer communities. So, FEMA assistance, we are looking into this. I'm not saying no, but you know, I'm not sure that we're gonna meet the threshold requirements to qualify for FEMA assistance. We are exploring other routes for damage assistance from the State of Indiana, we're assessing that right now. Including all the other events we have had. I know the Council has questions about this. I don't want to just keep on talking. I think, I know, one other question that was ... because we're getting a lot of questions in the Mayor's Office and I accumulate them and I try to answer them in front of you as well. Another one is, "Mayor, you treated Hessville different in 2020. Hessville flooded and they got damage claims and we would like the same treatment." First off, in Hessville, when that happened, I don't want to get into tit for tat, but the source of

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Mayor McDermott cont. - funding for that was Covid relief money. Which is available from the federal government, which is no longer available. If we came up with such a program now, it would have to be funded out of the budget and that would be something we have to decide. If there is a city ordinance or some type of program that we want to offer but that would have to be paid for outside the federal funds. Any way, I don't know if there's questions. I'm sure there are. But thank you for giving me a chance to address the Council and I'm open for questions.

Councilman Kalwinski - How far are we along in the process with FEMA? Have we made application of any kind?

Mayor McDermott - No, we have to we don't want to First off, it has to be declared by the president of the United States as a disaster area. It hasn't happened. So then, the State of Indiana has to declare it a disaster area. I don't think that's being considered very strongly at all. We're trying to see if that's even a possibility, Councilman. But it's based on lives lost. Thankfully there were none. Right? It's based on property damage. Like the last time I remember our part of the State being declared a disaster area was when we flooded in Munster and the highway was shut down and there was widespread property damage. I don't think there was deaths but we were definitely declared a disaster area and FEMA was definitely a part of that. So, that would be ... I'm trying to like parallel, what we're dealing with now versus then. I don't believe, I'm almost positive in 2020, when Hessville flooded, there was about 1700 homes affected, if I remember correctly, and FEMA was not part of that recovery. Was not, and there were 1700 homes. I'm not trying to compare, everything is horrible. When my home flooded there were only a couple dozen that flooded and it was violating me, it sucked for me. It was only a couple dozen people that felt like I did, but I was one of them and it sucked. So I'm not trying to dismiss anybody's pain. It sucks what you're going through. I went through it. It's horrifying and horrible, okay. But, I'm just being realistic with you, okay. The last time I remember FEMA being involved was when Munster flooded and the highway was shut down for a week. There was million and millions of dollars in damage. They were involved then. I'm not sure this qualifies. If it does, we'll apply, Councilman. Nut, you know, after we apply then who knows if it goes anywhere. But if we could apply, we will apply. My gut tells me, I don't know if we're gonna meet that threshold but if we do, we will. I promise you. I'm just trying to be ... I'm not trying to dismiss anybody's pain. Everybody's upset. I get it. But I'm just trying to be realistic. I'm really just trying to be realistic, okay?

Councilman Kalwinski - Of course, I've lived in the City my whole life, so seventy years, I've been a homeowner over forty and I've never left my neighborhood. I have had flooded basements twice in my first house, twice in my second house, and I have a back flow preventer and I still had water come through the opening to clean the trap. But what the calls that I'm receiving are that people like me who have been around for decades, who have to keep cleaning their basements, don't want to do that anymore.

Mayor McDermott - I agree.

Councilman Kalwinski - and they asking, what do we do? What is the City's next steps in not having basements get water again? So, I also understand that back flow preventers primarily do work, and that's a good thing. But I also was told that if you have a back flow preventer that water will just go to the next house that doesn't have

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Councilman Kalwinski cont. - and go up

Mayor McDermott - That's true. If the whole Council lived on the same block and everybody had a back flow preventer except for Councilman Rakos, in a flood event, you would all be dry and Councilman Rakos would get the brunt. Agree. Which means we should all be getting this, you know, and don't be the last one. I guess that's what it means.

Councilman Kalwinski - Well, I think people are asking what's next and how do we reduce risk and how do we afford that risk, to reduce that risk, and I think they want to hear about a plan about what are we going to do, and I invite you, Sanitary, the Council, we start sitting and brainstorming this to see what else there is before everybody has a back flow preventer, is there anything else that can help people. So, I'm not gonna keep beating that one. People want to know what are we gonna do in the short term. The other thing is, I have a lot of immigrants in my neighborhood, primarily Spanish speaking, and I don't think they have access to information about Sanitary's program and do's and don'ts about how to not flood. And I think that perhaps in you thing that goes out every month with the Water Department, maybe information about water and the program might ... you might put that in there as a suggestion and maybe in Spanish too so that so many of the residents in my neighborhood know what's available. Because I think that there are people who just ... I saw people cleaning and I went up to them and I gave them the flyer for the Tuesday meeting. But they spoke three words of English and they were just battling the flood like everybody else. I just hope that there can be some consideration to get the message out to them about what we're doing too.

