

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on October 23, 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.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec 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 - Thanks everybody, good to see you all. Mayor's activities over the last couple weeks. Cut the ribbon at the Ninja Action Park. It's been very successful. So successful that we got parking issues already. Which is good problem to have. But I talked to Councilman Woerpel earlier, who was in my office this morning talking about what was going on over there and we're gonna be working for the neighbors in that area. We're gonna be working real closely with Ice Kube's leadership. We are working with Ice Kube's leadership. We are gonna mark that area off a lot like we do with MLK Park, with the same concept where on one side of the street it's resident only parking. On the other side of the street there's no parking tow zone. Because we can't tolerate what happened this weekend. It was the first big weekend with Ninja Kids open and it was a big problem. And I know that Councilman Woerpel was concerned about it. So, I just wanted to point that out. So, held the Mayor's Night Out in the 4th District. Thanks to Councilman Emerson and Superintendent Scott Miller and Edison Elementary School for hosting. I thought it was real good. Had lunch with Representative Hal Slager. Uh, he's the Republican Representative from Schererville. We talked about the upcoming legislation session. I've been meeting with a lot of Reps about our upcoming session. We have a couple issues that we want to them about. Sportsplex recently hosted a Division Two Women's Volleyball Tournament, Three Conference Tournament, 38 College Women's D2 College Volleyball teams attended the tournament. All the teams stayed in Hammond, dined at our restaurants. It was a three day tournament. Highly successful. I thought it went really well. I want to commend the staff at the Sportsplex, the Park Dept., and I want to thank Dave Uran and the South Shore Convention and Visitor's Bureau. They attracted that tournament to our City and it was a huge success. So, I think that's real positive. Attended a dedication ceremony at the Hammond Marina to rename the Hammond Marina after my father. Who was Hammond's Mayor for a decade and helped build the Hammond Marina. It's now referred to as the Thomas M. McDermott Senior, Hammond Marina. So, congratulations Thomas M. McDermott Senior for an honor. I think he deserves a lot. Maybe I'm biased but thankfully he built that. If it weren't for the Marina being built, but I hate to think what the 1990's and the 2010's would have looked like in the City of Hammond. So, I was keynote speaker at the Economic Development breakfast for the Indiana Builders Home Builders Association that was held in Hammond at the Indiana Welcome Center. Hosted also by

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - the South Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau. I presented to the group, along with Dave Uran, and the CEO of the Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sherry Ziller, the CEO of the Regional Development Authority. Attended a public meeting in Whiting regarding the EPA Superfund cleanup of Federated Metals property and the surrounding areas. I thought it was a ... it was an introductory session. They're gonna have more sessions for the people that are affected by this or that are just inquisitive about the process that's going to take place. The EPA was there. The number of representatives, along with IDEM. The meeting was informative. It was more about the history of the site and the process that we're going through. To give you an idea of what we're talking about. It's probably, at a minimum, a decade process, decade long process. So, that was ... and there's more of meetings taking place is mostly in Whiting. I attended the Lake and Porter County Judicial Reception at the Federal Courthouse. All the judges from, basically, the First Congressional District were there. It was a really good event. It seems like Hammond's hosting a lot more of these types of events. As you all know, the Hammond Municipal Budget's before you today. I talked about that in the last meeting. If you have any questions, I'm here for that but I know we've been really busy then last couple weeks but it's been mostly focused on getting this budget before you our (unclear) meetings. I don't have anything else to discuss unless the Council has ...

Councilman Kalwinski - Good afternoon, regarding that EPA meeting, a resident in Robertsdale and a business in Robertsdale, both reported they got the flyer the day of the meeting, which is insufficient. Maybe Ron Novak can call the EPA and say that's not good notice.

Mayor McDermott - I appreciate that, Councilman. It seems like the EPA, because of what we did, which I'm proud of, that we did a lot of work on residential properties. So it seems like Hammond's residential ... first off, Whiting's problem is much bigger than ours. Numbers wise, they have more homes affected than Hammond. And we've taken care of our homeowner's through our use of our American Rescue Plan money. So, I don't think it seems to me, and I'm not making excuses, Councilman Mark, but it seems like the EPA is talking mostly with Whiting and we're along for the ride, but it seems like a lot of the coordinating is going on between Whiting and the EPA, and I will definitely make them aware of that.

Councilman Kalwinski - It's all the same zip code.

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir. I agree. And I totally get where you're coming from. But I noticed also that the meetings are in Whiting. Which is no problem for most of your residents. It's across the street for a lot of them, but, you know, it seems like most of the damage was done in Whiting, it seems like the EPA is coordinating closer with Whiting. We are definitely paying attention and are along for the ride. Though I don't want you to get the wrong impression, Councilman. Any more questions?

Mayor McDermott - I know Megan's out today, unfortunately, and Tinisha's here and she is ready for all your questions if you have any issues that come up. We're ready to answer them, obviously. Tinisha's been working very closely with Megan the whole time on the City Budget, so.

Council President Rakos - She was very helpful in caucus.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - I have an update for gas stations. We went through a couple more. I'll give you a better update next month, or next meeting, on where we are with the gas stations. But we're going through that process right now where a number of gas stations are applying. I know a number have been approved to operate all night. Off the top of my head, 7500 block of Indpls., the gas station on that block is open. 7300 Kennedy has been approved to operate all night. I know, and I don't want to get out in front of my skis. I know those two for a fact. But there's a number ... and there's a number, surprisingly, that aren't putting in. Like the new Casey's. Not putting in. They close at midnight anyway. They're not planning on staying open at midnight. That's a policy they had company wide. And then, obviously, there's other issues that we want to talk to the Councilmen and get your feel for a couple of other areas of the city. So, there will be gas stations open after midnight after November 1st. A couple here and there for interstate travelers. I don't know if you have any other questions. And I'm gonna stay, obviously, for the budget, so.

Councilman Tyler - What's the enforcement going to look like, in terms of gas stations that don't have the exclusion that maybe they tried to stay open?

Mayor McDermott - Great question. I'm still waiting if we might get legal paperwork, I'm not sure. But I imagine on midnight on November 1st, after Halloween's over, we'll go hit the road and I imagine they'll be compliance. But if there isn't then we'll have to deal with it, Councilman. But we know right now there's gonna be a number open. I say two right now for a fact. But I know the Board of Public Works is looking at a few more within the coming weeks. Like, they're all up right now. So, there will be gas stations open after November 1st, after midnight.

Councilwoman Alexander - Just to jump in with what Councilman Barry is saying, if they happen to stay open, I guess we're asking what would be something that would happen (unclear) go in or would we also maybe send out letters to remind them that ...

Mayor McDermott - I imagine, so let's say, November 1st you go to a gas station that's supposed to be shut down and it's not. I imagine we'd probably wait 'til the next morning. It's not, like, an emergency. We're not gonna, like, go storming in. I imagine the next morning we have to do something. And if they're, like, gonna test the system then we'll have to take the next step. But hopefully that doesn't happen, Councilwoman. But, it's not like, I don't think we're gonna go barging in with the SWAT team or anything if that occurs.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of October 10, 2023 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from October 12, 2023 through October 18, 2023. Claim #7166 through #7616, inclusive. In the amount of \$4,999,162.69.

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

Councilwoman Alexander - In light of Trick or Treating hours, I know that some residents have been inquiring about the times, the times for Trick or Treating will be Tuesday, Oct. 31 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. My hope is that everyone will stay safe while out Trick or Treating and having fun.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Woerpel - Capital Improvement Board did not meet last week. There was no business on the agenda so there will be no report.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

- Edison Community Watch; Wed., Nov. 1; Edison School; 6:30 p.m.
- Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues., Dec. 5; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman
- Hessville Crime Watch; Thur., Nov. 16; 6 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center
- Irving Community Watch; Fri., Nov. 3; 9:30 a.m.; Art Room of Irving School
- Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Nov. 9; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Woerpel - Brought out 23-23, 23-24, 23-25 and 23-26.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Tyler - Brought out 23-20, 23-21 and 23-22.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

23-20 2024 City of Hammond Budget Proposal
 Sponsored by Thomas M. McDermott

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

Councilman Kalwinski - I want to say thank you to Megan, the Controller, for ... and her staff, for all the work that it takes to put this together. It's a volume and it's got a lot of information. I'm sure it's very difficult to collate and get it all together. So, thank you to them. As well as to all the other staffs with the budgets that they're coming out with today. The only thing I want to say about the budget is, what I usually say, and that is I have a philosophical difference regarding the gaming dollars and what I can see from this budget for '23 and 2024 is that projection is a little over \$26 million expected in gaming dollars for '23 and about \$15.7 million will be going off the top into the general fund for balancing the budget, and for 2024, that same amount is budgeted for coming off the top of gaming fund. My concern is that with Bally's opening up in Chicago, and they will have a full year in 2024 to be open, I anticipate that the Horseshoe will continue to show less revenue toward the city of Hammond and even though the amount off the top is the same, I suspect that how much we take in next year will be less than \$26 million, we're projecting for this year. So our percentages will continue to get higher regarding the monies used in the gaming fund for the general budget and less for the infrastructure that remains in the pot. Twenty years ago, when the Mayor and I started, there was \$30-35 million from gaming and most of that went into infrastructure and now it looks like, you know, we're gonna have \$10 million or so. It's a slippery slope and I think we just have to be aware that at some point if we use all this money up and don't have it set aside that we're not going to be able to pay the piper at some point. So I'm just hoping that we're more careful inheriting the use of dollars from the gaming fund in trying to keep that in place for more infrastructure improvements. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-20)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

8/1/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9609 PASSED

23-21 2024 Hammond Redevelopment Budget Proposal
 Sponsored by Dan Spitale & Janet Venecz

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

Councilwoman Venecz - I think we've had more than ample discussion on all of the budgets before us. We met before the last meeting and we met again this evening before this meeting and we had lengthy discussions on each of the budgets. So, I don't think there's much more to say, except I ask for approval.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-21)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9610 PASSED

23-22 2024 Sanitary District of Hammond Budget Proposal
Sponsored by Janet Venecz & Dan Spitale

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-22)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9611 PASSED

23-23 2024 Civil City Salary Ordinance
Sponsored by Thomas M. McDermott

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-23)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9612 PASSED

23-24 2024 Police & Fire Salary Ordinance
Sponsored by Thomas M. McDermott

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for passage.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-24)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9613 PASSED

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

23-25 An Ordinance Creating New Funds (Funds #2477, #2478, #2479 and #2480)
for FY2024 Comprehensive Highway Injury Reduction Program (CHIRP)
Grant Funds
Sponsored by Dan Spitale

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved for passage.

Councilman Spitale - This grant comes every year to us for reducing injuries, fatalities, for the roadways.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-25)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9614 PASSED

23-26 An Ordinance Creating New Funds (Funds 2481 and #2482) for Justice Assistance
Grant (JAG) Program Funds Awarded to the City of Hammond Police Department
Sponsored by Dan Spitale

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

Councilman Spitale - This grant goes for personnel, equipment, supplies, (unclear) for the police department.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 23-26)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9615 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to reschedule the meetings of December 11, 2023 and December 25, 2023 to December 4, 2023 and December 18, 2023. AYES: ALL

Councilman Emerson - We do this every year, it's the Veterans Appreciation Day Parade, Saturday, Nov. 4th at 10 a.m. The parade route is Olcott Avenue and 173rd Street east to Hessville Park's Veterans Memorial. There is

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Emerson - a brief ceremony at the memorial immediately after the parade. I appreciate it as a Veteran and if you know any veterans out there, tell them to either participate in the parade or watch the parade.

Councilman Kalwinski - I want to say thank you to a few groups that ran Trunk or Treats events and parties this weekend. Thank you out to Hermits, as well as to the Mohawks for their Trunk or Treat festivities and they actually even gave out prizes for the best trunks decorated and kids too. Also, thank you to St. Cas for holding a party in their gym and I believe there were a couple others that do that as well. So, thank to all those parties for making a safe environment for the kids to have some fun.

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved that the Council sponsor the Hammond Holiday Parade as a Council in the amount of \$500.

AYES: ALL

Mayor McDermott - The night of the Holiday Parade, I wanted to make the Council aware the city of Hammond is sponsoring an event the night of ... Indiana Society. It's in the Renaissance Hotel in Downtown Chicago. The Northwest Indiana Reception takes place before the Indiana Society Dinner and the city of Hammond is the sponsor this year and you're all invited. The dinner after is black tie, except for this event is a region event so I don't think you're gonna be kicked out if you're not wearing a tuxedo. But I would recommend a suit at the least. But, it's in Chicago. The entire Northwest Indiana usually goes to this event. So, it's around ... I can get you further details. Please have Liz reach out to my office. But city of Hammond sponsored it along with the Data Center Group, along with the South Shore Convention and Visitor's Bureau. So, if you're interested it's before the event. You don't have to go to the dinner and you don't have to pay. You can just show up to this event. I just want to make the Council aware. Secondly, I would like to say thank you to the Council for working with the Controller's Office and getting the budget done. Thank you very much, appreciate it. A lot of cities don't do that and we do it every year. So, thank you, I appreciate it.

Councilman Emerson - I had the privilege to attend the Democratic dinner at the Democratic Central Committee Annual Dinner in Merrillville, of Lake County, and Carol Ann Seaton received the Annual ... they elect the ... they vote for a Precinct Committee Person ...

Councilman Rakos - Councilman, I don't know if that is appropriate to be honest with you.

Councilman Emerson - Okay.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Rosek - There was a news story that Indiana Dept. of Transportation is delaying the bridge project is being delayed because of further qualitative ecological studies. INDOT is also taking a more detailed look at an underpass at Grand Avenue. This was because of the large public response, it said in their message to us. We consider this a great win to the residents. We applaud INDOT. Also, the status of constructing a pedestrian bridge to make up for the failure of the administrations design to ensure public safety for pedestrians. They are now discussing a permanent solution. If we find a better way to solve our problem we can just reapply for funding.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

TJ Gaertig - Discussed purposeful urban planning and design. On gohammond the Mayor writes Hammond's stability is directly tied to its livability. People are always searching for the intangible but important quality of life aspect of a community when choosing a place to call home. I think he really hit the nail on the head with that. There was an article on making Downtown Hammond more pedestrian friendly and that's beautiful. Councilman Rakos posted about upgrading Gibson Park. I think that's awesome. Edison Park is one of the coolest Parks he's ever seen. Thinks we need more of this. A good place to start would be to turn Briar East Woodland Dunes into a bonafide park. It is an incredible habitat. There is no reason to move on with Governor's Parkway. The Grand Avenue solution is cheaper and it's far better for emergency response times.

Gary Dugischorf - Thanked Dave Woerpel for what he's done for our city and for getting the 6700 block of Alexander done. It really turned out nice. He really appreciates it. The neighbors love it.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, motioned 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	13	27	10	24	8	22	12	26	10	24	14	28	11	25	10	23	13	27	4	18
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	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	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	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	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	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 M Rakos
Scott Rakos, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:
RJG

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:45 p.m.
cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk