

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on November 25, 2024 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.

Moment of silence was observed

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL:9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Hi, thanks, Councilmen. I appreciate Councilman Woerpel for the recognition for Steve Fowler today. Steve Fowler was with the City of Hammond for about 20 years. I think he came in right around the same time I came in. He was in charge of recycling when we did it. He was off in Public Works doing a great job for the city. He was way too young to pass away, so we're gonna miss you, Steve. I know a lot of his fellow employees are devastated, trying to deal with the loss. It all came on really quick. He found out he was sick just a couple months ago. He found out he was terminal last week. He's gone this week. It's pretty incredible for a young man to go that quick. God bless his mother and his family. It's really sad. Thank you for recognizing, Councilman. Mayor's activity log, I apologize, it seems like it's a real big report today, but we have a lot of stuff going on, so if you bear with me. WE all went together to see the Gateway Station. That's still on my report even though it was before the last Council Meeting. The entire Hammond Council and the Mayor toured the Gateway Station in the 2nd District. We saw the potential, saw what's going on in the 2nd District, really cool. I stopped by the Central Firehouse a couple weeks ago to congratulate the Assistant Chief Ed Lomeli on his retirement from the Hammond Fire Department. Chief Lomeli was with the Fire Department for 30 something years. Do you know, Scott? 36 I think, something, really, really long time. He's no longer with the city. Chief Lomeli was a great job. That job is open right now. We posted it actually, and we are doing interviews for that job right now. It still hasn't been filled. We cut the ribbon on a brand new Pickleball Facility located in the Jean Shepherd Center over 2 weeks ago. I apologize again. I wasn't here at the last Council Meeting, but that's going really well so far. The new Jean Shepherd Center, we're interviewing for that top spot as we speak. The Hospitality position is also open over there as well. Those spots are all posted and people are bidding on them as we speak. Attended the Hammond's Annual Veteran's Day Parade, it went really well. The weather was perfect. A lot of participation from the Council, I appreciate you all coming to the 5th District and participating in that great event. Met with Councilwoman Janet Venecz, on matters of importance throughout the city. I also met with Attorney David Jensen, and Pastor Steven Munsey of The Family Christian Center to talk about the old Bargain Finders building. It's interesting history for those of you who are familiar with Pastor Munsey and Family Christian Center. Pastor Munsey was a Hessville kid, I don't know if you knew him growing up, Scott. You're probably similar age, funny enough. But he grew up in Hessville. His father built his