Mayor McDermott - Yeah, I specifically will ask Marty if ... almost everything we do has been bilingual so we put everything in both languages. So, I imagine they do the same thing at Sanitary District. I would hope so. And, you know, I'm willing to sit down and talk. You know, I feel horrible, obviously, I also know that there is nothing that I could have done. There's nothing that the Sanitary District could have done to prevent what happened. It's like a murder. When that happens too. I feel horrible as a Mayor I feel like, man, what could we have different. A lot of times there's not anything. It's just ... The storms are getting tougher, you know, we're blessed and cursed. We're blessed with a lot of water where we live, and we're cursed with too much water sometimes and we can't control it. I go to other parts of the country where I have family living and they have no water at all and that's a curse also and I'm not making excuses, I wish there was something I could tell you, Councilman. Where I said, Councilman, we're gonna do this deep tunnel in Hammond and it's gonna fix all of our problems. We have to have a place to put the water and we used to put it in Lake Michigan and we can't do that anymore. And our water, going to the Hammond Sanitary District, to build a plant, another Hammond Sanitary plant, I mean if that's what we were thinking, bigger capacity, 70 million's not big enough, we want 140 million, I mean realistically, that's a ... I'm just spit balling, I mean, that's a six figure project, excuse me, a nine figure project all day. Like a couple hundred million.

Councilman Kalwinski - I' sure it is.

Mayor McDermott - Then, if you had the bigger client, then you have to have the bigger infrastructure to handle the bigger storm load. Which would be... I mean, I'm not making excuses, that's what I'm talking about though.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - This is nothing we could fix in four years. This is, if we're saying that we think that the infrastructure in our City, because since you and I have been on the Council, you took over the same time I did, Councilman, we've watched, probably, fifteen to twenty million dollars a year to go into our infrastructure. A lot of it in the 1st District. That's just counting local money. That doesn't count any federal money. That doesn't count state money. And we've done a good job of rebuilding the infrastructure in this city, and yet we're still flooding.

Councilman Kalwinski - All the streets that got new work under ground in my District in that area you talked about, flooded over the curbs. They flooded over the curbs, so having the new street, for that storm, didn't matter. Having the new work under ground and new piping didn't make a difference.

Mayor McDermott - Agreed. You did what you're supposed to do with the money, and it was completely submerged in water and just quick calculations, North Hammond alone had 400 million gallons of water. There is no ... I don't know how big the plants are in South Florida, where they have hurricanes, I don't know how big they are there, but that's, I mean, you can't handle a water, when it hits us like that. I know this, after twenty years, because I get PTSD when we start getting heavy rain events like that, and heavy snow events. The fact is when it hits us all at once, that's when we have the biggest problems. And it hits you all at once. When I say hits you all at once, Councilman, it hit North Hammond, specifically, all at once. Cal City and Dalton, but I'm not responsible for that. North Hammond got walloped. There's a heat map I could pass it out to the Council, I should have brought it, I apologize, the heat map is white where it's the worst, right across North Hammond. Almost five inches of rain.

Councilman Kalwinski - What I was getting a lot were calls about, "I flooded. I lost things. I have to clean. Then I have to buy a back flow preventer to prevent it again and that's going to be some thousands."

Mayor McDermott - Right.

Councilman Kalwinski - "And then when I sell my house, I have to list that it's had floods so I may not get the amount that I was looking for because now it's on the real estate application that my house flooded, even though it might have been five years ago or whatever". So, people are just feeling dinged all over the place.

Mayor McDermott - Tell me about it. I get it.

Councilman Kalwinski - I feel it and I just want you to know that that's what's coming up on the calls I get.

Mayor McDermott - Believe me, we're getting it also. Hammond Sanitary is getting it. I know you're getting it. And it's horrible. And when Councilman Barry's District ... you went one neighborhood two times within a couple months, within the last couple months, Councilman Barry ... and I dare say the Councilmen who got lucky this time, we're probably gonna be talking to you. It could be my house that's next. Because my house is combined. Just like North Hammond. My house doesn't have a back flow preventer just like North Hammond. I got lucky this time. Last time I cleaned my basement I didn't put anything nice down there. To this day, it's not

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - super ... it's not ugly, but it's not like it was before. I never had the confidence. I'm not sure how homeowner's insurance works. I know when I had my situation, I contacted my homeowner's insurance and I learned that my homeowner's insurance doesn't cover that. And that I could have bought a separate policy, that I didn't buy unfortunately, that would have covered that, but I didn't have that. My regular homeowner's did not. Which was a surprise at the time.

Councilman Kalwinski - That may be some of the information people need too. Because I think a lot of people got blind sided thinking they had coverage.

Mayor McDermott - With their homeowners? Right. I think you need homeowners and ... well, I learned the hard way, just like we're learning right now. Homeowners and renters insurance doesn't cover. You specifically have to have separate flood insurance to events like this, and that's not cheap. And I don't believe, because Councilman Mark, a lot of your District in Robertsdale, you used to have flood insurance from Wolf Lake, I don't even think that flood insurance would have covered a basement backup like this. That was if Wolf Lake flooded into there.

Councilman Torres - I agreed with Councilman Kalwinski that some kind of board or committee ought to be formed to discuss this. Because this weather for this climate change is not gonna get better. There's a lot of people in my district that keep losing their appliances, their furnaces, their water heaters. And let's say their able to replace it now, next year it might be the same thing. We just cannot let this continue. There's got to be a way.

Mayor McDermott - What are you suggesting?

Councilman Torres - I don't know, that's why if you get idea ... I got an idea.

Mayor McDermott - What's that?

Councilman Torres - I'll tell you what it is. You know, I think problems started when we put a lot of, when we paved the alleys, for example, with asphalt. And water has nowhere to go. Water just seeped down into the ground and water was like a ... I mean, the ground was like a retention pond. And if you go back to gravel alleys, and I know they're paved to maintain and all that. But at least it gives water a place to flow down in the ground and retain instead of going in people's houses. It goes down to the ground. That's one idea. More retention ponds around the different neighborhoods, like the one we have on Columbia Avenue. There's gotta be ...

Mayor McDermott - Those are coming in our future, Councilman. We do ... part of our Consent Decree (unclear) has them.

Councilman Torres - Use some money planned for some losses. Like you have a rainy day fund, the city has a rainy day fund planned for loss that we can compensate people at least. I know Sanitary Director was telling us that he's trying to advance the overflow valve from a thousand to maybe two thousand, but he's looking for the money. Maybe we could find the money to at least help them. Like it was mentioned, if somebody has a over

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Councilman Torres cont. - flow valve and the other person doesn't that's gonna go find a way to give that priority to give everybody an over flow and put it on the side of the street so that the government lets us pay for it instead of under people's property. There's got to be ways. Maybe if a board would form just to plan that. Maybe some other ideas might pop up. Thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski - Because we have a new normal, this is our new normal.

Mayor McDermott - It is. I agree, Councilman.

Councilman Kalwinski - The hundred year rain is not the hundred year rain. The new normal is torrential rain. So we have to come up with something new too, to match this. Whatever that looks like. None of us really have a clue right now. That's why we are willing to talk some more about it.

Councilman Tyler - Mayor, I just want to thank you for acknowledging the fact that, you know, the 3rd District has dealt with this several times. I think just within the past three years they ...

Mayor McDermott - The previous two incidents were in your district, Councilman.

Councilman Tyler - The previous three if you want to go back to May of 2020 as well. Because that was ... I don't know how big that was compared to these last two, but that was the first one I experienced in this position. I've had several conversations with Dean, with Marty, with Jack, just trying to figure out, like we're talking about now, like possible solutions, and I know a lot of them cost a lot more money than what we have now. But it sounds like in areas where there is a separation between the two systems that they either don't flood or flood less. So I don't know if we want to kinda of sit down and take a look at what it would cost us to separate the ones that aren't separated and map that out for, I don't know, twenty, thirty years, however long it will take but at least, what my counterparts are saying, have ...

Mayor McDermott - I'm not trying to interrupt you, I think your idea is great. In fact, I know that the idea is addressed in the Consent Decree which as a reminder to all of you, has to be met within thirteen or fourteen years. That we have to spend a significant amount of money through the Hammond Sanitary District to satisfy the USEPA. That we won't have such events as the one we just did.

Councilman Tyler - Okay.

Mayor McDermott - So, very wise. I appreciate what you're saying and I know that's being addressed. I appreciate you bringing that up.

Councilman Tyler - The only I just wanted to question is, I know the Mayor in Cal City issued a State of Emergency. I know that you're in the process of researching FEMA and what support we might be able to get from them, what would you declaring a State of Emergency do in that process? Would it help bring FEMA in? Would it help bring notice to ...

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - It would have to be declared by the Governor for us to bring FEMA in.

Councilman Tyler - Right, but I'm saying, you could still declare a State of Emergency locally and maybe that might trigger the Governor to act?

Mayor McDermott - Sure. These are questions ... I think that we have to define what an emergency is, you know, because we want to make sure...

Council President Rakos - Please, everybody. Use decorum here.

Mayor McDermott - We have a lot of events that take place in the city and we will over the next ten years, we'll have a lot of events and if we're constantly going to the Governor's Office, making the Governor make a tough decision, nobody appreciates having to make this decision, okay, nobody appreciates ... if I approach the Governor and say, "Governor, we have an emergency in Hammond", and the Governor says, "No, Mayor. You don't". Nobody appreciates being put on the spot like that, okay. So we have to be ... This doesn't really help when people mock you. I'm trying to have a ...

Council President Rakos - Excuse me, excuse me, if people don't know how to behave in a public meeting ...

Mayor McDermott - I mean, one of the worst things I think we could do in Hammond is be afraid to talk, I'm having a conversation with the Council right now and I'm trying to be honest and express this is a horrible situation. Nobody caused. Nobody up here caused this problem. This a horrible situation. I feel horrible for you, as do the members of the Council. We're having a conversation, trying to have it, and we're better than that in Hammond. I thought we were. We're just trying to discuss this. This isn't Tom McDermott's fault. This isn't Councilman Kalwinski's fault. This isn't anybody's fault. This is, like the Councilman said, this is the new normal. We're gonna have, once a year, you know, once a century storms more frequency than we're used to. And North Hammond got it. Just like the previous three were in the 3rd District. Just like the previous couple before that were in the 5th and the 6th District. Now, the question is, are we gonna completely reinvest in our Sanitary District and make it twice as big and twice as efficient, and we're talking not just big money, we're talking massive amounts of money. Like, let's be honest, we're talking big, big, big money and we still have the Consent Decree and everything that hit with the federal government, that's the kind of stuff we're talking about. Maybe that's what people have to start doing now. I don't know. You know you go west and everybody is burning down. They'd be begging for water. We come out here and we're drowning. This is all related to one thing. I believe it's climate change, but who am I. I'm no expert. I'm just a dumb Mayor. But I think it's related to climate change, but I'm a jerk off if I say that, right? This is a hard thing we're dealing with, and we're trying to do it the right way. I feel sorry for everybody that's going through this and your local government cares and we're getting called jerks and ass holes all day long. Like we did something. You turned on the pumps. That doesn't help. The pumps were on. Everything was working. Everybody was working. Everything worked as it was supposed to that day. Everything did. And it doesn't help when you get called names. It doesn't help when you get ridiculed in public. It doesn't. I appreciate the questions from the Council. I do. I think this helps. We're trying to be honest in front of our constituents when something horrible happened. There's no explanation for it. You didn't fail, Councilman Mark. Neither did I. I think you were really nice to go out there and talk to people when they are devastated. That takes courage.

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MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Woerpel - You talk about 2020. We got it three times in the 5th District. When the snow melted and we got that horrible rain in May and in June. After the June event I talked to Jack Smith and I subject, everybody keeps telling me about these gates, can you show me the system? On the Saturday after the event. He took me and showed me every step of the way. And what he explained to me is when you got these big main sewers, when they fill up and they start flowing towards the plant because they're gravity filled, it acts like a railroad gate more or less to the side street fillers because those ... the water is flowing so fast through them big sewers, the street's not gonna release until the main sewers clear out. I'm not making excuses as far as what can we do as a city. Mayor and this Council knows in 2020, after that main event when I had a project going up for lights in the 5th District and we had that flood and I went over to different districts and saw peoples water heaters and furniture floating down the street, I said we got to do something different as a Council. And we did create the Capital Improvement Board there where we can take on these bigger projects. So it's not like we're just some magic wands waving and gates opening and closing at, you know, somebody's request or leisure. We are trying to take steps and I agree, I've been in knee deep water, not only in my residents basement but that one in 2020, I was up 24 hours. Mr. Button was out there in the flood. I got home 24 hours later and I had eight inches of water in my basement and I think it sat there for three days because that was the third one that year. I get what ... I totally understand when you say it was a system failure. I understand it. That's all I got to say.

Mayor McDermott - It wasn't a failure though. All due respect. It was a complete and massive overload of the system. The system was trying to do what it is supposed to and it just got completely clogged with water. There was water on top of water, on top of water. There wasn't a ... when you see the manhole covers blowing off, the system is filled. It's filled and pressurized so high that it takes these manhole covers that weight almost a hundred pounds and throws it eight feet in the air. That's pressure. That's a completely saturated full system. That's what happened. Then our guys have to go out there and pick up the manhole covers and put them back on when everything calms down.

Councilman Kalwinski - I think that all these events across the city just reaffirm that we just have to look at the new normal and is there anything else we can do.

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir.

Councilman Kalwinski - And come up with that and let people know if there is something.

Mayor McDermott - You know, and I appreciate that, Councilman Mark. And I'm willing to sit down with the Council at any time about this. I just, I'm the guy at the end of the day that calculates the bottom line number and I'm always the guy that gets beat up because I'm the one that comes back, but everything we do comes back to the bottom line. And it's a massive amount of money, and that's fine. Maybe we start biting it in small chunks. And I would like to say there are a number of Council people that sit on the Capital Improvement Board and you deal with these types of problems every little meeting and I appreciate the work you do with the engineer trying to get these citywide projects that will help us with this kind of problem and that's why we did put that together and I appreciate Woerpel for bringing that up.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Tyler - The only other point that I wanted to make, Mayor, was that I think Councilman Woerpel alluded to this, but it's not like your administration is not having these conversations and not exploring what we can do to prevent this from happening. So, I know that I've sat in numerous meetings with Marty, with Jack, with Dean, kind of ironing out the possibilities of what we could do, and to your point I know it will cost a ton of money to make any improvements and I think that's why we've been saying that the back flow preventer program is the most feasible right now. Because we do have money set aside to help residents pay for that and I know from each HSD's stand point, there haven't been a lot of residents who have taken advantage of it.

Mayor McDermott - Do you know if you have one in your house?

Councilman Tyler - I don't but my basement is water proofed. The only water I get is if my sump pump malfunctions. Which it has because of one of these major storms, but um, so I know that the HSD is exploring, along with Owana in Community Development, exploring ways to expand that program and make it even more feasible for more residents to obtain that so I just want to thank you for that. Because I know that it's coming and hopefully residents will take advantage of it. And I'll do whatever I can to assist from a Gaming Funds standpoint or just getting the word out too.

Mayor McDermott - Thanks, Councilman.

Mayor McDermott - Again, can I say one more thing before I leave. First of all, I appreciate the Council for ... and I'm really sorry to all the residents that were affected by this. You know, it's a horrifying thing that you're going through. I've gone through it and it sounds like it was a lot worse. What I went through didn't ruin my water heater and my furnace and stuff like that, that's devastating. So, my heart goes out to you. I think that Councilman Mark's suggestion for putting together some type of information packet from the city that could give people the ability to defend themselves in the future better. Maybe it's time for us to check out these flood insurance policies. Maybe it's time, you know. Like I said, when my basement flooded I didn't put the money back into it that I had before, and I put a lot of money into it and I felt like I wasted my money. And I know how you feel and I'm really sorry and, you know, I wish this was an easy solution. I wish we could just say, yep, we'll fix this next year it will be all better. I wish I could say that. But this is very, very tough. Complex. And it's out of our control in a lot of ways. So, I apologize. I love North Hammond. You guys are beautiful. It's a beautiful part of the city. We believe in it. We're investing in it. And I know you feel like, you know, everybody's against you. But I want you to know, everybody is thinking about you. Members of our own administration, members of the Engineering Department, were among the 467 people that lost their basement. So, it affected our team just like it affected you. So, I apologize to everybody and I want you to know we'll do everything we can to prevent this in the future. So, thank you. If there's no other questions .

Councilwoman Alexander - Just one quick question, Mayor. The Whiting retention area, is that also being utilized?

Mayor McDermott - The what?

Councilwoman Alexander - The Whiting retention area, is that also being utilized?

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - I imagine Whiting uses it for their own storage.

Councilwoman Alexander - Okay.

Mayor McDermott - But our storage basin is ... so we don't just put it in there and just hold it. We flow water through it, Councilwoman. So, I've learned this in time. So, when I mentioned the stat to you earlier that says the CSO basin was discharging at a rate of 468 million a day. That is so much bigger than our plant. And the reason we're able to do so much water is when we're overwhelmed like we were in the plant, you could only clean so much and the basin was full. So they flow the water through the basin and it just sort of , the bad stuff sort of collects, and this is gross, okay, but the bad stuff collects and the water flows through and by the time it makes it through that maze and makes its way into the river, it's cleaner than in the old days. Way cleaner than the old days. Not clean, I wouldn't say, I wouldn't go swimming in it, okay, but it's cleaner, and that's satisfactory to the EPA. So when we're overwhelmed like we were , that's what we do, and that's what we were doing. And that's why that 468 million gallons was, ten years ago, that's in our basements. It would have been a much bigger problem. I'm not clapping anybody on the back either. Because we failed. But, 468 million gallons we got rid of that day and that water had to go someplace. But that's a great question. That CSO basin is a huge part of our defense and Councilman Torres brought something up earlier that in the future you are going to see more of these detention basins in different parts of the city, including down south and strategic parts of the city. That's part of our plan with the federal government, Councilman. So, but these are real good questions. And this is part of the strategy that HSD is working with the EAPPA on.

Councilwoman Alexander - One more thing, I just want to give kudos out to our Sanitary and our Public Works because they were out working that day. So we want to just thank them for that. But if you could also just keep us up to date on any applications on anything that would be great.

Mayor McDermott - No, I'll have a report by the next meeting.

Councilwoman Alexander - Thank you.

Councilman Torres - Mayor, I don't think anybody's blaming you, personally for an act of nature. It's just that frustration everybody has and there are no way to ... you know, to come up with ideas. But I think that you as major as a Mayor and us as a Council, people expect us to come up with ideas and solutions to prepare for the future. And not much we can do about what happened but weather is not gonna change and it's predicted ... beyond predictable like it is. It's gonna keep on happening so we got to come up with something.

Mayor McDermott - I agree. Councilman, one of the things I've learned about being Mayor is one of my jobs is to get yelled at. And I'm not being funny when I say that. When something like this happens, sometimes you just want somebody to get pissed off at and take your frustrations and that's part of my job and it sucks. It's a crappy part of my job, but it is. And it's not just when it floods, when it snows, when somebody gets killed, when somebody messes up, that's my job is to take the heat, and I feel the heat. When I can't feel the heat, that's when I need to stop doing this job. But as soon as this happened, I knew this was trouble. As soon as this happened I felt devastated and that's part of my job is to feel the heat. I knew they were in trouble and part of

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - my job is to get yelled. That’s part as your job as Mayor, and I know you guys get yelled at too. People get frustrated and who do they take it out on their local government official. Nobody made me be Mayor. I ran for it. So, I’m not apologizing. I wasn’t trying to be offensive or anything. Councilmen.

Council President Rakos - Just to remind everybody, all cell phones should be either off or turned on silent. We’re not gonna make phone calls in here and just try to maintain decorum in a public setting and we’ll go on with our meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes for September 11, 2023 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from September 11, 2023 through September 20, 2023. Claim No. 6373 through No. 6850, inclusive. In the amount of \$5,163,784.35.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Kalwinski - I received notice that the Pulaski Park Neighborhood Association will hold its monthly meeting tomorrow at the Hammond Mohawks, which is located at 141st and Calumet Avenue. Start time for the meeting is 6:30 and the Sanitary District Manager, Marty Wielgos, will be the featured speaker at that meeting.

Councilman Tyler - I have a couple. I just want to go on the record and thank Amy Radolak and Home Depot. So, back in 2020 they donated three hot water heaters after that May 20 whatever storm and we were able to get two of those installed in the homes of residents at no cost to the residents back in 2020. Well, I had one left over so after the events of July 5th, we were able to get that installed. So, I want to thank them for that donation. I’m working on try to secure more, so if we have residents that are still without hot water heaters please reach out and let me know. I also want to give my payers and condolences to the family of Mr. Jerry Jerrott, who passed away last week and his funeral is on Wednesday in East Chicago.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Council President Rakos - HC3 is holding their fall community cleanup on October 14th at 9 a.m. to noon. Everybody will meet at the Hanson Community Center, which used to be the Hanson Library. It's October 14th at 9 a.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:
East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Tues., Oct. 27; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
Edison Community Watch; Wed., Oct. 4; 6:30 p.m.; Edison School
Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues., Oct. 3; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman Avenue
Hessville Crime Watch; Thur., Oct. 19; 6 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center
Irving Community Watch; Fri., Oct. 6; 9:30 a.m.; Irving School (Bilingual)
South Hohman Avenue Neighborhood Watch; Thur., Oct. 12, 7 p.m.; Trinity Lutheran Church
Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Oct. 12; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College
Golden Manor Community Watch; Fri., Oct. 6; 1:30 p.m.; Golden Manor Senior Building

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Woerpel - Met on September 18th, and I grabbed he wrong folder so I'll have to report on it at the next meeting. We appropriated two things but I can't remember what they were. I'll report on both meetings at the next meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

23-19 An Ordinance to Appropriate Monies into the 2023 Gaming Fund
 Sponsored by Janet Venecz and Dan Spitale

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Public Hearing on October 11, 2023.

AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz - This is appropriating Gaming dollars from 2022 Park Improvements from all six districts and the Capital Improvement Board that will be appropriated to 2023 Park Improvements in each of the districts and the Capital Improvement Board.

Council Atty. Berger - It seems to me that there was a typographical error here on the first page of the ordinance. There's a box that shows how it should be appropriated. I think that should not be there. It should be after "Therefore be it ordained by the Common Council", because it's just a blank there. So I think at some point in the proceedings that should be straightened out.

Council President Rakos - Is that something that could be amended at the next meeting when its approved

Council Atty. Berger - Yes.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st and 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

23R-07 A Resolution of the Hammond Common Council Approving and Entering into a Joint Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Lake County, Indiana regarding the Construction of a New Fire Station
Sponsored by Dave Woerpel

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

Council Atty. Berger - I don't know what we could do about it but there's apparently an error where they, instead of having the Clerk sign this it says Clerk and Treasurer. We do not have a Clerk and Treasurer here. We would just sign this the Clerk but, you know, it appears several times and since its brought to so many other bodies it might not be worth it to try to clean that up but I just wanted to call it to the attention of the Council to that problem.

Council President Rakos - Thank you Atty. Berger we did discuss that in Chambers beforehand.

Councilman Woerpel - This is a resolution that is a mirror resolution that the County Council passed. Whereas, the City of Hammond will receive \$2.1 million per the joint interlocal cooperation agreement between Hammond and Lake County and specifically Councilman Hamm, the County Councilman, is donating \$1.4 million and Councilwoman Cid is transferring \$700 thousand for a total of \$2.1 million for construction of the new fire station. It's a mirror image of the resolution they passed and apparently in the resolution they passed, we have an attachment that's not part of our original resolution and it does say the part about Clerk Treasurer in Hammond. So I'll make a motion. I don't know if we can amend something that they passed but I'll make a motion to amend.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to amend out Clerk Treasurer and put in Controller on page three, item B. On the last page, where they sign, under Clerk Golec it says Clerk Treasurer, I make a motion that we amend out the word Treasurer.

Council President Rakos - My question is, do we have the ability or the right to amend?

Council President Rakos - Councilman Hamm is shaking his head yes.

County Councilman Hamm - I never had so much trouble giving money away before. Yes, absolutely. The attachment was just there for your reference. What we're trying to do is assist, at the Mayor's request, in helping with the

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS cont.

County Councilman Hamm - construction of the fire station up there by Wolf Lake. Council Lady Cid and myself have agreed. But the amendments that Councilman Woerpel has offered should satisfy everything. I don't believe that Attorney Berger would even protest that. But Dave's amendments would cover it. This is done in County quite often. I just happen to give all of mine to Hammond. Council Lady Cid gave half, because she had some other. But you have to understand, throughout the County, with the seventeen communities, there are Clerk Treasurers all over. In all of these town. We only have a few cities. So, that's probably the reason. But that's just an attachment. All you have to do is follow Councilman Woerpel's amendments and you'll be in good shape and they'll send our lovely Controller the \$2.1 million.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment to 23-R07)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R07 ADOPTED
(as amended)

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel - Since we have so many people here, we did change next months first meeting from the 9th to the 10th because of Columbus Day. So instead of our regular night on Monday night, it will be on Tuesday night at the same time.

Council President Rakos - Hammond Fire Department Open House is October 7th at Station No. 8 on Parrish just north of 165th.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Bob Nelson - Re: Flooding; Lost his hot water heater and furnace. Replace the hot water heater but will have to wait on the furnace. Just wanted to express the his and his neighbors pain. Requesting some sort of diversion of money, gift or low cost loan to help.

Dolina Zwierz - Re: Flooding; Waterproofing doesn't make a difference. Check valve thing is a great idea but once you've spent thousand replacing everything who's gonna help pay for it. Will the check valve stop raw sewage form coming in your house? Had three feet of sewage. Her pets were down there. If she wasn't home her pets would have died. Nobody's helping.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

TJ Gaertig - Re: Flooding; Flooding has plagued Hammond for along time. The system is overwhelmed. It becomes more stressed the more pavement we put down. The more development replacing green space, the less water that will be able to infiltrate into the ground through that green space.

George Stoya - Tracked the lawsuit by the Hammond Sanitary District. Part of the damages sought by the HSD was monies from Whiting, Griffith and Highland to fund a larger retention basin. Whiting countered that they had access to retention capacity. I don't think they are fully utilizing it. It should be looked into as to another place to dump water.

Ken Rosek - Re: Flooding; Over development causes flooding. Purdue University did a study predicting a 17% increase in the amount of heavy rain events in our area by 2050. Back flow preventers only send the water into you neighbors basements and often fail.

Carolyn Marsh - Re: Clark Field; There is a huge issue of draining the field. It has a very high water table that is being drained into a wetland. It was stopped by the IN Dept. of Environmental Mgmt. A water main broke in Clark Field and nobody knew how to shut it off. That water is going into North Hammond. Don't move the fire station, just add on to it. Stop the over development at Clark Field, they are building on a wet land.

Arturo Martinez - Re: Flooding; Got 32 inches of water with human feces. Lost his washing machine, dryer, refrigerator and stove. A city worker said it was human error, they didn't turn on the pumps.

Dorothy Hill - Flooding - We did get water in the 3rd District on Bauer Street. We can hear the noise from the football field when I'm inside the house. They need to lower the noise. We need to something about the flooding.

Genoveva Atilano - Re: Flooding; Lived in her home for 23 years and gets water every year in her basement. When does it stop to be the norm? You got to fix the problem.

Anthony Diaz - Re: Flooding; Harrison Park finally got water in the lagoon. Put the park back the way you found it. It was thriving at one time with community programs and 4th of July activities. The community was taken out of it and sent up North. Gave traffic street opening updates. Property taxes for the Veteran's seem to have gone up. The Mayor said you can't push the Governor to do anything for us. Well he works for us. If we don't push they are going to think we are ignorant people. We need good representation down there.

Crystal Edmond - Re: Flooding and Noise; Did get water on Erie Avenue. Have had problems with the sewers in that area that are not being addressed. Sunday the football field was rented out and the noise and were bombarded with noise 8:30 until after 6. We could not even stay in our own home. The cars were all parked in our alleys and we couldn't get out so the police were called to clear it out. There is noise from Monday through Saturday, and now on Sunday too. Superintendent Miller did not return our calls until it was over. Our street needs to be repaired. It holds water.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Ed Waters - Re: Flooding, Noise and Traffic; Here to expose the big lie. Concerned with how the 3rd District is being run. The new high school was three schools combined into one. His street (Erie) has no sidewalks, cracked sidewalks. The street is horrific. It seems like you're trying to get us to move. Takes pride in his property and neighborhood but the city needs to do its job. Bets nobody's street looks like the 57-5800 blocks of Erie. It was only patched up. But it's no better than with the last Councilman of the district.

Oscar Palacios - Re: Flooding; Flooded also and lost a dryer, washer, furnace and other things. If we call to the Governor and push him he can help us. But we have to do it together. If you have the numbers, we'll call and try to make pressure for them to help us, for FEMA to help us.

Patricia Stanford - Re: Flooding; Showed pictures of her flooded basement. She lost everything. There was poop floating around her basement. Everything is ruined. Doesn't understand what happened. It's never been this bad.

Rodrigo Almercz - Re: Flooding; Got four or five inches of water. The water heater, deep freezer were lost. Is just asking for help. We need the city's help.

Jonathan Lopez - Re: Flooding; thanked Councilman Kalwinski for his suggestion of bilingual materials. Disbursing information is just a band aid but it will help.

Rhonda Tyrone - Re: Flooding and Waste; Been calling for 20 years about the water that sits outside of her home when it rains of the snow melts. It only gets temporary fixes. The water goes up to her front door. Her basement also flooded. The Mayor is crying because people are calling him names but he begged for the job. The Mayor should have been here listening to us because we had to listen to him. Lost everything in her basement. Lost her recently deceased mothers things and had to throw them out. She lost her washing machine, dryer, hot water tank. Didn't have water for a week. This is hard for us. Twenty years and nobody has come up with anything.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

2023 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	9	23	13	27	13	27	10	24	8	22	12	26	10	24	14	28	11	25	10	23	13	27	4	
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P						
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P						
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P						
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG						

E=ELECTRONIC

P=PHYSICALLY
PRESENT

A=ABSENT

If the member qualifies for an exemption from the "Consecutive - 50" requirements, draw a circle around the E for that meeting/ member.

Scott Rakos, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 8:15
cb

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*