

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on February 24, 2025 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Dave Woerpel 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, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Good Evening, Council, President Woerpel. Some announcements and updates over the last couple of weeks. We had a great turnout for 219 day this past Saturday. We had a Vegas theme. We had a Sinatra singer. I was there and saw several of you there. Just the overall mood was great. We had a really good time. A lot of positive comments online, on social media as well. We also this past weekend hosted our first competitive pickleball tournament at the Jean Shepherd Center. Picklemania 2025. It had a \$20,000 prize money. Half was sponsored by 219 Pickleball, the other half was sponsored by the Southshore Visitor Convention Bureau. We drew people in from Texas. We even had a team where one of the players was from Paris, France. The compliments we received about the Jean were all really positive. I stopped by a couple times over the weekend, and it was packed. They're already planning bigger and better for next year. The Gaming Advisory applications were all due on Friday. We had a flurry of people stopping by the office on Friday to drop them off. That has now concluded. We're gonna take a few weeks to get ourselves organized and then those meetings will begin in March. An update on our YMCA member discount, I had a meeting with Jay Buckmaster, the CEO of the area YMCA's and we are gonna be able to offer a discount to Hammond Employees. We have a follow up this week. So probably by the next time you guys meet, that will be finalized and we'll be able to offer a discount to the YMCA for all City of Hammond Employees as a nice extra perk and to acknowledge your significant contribution to that project. The City of Hammond ended up putting over 15 million dollars into the YMCA project. I'm happy to do that. We'll actually have the best rate of any organization due to the fact that we contributed. Mayor's getting close to announcing the Festival of the Lakes lineup. We've been meeting every other week at this point and planning activities. We have majority of the acts locked in and we'll be getting close to announcing acts, sooner than later. Some of you noticed, I know that Councilman Tyler reached out, that Memorial Park Development started this past week. We're working on the infrastructure there and are moving forward. Of course, you have in front of you tonight, a zoning change to approve on that development as well. Another property that has got a lot of interest, we put up a sign just north of 18th Street Brewery on that grass lot where they used to park, and that's 500 Fayette. We've had quite a bit of interest of people calling on that property. We have some people that, what we're looking for is, mixed use residential, where we have businesses on the first floor, and residential on the 2nd and 3rd floor. We've already had some developers call us with some ideas to do just that. I got to tour the new Fire Station #2 with Chief

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Bernie and our Engineer, Dean Button last week. It should be completed this Friday with the punch list items and then we'll have an open house for all to come out and see it. It looks fantastic in there. It really is gonna be a nice addition to the North Hammond/Robertsdale area. I attended the Lakeshore Chamber Annual Dinner. A few of you were there with me, and got to introduce some of the award winners for Hammond businesses on behalf of the Mayor. This year was hosted up at the Horseshoe Casino. A big turnout from the City. We had 4 tables worth of City people who came out to support. Good to see everybody there. Update on 3 141st property, which I know a lot of our residents have had concerns about, how that property is moving forward, the Mayor, myself, and the team, met with the proprietor of the business and the owner to develop a plan to move forward, and I did get to see some renderings of what it's going to look like, and it really does look nice. I think the end result, people are going to be please with. I just think they weren't equipped to deal with a city who is on top of things. They did a lot of work in Chicago before, and they're just not used to the level of oversight that Hammond provides to make sure our projects are done safely and according to environmental standards, but they got the message. It was a productive meeting. We developed a timeline of things to get done, and I do think that project's gonna move forward and ultimately, finally get some resolution to that property. Lastly I wanna bring up that we had a meeting on parade safety protocols. We are introducing a new process that, prior to coming to BOPW for parade requests, and these are the parades that are not run by the city, like our St. Paddy's Day parade for example. The person responsible for the parade is gonna meet with the Hammond Police, and they're going to go over parade safety considerations, just so we can do everything we can to make sure parades are as safe as possible. In case of the St. Paddy's Day parade, the route is gonna be trimmed a little bit, just again, for safety considerations more than anything else. Just 2 more announcements, and then I'll take my seat. We have Mayor's Night Out coming up, March 12th. It's going to be at HAST for the 2nd District. Then we have Mayor's State of the City, which is put on with the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce and that is March 5th, at the Dynasty, at 11 o'clock. That concludes my reports. Thank you. Any questions?

Council President Woerpel- I just have a comment about that pickleball tournament. I went there and watched a lot of it. I'm impressed by the amount of people. What really impressed me is how many out of towners say that finding a place like that is rare and it's one of the best they've played in. I know I sent you this earlier, but as far as the pond goes out there, we actually had 2 state records caught this year at Dowling Park Pond. One of them was a 13 inch Brook Trout and another one was a 13 inch Tilapia. That's, I believe 3 years in a row for the Tilapia out there, so. I just put that in there, and by the way I have seen some Bald Eagles floating around out there too.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Yeah, when we had the employee Olympics, a couple weekends ago, there was a bald eagle flying around back there that day, so very cool.

Councilman Tyler- Thanks for the report, I just have a couple questions for you. One, connected to Memorial Park, residents were saying that some of their fences were torn down. Do you know anything?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- I don't have a comment on that right now, but I'll take a note of it and I'll get back to you.

Councilman Tyler- People were just wondering if they were gonna be put back up or if it's, I don't know in terms of location of the fence, maybe was on park property, maybe it wasn't so, I don't know. So if you could find out, that would be great. Thank you.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- I'd be happy to.

Councilman Tyler- My other question is, this 2024 year in review, is this public? Or is this just for the Council? From the Parks Department.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- I believe that is a public document. I don't know if it's on their website just yet. Is the nature of your inquiry of how we're getting it out there?

Councilman Tyler- I was just wondering because there's a lot of good information in here and I know people always ask about different parks that are going to be renovated, and there's a lot of information in here that I feel like the public would want to know. So I was just wondering how we're gonna advertise it.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- I'll check with our Park Leader, Jim Taillon, and I'll get back to you on both.

Councilman Kalwinski- Chief of Staff, good to see you. If you have a few minutes during the course of the week, I'd like to catch up with you about 3 141st.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- We're preparing a memo actually, directly for you that summarizes the meeting, and I have copies of the renderings for you and everything else.

Councilman Kalwinski- We'll take a few minutes this week, maybe?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- That's absolutely fine.

Councilman Kalwinski- Thank you.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Yes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of February 10, 2025 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from February 5, 2025 through February 19, 2025. Claim #1377 through claim #1881, inclusive. In the amount of \$4,564,216.15.

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to amend in claim #1882, to the Polish American Heritage month Committee of Calumet Region , in the amount of \$100.00.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

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, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

(As Amended)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

25-02 An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of a Section 108 Guarantee Loan and Dealing With
Other Matters Pertaining to the Expenditure of Loan Proceeds for Program Year 2025

Council President Woerpel- Does anybody wish to speak? (x3) Hearing none, public hearings are closed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Alexander- Prom Genie will be having their annual boutique day, which is their annual prom dress giveaway on Saturday, March 22nd from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Civic Center. It is first come, first serve, but there will be free dresses, shoes, jewelry, and make up and hair consultations. This is for any current 2024-2025 high school student with an ID or credentials from your school that will allow them to get a free dress, shoes, or jewelry for that day. That is Saturday, March 22nd, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Civic Center. 5825 Sohl Avenue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community and Crime Watch - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

Edison Community Watch; Edison School; Wed, Mar 5; 6:30 p.m.

Harrison Park Crime Watch; VFW on Hohman; Tues, Mar 4; 6 p.m.

Hessville Crime Watch; HC3 Community Center; Thurs, Mar 20; 6 p.m.

Irving Community Watch; Irving School; Tues, Mar 11; 9:30 a.m.

Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Calumet College; Thurs, Mar 13; 6:30 p.m.

South Hohman Ave Neighborhood Watch; will be sometime in April

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Spitale - Brought out 25-02 and 25-03

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

25-02 An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of a Section 108 Guarantee Loan and Dealing With Other Matters Pertaining to the Expenditure of Loan Proceeds for Program Year 2025

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for final passage.

Councilman Spitale- This is to delegate the section 108 loan funds as part of the sportsplex expansion construction

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9665 PASSED

25-03 An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 9643 of the City of Hammond as it Pertains to the Classification of Vehicles Subject to the Municipal Vehicle Excise Tax Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-6-5-2(a)

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

Councilman Spitale- The BMV flagged for the having an addition of the mini trucks now and the military vehicles were added.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9666 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

25-04 An Ordinance Reclassifying Certain Lands in the City of Hammond for Zoning Purposes and Amending Ordinance No. 8514 (An Ordinance Establishing a Zoning Plan for the City of Hammond Including the Regulations and Maps to Administer the Zoning Plan in Order to Provide for Orderly Growth and Development Within the City, All in Accordance With the Comprehensive/Land Use Plan, as Amended) for Property Commonly Known as 5911-5971 Noble Avenue, 5919-5963 Ray Avenue, and 1339 Highland Street

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Salinas, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title, with a Council as a Whole committee meeting at 5:15 p.m., an intent to consider, on March 10, 2025

Councilman Tyler-Just so we are all aware, this is to reclassify, rezone parts of the Memorial Park area, to go from a recreational area to residential district, so we can move forward with the Memorial Park development plan. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Council President Woerpel- Is there any further discussion(x3) Hearing no further discussion, all those in favor, signify by saying aye? AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

25R-04 A Resolution of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana Approving Plan Commission Resolution No. 2025-01 as a Written Order and Finding of Fact Approving Redevelopment Commission Resolution No. 2024-17 as a Declaratory Resolution that Designated the City Hall Redevelopment Area and Approved the Redevelopment Plan for the Gateways Redevelopment Area, Pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-14 and the Administrative Code 50 IAC 8

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Salinas, moves for adoption

Councilman Tyler-This is the Council agreeing to the determination of the plan commission to establish the City Hall redevelopment area, which will be located just to the North of us. If you pass by there now, you will be able to see the rendering of what Lyons Commons will look like in the future. So excited about this development. It's been 2 or 3 years in the making now. So excited to move forward with this.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R04 ADOPTED

25R-05 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Gabriela Gallegos as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moves for adoption

Councilman Rakos- This is a reappointment to the commission. I believe this is her second term.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R05 ADOPTED

25R-06 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Anne Herbert as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moves for adoption

Councilman Tyler- As Clerk Golec stated, this is a resolution confirming the reappointment of Anne Herbert as

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilman Tyler cont.- a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission. This means that she will be on the commission until December 31, 2028. Councilwoman Venecz, I believe this is her 3rd?

Councilwoman Venecz-Maybe even 4th.

Councilman Tyler- Either 3rd or 4th reappointment. I know she takes pride in the service she provides for the city and everybody loves her and the work that she does. So thank you Anne, and congratulations on your reappointment.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R06 ADOPTED

25R-07 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Albert Ochoa as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moves for adoption

Councilman Rakos- The appointment of Alberto Ochoa to the Human Relations Commission, I believe it's his 2nd term as well.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R07 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to approve Rosemary Wojdyla for a reappointment to the Hammond Port Authority Board

Councilman Kalwinski- I believe most of the Council knows of Rosemary because of her work with Redevelopment Commission in the past and her work with the Port Authority. She's also a volunteer at the Pulaski Park Senior Center as well as very active in her church with St. Vincent De Paul group providing food and clothing to the community at large.

Councilman Salinas- Thank you for the resume.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (reappointment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Tyler, moved to approve Janice Polka for a reappointment to the Hammond Community Corporation

Councilwoman Venecz- This will be her 2nd, 3 year term.

ROLL CALL VOTE (reappointment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Queen Alexander- I was listening to your last meeting, because I was not here, and neither was my daughter Katrina Alexander. The Mayor was very rude because she asked a simple question. Her question was not answered because Janet Venecz called for the vote on that question. I understand you are trying to get the meeting over with. I expected you Dave Woerpel to say something, but you didn't say anything. You all are elected by the citizens of Hammond. The citizens have a say on what goes on within this Council. You aren't doing what you're supposed to. That was very rude of him to say. My daughter was sitting at home on the couch because she fell down a flight of steps. I didn't appreciate it and I'm letting you know that.

Enrique Meza- I am the new President of Hammond Optimist Youth Sports. Our mission extends far beyond the game itself. I want to continue this legacy and also expand it's access and strengthening our partnership with the City. Tonight I'm here to introduce myself and to share our vision with your support to make this a reality. We want to make Hammond the premier softball/baseball hub in Northwest Indiana. Travel Ball has lead the decline of rec ball and has increased the overall cost. Baseball used to be accessible and we want to make it accessible to all again.

Ken Rosek- What the Council did last meeting was disgusting. It was the 3rd time this year that the City violated our free speech. Over 100 people were relegated to the basement. It was a dirty trick. We need to follow the protocol. Last week you told us the same old tired story about how you would get overtime as a mailman due to the stopped trains. No one from Hessville waits on trains because they know how to get around them. I can see you with your feet up in your mail truck listening to the ball game and ripping off the tax payers. Why should anyone believe you're not doing the same thing right now? We knew you would all fall into place and do what you were told. How is that raise working out? Seems to be paying off now. I can go to staples and get a rubber stamp for \$10 and get the same results. .

Matt Marcum- I've been a resident for 54 years and I support the Governor's Parkway Bridge Project. This

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Matt Marcum cont.-wooded area is not historic. It's not 5,000 years old. Bald Eagles don't live there. Certainly dinosaurs never roamed this area. These people act as this area is Yellowstone National Park. It's such a wasteland. These trails are littered with broken glass, abandoned shopping carts, and roofing shingles. It's a mosquito infested swampland.

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

AYES: ALL

2025 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

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

ATTEST.



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:45 p.m.
mg/cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk



Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council