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- first church at the Bargain Finders building, right there next to The Little Red Schoolhouse. So, there's interest in The Family Christian Center of reacquiring that building, and putting some type of food distribution center for like Meals on Wheels type of thing at that location. I had a really good meeting with him, and obviously Family Christian Center has the money to get that project done, so good news for a building that looks like crap. That's great that Pastor Munsey and his church are interested. I attended the Police monthly Captain's meeting with the Hammond Police Department. I met with members of Highland's Christian School in the Mayor's Office about a proposal they're making for the 2nd District. It's an interesting proposal. Talk about another facility that has money and can get things done. They've got an interesting proposal. We're still flushing it out, but I have a feeling I'll be talking to you all about that. I attended the Crossroads YMCA grand opening of the Hammond YMCA. I want to say thank you to the Hammond Council for the support with the incentive package we put together. I hope you're proud of it because it's the biggest YMCA in the country. It's located in our city. It's doing gang busters already. There's been over a thousand new members since it's opened last week. I try to go there on the off times and I go there on the off times, and it's slammed. If you go there after work, if you go there on the weekends, it's impressive. It's just slammed in a good way. As you all know, we got about 15 million dollars of incentives, plus some infrastructure work around there, so we definitely did our part, and it looks gorgeous, so thank you for your support on that. We're not done there, by the way, I know you all know that, but, there's a phase 2 to that project that includes going to the North, into commercial buildings that are presently occupied. We're trying to work out the dominos right now, to move those buildings to another part of that footprint, so that we can move and do phase 2 of the expansion which involves, outdoor pool, outdoor waterslides, outdoor waterpark, things of that nature. As you see, they do it first class, so thank you for the help. I met with the Mayor of Hobart Josh Huddleston at El Taco Real. I brought him to the 2nd District. He wanted to talk to me about his bid for the Lake County's Convention Center. Interesting points of view coming from Mayor Huddleston. I met with Pastor Polk from New Hope Missionary Baptist Church regarding Memorial Park development. I met with Randy Palmateer, Northwest Indiana Building and Construction Trade Council to discuss upcoming projects across the City of Hammond and Northwest Indiana. I met with Talina Cisneros, a senior at Hammond Central, regarding her letter of recommendation from me, to support her bid to be nominated to US Naval Academy. This young lady is impressive. I'm sure Councilman Tyler is familiar with her, right? She's a completely impressive young lady. Talina Cisneros, remember that name, ok? Every once in a while I meet young people, and I'm like, wow! I remember a couple people I've done that to, and one of them is sitting on the Council right now. I had the same impression when I met with Miss Cisneros. She was completely impressive, and she obviously is if she wants to be in the US Naval Academy. I was a guest speaker at the Chamber of Commerce coffee and community connections meeting. It was at the Dean and Barbara White Center. I love going to other locations, and I feel real lucky that we have the Sportsplex in our city. Although the Dean and Barbara White Center is beautiful. I conducted interviews for the new Executive Director of the Jean Shepherd Center. We're in the process of doing that right now. Hammond negotiations update, I'd say Police negotiations are doing well because I have the final contract on my desk right now, so I'd say that's going really well. They voted 90-10. 90 percent in favor of the proposal we made to them, so that contract is on my desk. I plan to sign it after it's signed by the lawyers and reviewed for accuracy. Fire, negotiations with Local 556 continue, but we believe that we are close to extending a formal offer as we work to clean up some bargaining language issues. One area of focus is to retain and attract Paramedic candidates to our Fire Department. It's one of the things we've been losing. We've been talking about how we're losing Police Officers, we were, but that's stopped right in the middle of negotiations, thankfully. I think once they started getting wind of the numbers we were talking about, they started settling

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- down. I have a feeling after we get this contract in place, you'll see a lot more stability with the Hammond Police Department. Hammond Fire Department, if there's instability, it's within the Paramedic ranks. That's scary because we need our paramedics. We're trying to address that and keep our paramedics strong in the Hammond Fire Department. The Teamsters, I'm confident that we will be extending a formal offer this week, at the Public Works, Sanitary District, and the Water Department. We have focused on identifying the differences between those contracts, so that the benefits and pay are similar regardless of what subdivision of government you're working for. As a result of our effort, teamster members will be more likely to seek opportunities throughout the city, and provide for a better trained and equipped workforce. Operating Engineers, we're working on that contract as well. This year is ridiculously busy. We're gonna close out Police. We're about to close out Fire. Teamsters will be shortly there after Operating Engineers. There was a letter that went out to your residents. I'm glad it was brought up today at the Council lunch. It was a letter about lead in your water. This letter, I don't have a copy of it right here, I apologize, I have a copy of it on my computer, that's really not gonna do you much good being on my computer, but this letter went out mandated by the EPA for water companies to send it out to their residents about lead in your water. We don't have lead in our water in Hammond. This was mandated by the federal government to send out. We have lead service lines in our territory, we've talked about that. We don't have lead in our water. If you have a lead service line, we can test your water. There will be minimal traces of lead way below the safe limit. Hammond water is beautifully clean. Lake Michigan water is beautifully clean. We are super lucky to leave where we live. You go to other places in the country, their water is dirtier, and less reliable than our water right here. To see this letter go out, and to scare our residents is really disheartening. It sort of tells me a lot about the last EPA. The last EPA, the one that's before Trump takes over, the next EPA. The last EPA was stupid. This did not need to happen. We don't need to send out a letter to scare American residents about lead in your water if you don't have lead in your water, and we don't have lead in our water in Hammond. I don't know why the EPA mandates these types of letters to go out because they go out. Everybody reads it, and if you read it real closely, it says you don't have lead in your water in Hammond. If you don't read it real closely, you're like, holy crap, there's lead in our water. Then you start calling City Hall, and you start calling the Water Department, because you're afraid naturally. This letter did not need to go out. It was mandated by the last EPA to go out and the Hammond Water Department sent it out. I apologize I didn't give you word, I didn't get word until it was out already and I've addressed that with the water company. If we're gonna be sending out mass mailings to our bosses, the water company is supposed to tell me so I can inform you about that. I could've told them that this letter is worded very poorly. I apologize. Hammond Water is tested very regularly. It's below federal limits currently, safely below. The Federal Government's talking about tightening up their limits. If they tighten up their limits, we're still safely below the tightened limits. Hammond water is clean. You didn't need to get this letter. We didn't send it out because we wanted to, EPA forced us to send it out. I apologize. If anybody has any questions about that, please. We test our water regularly. I had information about grants, I'm not even gonna talk about it. I'll wait until Project Wicker comes up. There's a lot going on in the city right now, I apologize for the long report. If you don't have any questions, I'll just go ahead and wait until the stuff comes up.

Councilman Tyler- Mayor, in regards to the water, can we publish the reports of how we test our water, and what our findings are just to ease some concerns?

Mayor McDermott- It's on the Hammond Water website.

Councilman Tyler- It is? Ok.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott- For sure, but we can probably pull it from there, and put it, my web guy's not here, he's usually in the back, it's another guy in the back today. Can you remind me tomorrow so I can follow this up. So like what we can do, I would love to, but I don't understand what it's saying. People that are engineer's could read it and say yeah, Hammond water is beautifully clean. Al, you might understand it. So absolutely. We're tested regularly, Councilman. We all know that there's lead service lines in Hammond. If your house was built before the 1980's, chances are you have lead service lines in Hammond. Eventually, your lead service lines are going to be replaced. It could be 5 years, it could be 30 years, and it's going to cost a lot of money when it's replaced. The question is, who's gonna pay for that cost. Is it going to come out of the Federal Government money? Is it going to come out of Water Department money? Is it going to come out of State money? These are things, because in Hammond alone, if we wanted to change all of the lead service lines in Hammond, it would be 600 million dollars right now, 600 million dollars. That's why this is ridiculous that this letter even went out. There's no way for the Federal Government to get this done right now. If it's 600 million in Hammond, how much does Chicago Cost? 12 billion? There's no way to get this done right now. That's why it was stupid to send this letter out, especially when you have clean water. For those of you in the audience that got scared when you read this letter, I apologize. Believe me, I had it out with my Water Department today, but they told me, they had no choice. This letter had to go out per mandate of the Environmental Protection Agency. The old Environmental Protection Agency. The new one, we're gonna find out shortly who President Trump puts in there. I have a feeling the new Environmental Protection Agency's gonna look at all this stuff and laugh. I just have that feeling.

Councilman Woerpel- This isn't on the water issue, this is on Police and Fire. What was it, a year and a half ago? You came to us and you told us that we were gonna have to do something to keep the first class Police Department and first class Fire Department that we have in Hammond. I'm glad that you said the negotiations are almost over and I saw today, and I won't name the communities, they were posting on social media, that they're doing emergency hires, because they're losing police officers, and fire department officials, and trust me, I know first hand what a first class police department and a first class fire department we have and I'm glad that's gonna be resolved and I commend the administration for working with them to get it pretty much done.

Mayor McDermott- Thank you, Councilman. Today in the newspaper there's a story about Munster PD hiring a resident of Illinois with a questionable background, quote, unquote, according to the newspaper, but it was widely reported that they lured that officer over with an 81,000 dollar salary. That's the kind of numbers we have to compete with. Munster is our neighbor to the South. Our officers look at those salaries, and then they look at their salaries, and if they're making in the 60's, and they know they can go to Munster and make in the 80's, they're leaving us, guys. That's what they're doing. A year and a half ago, we would lose 15-20 officers in a year, which was unprecedented for the Hammond PD. This year, we were losing them, until things got real in negotiation. I don't think we've lost one in quite awhile now. I think we're hitting it right on the head with this. It's a big hit for us. First year raise for the Hammond Police Department under the agreed upon contract, is 15 percent. That's the first year. It gets them up to where they need to be. We fell behind. Their last contract was 0-0-1-1. 0-0-1-1 over four years. We're paying for it now because they fell behind and we can't just say too bad, stay behind. They'll say ok, I'm going to Munster PD. Then we're starting from scratch with a brand new officer. Thank you, it's not a lovely situation, but I feel better.

Councilman Woerpel- Thank you

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Kalwinski- Recently there was something in the paper I think about the Town of Munster suing Hammond.

Mayor McDermott- Yes sir, Hammond Sanitary District.

Councilman Kalwinski- What do you know?

Mayor McDermott- They sued the Hammond Sanitary District, Councilman Mark. I think personally, I think it's piddly, like tiddlywinks in the overall scheme of things. What this is gonna do in the overall scheme of things, because we've been talking about the Department of Justice, and the EPA, the ones that just got fired, ok? Those people put together this master plan for water in the region, and we're a big player in that Councilman, because we're the Hammond Sanitary District. We have customers like Whiting, and Griffith, and Highland, and of course Munster, and Hammond. We're a regional water player, so the Department of Justice and the EPA has this whole grand plan, and we're players in it. They get Griffith to agree to the grand plan, and they get Highland to agree to the grand plan, and they get Whiting to agree to the grand plan, and they just assume that we're on board because we have a consent decree with the Federal Government. Part of us, the Hammond Sanitary District, we're also Munster. If I came to the Council and said, Council, I need to do this, the EPA is mandating it, the Department of Justice is mandating it, and let's say you guys went along and said, great idea, Mayor, a regional water plan, we've needed this for years, and you pass it. I'd have to go to the Munster Town Council and get that same thing passed. That's not gonna happen, obviously, they're suing us. So I'm like hey, feds, go get them. Go get Munster Town Hall. Go there. That's your problem, your problem is not here. We were getting ready to do it. As long as they're suing us, Councilman, I put the brakes on everything, we're not going anywhere with the CMDF Facility, we're not going anywhere with this Regional Solution that the Department of Justice and the EPA put together. Let them go to Munster and convince Munster Town Council of what's going on. That's, in my opinion, that's what it's really about. Councilman Mark, the CMDF Facility that they're talking about, 70 million dollars, 50-70 million. That's huge money. We're gonna have to pay for that and to pay for that, I'm gonna have to come to you guys, and we're gonna have to pass a rate increase, and then we're gonna have to go to Munster and pass a rate increase. They've already passed a rate increase in Highland and Griffith. Then all of a sudden, Munster's gonna say no, it's not gonna work. We can't do it until this is all cleared up. This is gonna give us some breathing room, the way I see it. Thank you Councilman. I'm sorry to keep talking. There's a lot going on right now, as you guys know, it's in front of you.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of November, 13,2024 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from November 6, 2024 through November 20, 2024. Claim #9823 through #10332, inclusive. In the amount of \$8,929,078.62.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to amend the Claims to add additional claims:

#10333 in the amount of \$5,000 to Community Title Company

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS AMENDED

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to amend Claim #10323 for ITSavvy in the amount of 166,848.27 to be changed to Claim #10332

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (Claims as Amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED (as amended)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Alexander- This Friday, we will have our Tree Lighting Ceremony here at City Hall from 4:30-5:30 we will have kid crafts. The Ceremony will begin at 6 p.m. On December 7th will be the Holiday Parade going down Indianapolis Boulevard starting at 10 a.m. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone out.

Council President Rakos- As Council President, I have received and will place on file the 2025 Hammond Redevelopment Commission spending plan pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-14-12.7

Councilman Tyler- I just have one. Over the weekend we held our 5th annual drive through turkey giveaway, thanks to the additional support of the Hammond Fire Department and the Hammond Firefighter's Union, we were able to bless 215 families with turkeys. I also want to thank Councilwoman Alexander, Councilman Rakos, Councilman Salinas, Councilman Spitale, Councilwoman Venecz, Hammond City Clerk Robert Golec, The Ophelia Steen Center, Minister Alliance of Hammond and vicinity, and the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana for their support and pulling this off. Like I said, this is our 5th one and it pretty much went off without a hitch. We had some traffic control issues, but I think we'll be able to duplicate the event next year and hopefully

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Tyler cont.- give out even more turkeys to families in need. So thank you everybody for your support.

Council President Rakos- Also, after the parade, the Holiday Parade, HC3 is again hosting Frostyville, at the Hansen Community Center 2823 Martha Street. That will be Saturday, December 7th 12-3. They'll have the Challenger Learning Center, Winter Wonderlab, raffles, Santa, elves, face painting, so come join us for the holiday shopping, treats, and entertainment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Woerpel- Council as a Whole will be bringing out 24-28.

Capital Improvement Board- Councilman Emerson-The Capital Improvement Board met on November 18, 2024. We dealt with:

Item A- Funding Allocation #218- The HAST signage and striping project; Hawk Enterprises in the amount of \$406.40

Item B- Funding Allocation #219- Repave Erie Lackawana Trail; The First Group Engineering in the amount of \$19,800.00

Item C- Funding Allocation #220- Kennedy Ave reconstruction at 174th Place to 169th Street; Supplemental Construction Engineering in the amount of \$41,500.00

Item D- Funding Allocation #221- Marble Street Reconstruction change order #2; Milestone Contractors North in the amount of \$13,323.00

Item E- Funding Allocation #222- 7500-7600 Van Buren Street resurfacing change order #1; Milestone Contractors North in the amount of \$31,704.30

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venez- Upcoming meetings

- Edison Community Watch; Wed., Dec 4; 6:30 pm; Edison School
- Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues., Dec 3; 6pm; VFW on Hohman
- Irving Community Watch; Tues., Dec 10; 9:30am; Irving School
- Whiting/Robertsdale; Thurs., Dec 12; 6:30pm; Calumet College

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE

24-28 An Ordinance Codifying the City of Hammond Homebound Program (Down Payment Assistance) and Amending Award and Eligibility Requirements

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

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for amendment of 24-28 to 24-28A.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilman Woerpel- What this ordinance does is, it expands the Homebound Program and it makes it available to, in the original ordinance, Police, Fire, Teachers, Educational Professionals, City of Hammond full time employees as described in provision 1, which included the Port Authority, the Hammond Sanitary District, and the Hammond Housing Authority was left out in the first one, this just amends in the Hammond Housing Authority.

Mayor McDermott- I know you guys talked about this in the last meeting that I couldn't make. This was given to us as a recommendation by the Northern Indiana Realtor's Association, formerly known as GNIAR. This was at the Realtor's Breakfast. They, as a critique of our previous program, was the one critique of the Homebound Program, was it's not generous enough. It really is so low it's negligible. If you really want to make a difference, it's gotta be up in the ten thousand dollar area. We took that back, Councilman Spitale is our liaison at the realtors. We took that back, discussed it. I know Owana in Community Development worked really hard. Darrell and her worked real hard making sure that we can make sure that people that need to qualify for income reasons, can qualify for income reasons, and then if you can't qualify for income reasons, we have the other money that we use that's not Federal Government money that can pay for others or you know that police officer that wants their first home. This is a good thing, and I hope the Council can support it. We've been doing this for awhile, but it's never been codified as an ordinance. If you guys do this, it will be codified as an ordinance in Hammond for all time. One more thing, Councilman, I apologize, first home. If you wanna bounce from your current home to another home, you cannot qualify for this money. It's your first home that we're talking about, so thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski- Can it be your second home, but first in Hammond?

Mayor McDermott- Interesting question, but I don't believe so, Councilman. That's a good question. I could see where you're coming from. We want you as a resident in Hammond. Good question. I don't think under this ordinance it would qualify, but that's interesting. If there's a lot of demand, I think that we should think about that.

Councilman Tyler- Mayor, when it says educational professionals, do we have a definition of who that includes?

Mayor McDermott- There's probably a definition there. I know that this has been going for a long time, Councilman Barry. Police, Fire, and Teachers, that's how it's been going for years. We're expanding it by making it an ordinance to include the City Employees. We inadvertently left off Hammond Housing, which is why we're doing the amendment today, Councilman. We've always done Police, Fire and Teachers, and quite frankly, Councilman Barry, I don't think a lot of teachers participate in it. I believe it's defined in the ordinance though, I remember reading it.

Councilman Tyler- The original ordinance?

Mayor McDermott- Yes, sir.

Councilman Tyler- I was just asking because I know there's a lot of individuals who work for our School City that might not be actual teachers, but they still contribute to the livelihood of our students

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Mayor McDermott- Scott, do you know the answer to that? We have an Educational Professional right here. Look at that.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- It is defined as licensed Educational Professionals, so just to be straight, someone who doesn't possess a license would not qualify for the program, even if they're employed by the school system. It is licensed Education Professionals.

Mayor McDermott- So this would be Police Officers in Hammond, Fire Fighters in Hammond, licensed Teachers in Hammond, including HAST, that includes Bishop Noll and stuff like that?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Yes, if they're licensed.

Mayor McDermott- and then City Employees, Councilman. It's not for all employees. If it is for all residents, if they go through that program, it's going to be through Owana then. Correct?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Correct.

Councilman Barry Tyler- So when you say license, it could also mean, School Leaders, Principals, and Assistant Principals?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- It does, yes.

Councilman Barry Tyler- Ok.

Mayor McDermott- Good question.

Councilman Kalwinski- I didn't catch that last piece.

Mayor McDermott- Like Principals, and stuff like that, do they apply, and Scott said yes.

Councilman Kalwinski- Could it be licensed Mental Health Professionals, Counselors, that sort of thing?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- If they are employed by a school, yes, in that capacity. So a School Counselor, Occupational Therapist, if they're licensed and employed by a school system in Hammond, yes.

Mayor McDermott- I'd have a hard time saying no to somebody wanting to buy a house in Hammond, just being honest with you. We want people to buy houses in Hammond, right? So lets just keep in mind that at the end of the day that a Speech Professional wanted to buy a house in Hammond, we'd be like yeah, Educational Professional, come on in. These are great questions on what is an Educational Professional.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9652 PASSED
(As amended)

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

24-29 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund #2486) for the FY24 Law Enforcement Mental Health and Wellness Act Implementation Projects Awarded to City of Hammond Police Department

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Salinas, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title

Councilwoman Venecz- This a grant that the Hammond Police Department applied for and received, \$200,000 which is for, to support annual mental health wellness checks, mental health counseling services, and critical incident stress management services for our first responders and their families.

Councilman Woerpel- It's my understanding that this creates the line item for that money to go in, correct?

Councilman Kalwinski-So it says the grant is to provide support for annual mental health wellness checks. Is that the police going out to do the checks at home or is it to do mental health wellness checks among themselves? Same goes with the mental health counseling services, are the police providing mental health counseling services to the police, are they providing it to the residents?

Councilwoman Venecz- This is a grant that was applied for by the police department for the police department. It is for our police officers and their families.

Councilman Kalwinski- So it isn't police offering these services to their employees, it's having money to make referrals for the police department out of the department to get professional help?

Councilwoman Venecz- I guess I don't follow you.

Councilman Woerpel- This is for the police offers to seek, correct, mental health and wellness implementation project awards?

Mayor McDermott- It's for a therapist.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Woerpel- It's for the officers?

Mayor McDermott- It's for the officers that deal with trauma.

Councilman Kalwinski- So is the therapist in house at the police department?

Mayor McDermott- No, they would come in and deal with them. If you have more questions, we can have the Chief come in and answer these questions, I have no problem. This is not drop dead emergency, has to go today. If we have questions, I have no problem bouncing it for a meeting. We have 3 meetings left this year.

Councilwoman Venecz- It's 1st and 2nd

Mayor McDermott- I'll get the Chief in here for the next meeting, ok? I'm not sure.

Councilman Kalwinski- Thanks

Mayor McDermott- I think Megan knows, but let's just get the Chief in here.

Councilman Tyler- We can still do that, but I just went to the website and it says, the funds are used to improve the delivery of and access to mental health and wellness services for law enforcement through the implementation of peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention, and other promising practices for wellness programs. The FY24 program will fund projects that develop knowledge, increase awareness of effective mental health and wellness strategies, increase the skills and abilities of law enforcement, and increase the number of law enforcement agencies and relevant state coders using peer support, training, family resources, suicide prevention and other promising factors for wellness programs.

Councilman Woerpel- This is the introduction of it, right?

Mayor McDermott- Yes

Councilman Woerpel- We can bring this up in Caucus?

Council President Rakos- No.

Mayor McDermott- I promise next meeting, I'm going to have the Chief here, and I'm going to have Ben Stombaugh, who is the wellness officer, so that we can shed light on what we all have questions about. I'm not sure the answer to it, and I don't want to guess. But it's 1st and 2nd so they'll be here for the next meeting.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Woerpel, requests a Council as a Whole committee meeting at 5:15 p.m. on December 9, 2024.

Mayor McDermott- Sounds good

Councilman Kalwinski- When Councilman Tyler was reading about peer support, usually peer support means

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Kalwinski cont.- somebody within the department is trained to provide support to his peers, so the question sounds to me, are we training somebody in house to do these services?

Mayor McDermott- If we are, it's Ben. That's why I think Ben should be here for the next meeting. He serves as the wellness officer. He's an actual uniformed Hammond Police Officer, Ben Stombaugh. He's also like, the wellness officer. This is through him, and through his initiative, so I'll have the Chief and Ben at the next meeting and you guys can ask him. I know that this is your area of expertise, and it's not mine.

Council President Rakos- Any further discussion? All in favor?

AYES:ALL

Council President Rakos- All opposed?

24-30 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund #2487) for the FY24 Cops Technology and Equipment Program Awarded to City of Hammond Police Department

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title

Councilwoman Venecz- This is to establish a new line item for the Controller for the funding of a grant that was applied for by the Hammond Police Department and received in the amount of \$350,000 to develop and acquire effective equipment technology and interoperational communications equipment. From what I understand, this will be to enhance the license plate readers.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

24R-20A2 Resolution of the Hammond Common Council Approving a Declaratory Resolution Related to Creation of an Economic Revitalization Area

Councilwoman Venecz- I do need to schedule a public hearing for December 9th, which is prior to the confirmatory resolution.

Mayor McDermott- This is an important project that Councilwoman is carrying. It's a very important project, and it has time lines. I know every Councilman has had a conversation with either myself or Hammond Economic Development team. We have 3 meetings left in this year, and the precipitating factor in this whole thing, and I know that this has been discussed with you, and I know that the public is listening, I just, this has to go down before the end of the year if it's gonna happen. It's the biggest investment in the history of the City of Hammond. This is important that this passes. A data center, almost all the investment a data center make is tax exempt, meaning it's not gonna go towards the 123 tax caps. What you can do with these developments is make

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- PILOT agreements with them. PILOT, payment in lieu of taxes. I know you all know that. PILOT is, if I made a deal with, Purdue Northwest, they don't pay property taxes, but you can make a PILOT arrangement with Purdue Northwest, where they pay for fire and police protection. This is sort of the type of deal we're making with this development is a PILOT arrangement and it's, I think it's a good deal. I know it's a good deal. It's a better deal than any other municipality struck with any of the other data centers in the history of this state. There's a few of them that have gone down recently. It's massive compared to those as far as what we get locally and the amount of investment made. My economic development team worked real close with the IEDC and worked real close with the data center developers. It's really time line oriented. By the end of the year, and if it's not by the end of the year, we're gonna lose this deal. I'm not trying to be dramatic. I explained to you all why it has to be by the end of the year, and I think everybody understands it. We have 3 meetings left and this is an important deal. So if you have any questions, I suggest you call me, or call Economic Development, call Scott Miller, call Kevin. We will do anything we can to answer your questions so that we don't have any questions for the next few council meetings, so we can knock them all out before we get to the end of the year.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R20 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel-Now that that's passed, just to clarify, we are gonna schedule a public hearing on the confirmatory resolution for December 9th, at our next meeting, correct?

Council President Rakos- That's correct.

Councilman Woerpel-If I may continue, I don't know if it was mentioned, but I believe we have a tree lighting ceremony. I'm deaf in this ear. One last thing, I wanna wish everybody a Happy Thanksgiving. I got a notification tonight that a billboard went up out by Southlake Mall and my son's picture is on it. It's a fentanyl awareness billboard. I know the holidays can be tough on people. I met a whole community of people this year, survivors of drug abuse, survivors of people that were lost because of drug abuse, and survivors of suicide. All I ask is, while you're enjoying your family, is if you know someone struggling, it don't hurt to give them a call and ask them how they're doing. If you know somebody that's really trying, it don't hurt to call and encourage them. I just want everybody to remember that during the holidays that there's every family, there isn't a family out there that doesn't have somebody struggling with some sort of mental disorder, and yes, drug abuse is a mental disorder. I know full well what it does to families. So if you know somebody, in my son's memory, would you please reach out to them and ask them how they're doing? Thank you.

Councilman Emerson- I would like to echo, piggyback on what Councilman Woerpel just said, to reach out to all families, if you know someone that's struggling with fentanyl or any other drug, please contact them, and check on how they're doing.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Tyler- I just want to share with the public, everyone who's watching at home, that I think everybody knows that I've been a highschool football coach for 19 years now, even though I look this young. I've had the privilege of coaching other a lot of different head coaches at my time at Hammond High and Hammond Central, and I just wanna share with the public that our most recent head coach has opted to resign. I think that some people already know. He's from Lowell, so he's heading back to Lowell to take a teaching position there and be an assistant coach there. So I just wanna thank Adam Houdak for his commitment to Hammond families. He's not from Hammond, but he decided to take this job when he could have been coaching elsewhere. He really poured his heart, his time, and his energy into the young men on our football team for the past 4 years. I just wanna thank him for his hard work, his dedication, his commitment and wish him good luck in the future. Of course, just also share that that coaching position is open, so if there is anybody who is interested, you can apply through the School City of Hammond website. That is of course for the Head Football Coach position at Hammond Central High School. Thank you.

Councilman Woerpel- I thought you were gonna say you were applying for a job in the City of Chicago. It's not open yet though.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Aubrey Zalanka- My husband and I have started a non profit called the Hammond Downtown Redevelopment District Corporation in hopes to unite the businesses downtown and share how wonderful Hammond is with all of our fellow people in the region. We started a cruise night throughout the summer on Mondays, and now a farmer's market year round, every second Friday, of each month. I've been dedicated to the region my whole life, I have also lived in several cities throughout the country, so I bring a different perspective into the mix. If you show up for us, it will get better for you and us. Downtown will be wonderful. We invite you to our Holiday Stroll on December 7th, just after the Holiday Parade. Stop and get your downtown passport to get it stamped at all of the stops. There will be hot chocolate stops, food festivals, shopping, free haircuts, music, historical tours, and so much more and you get to vote on your favorite window display. We hope to see you all there. You can find out about events at Hammonddowntown.org. I hope to see you all.

George Stoya- While I share some of the perspectives the Mayor has towards the EPA, with respect to this lawsuit against the Hammond Sanitary District, I think he ought to take a closer look. This is the same law firm that sued us before when the 3 cities were involved and we lost. Like that suit, its settled on the cost of service studies, that for some reason, I find, my own opinion, the Mayor is resistant about who's gonna determine what the proportionate costs are, and that's what this suit is about. In paragraph 31, the winner gets to make the other guy pay for the costs. In addition to whatever damages are potentially there, we'd also have to pay if we lost, the attorney's costs and fees. I sent a copy to Liz, and an appellate decision that outlines the parameters. You guys should look at this. They are a utility law firm. This isn't a game. You need to look into it.

Tom Burns- I am 91 years old, I was born and raised here. I went to school in Hammond. I'm here to talk about my dad. Our business has been open since 1908. We started on State, and in 1926 we moved to Hohman. I would like to petition to see if something could be done for my dad. I was thinking maybe a street sign over on Mason street by our funeral home. He grew up and went to school in Hammond, and was very active in the community. I was just hoping you could do something for our family since we've been here for so long.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Ken Rosek- On Thanksgiving, my dad would take me and my brother out rabbit hunting in the woods to get out of my mom's hair while she was cooking. After, we would go to a local bar, and play pool, have a drink, and then he would take us home to have a great big meal. It was a great tradition. There were never any rabbits, and even if we did see a rabbit, it was impossible to catch. Then I realized, we were never gonna catch a rabbit. My dad never had any intention on catching a rabbit, it was just about getting us out of the house, and excited about going. It was the best tradition. My brother is going through a hard time right now, and I think I'll take him out and continue the tradition, and stop at a local bar and play some pool. Happy Thanksgiving everyone.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to Adjourn

AYES: ALL

2024 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

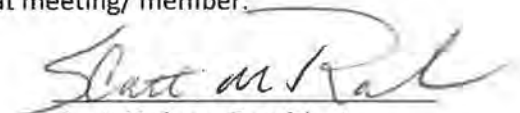
	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec		
	8	22	12	26	11	25	8	22	13	28	10	24	8	22	12	26	9	23	15	28	13	25	9		
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	A	P	P	P		
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Janet Venecz	E	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	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	A	P	P	P	
Dave Woerpel	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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			

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: 7:10 p.m.
mg/cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk