

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on May 27, 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, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Salinas, Tyler

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Hi, thanks. It's good to see the Council. Thanks everybody for being at City Hall today. It's nice to see all the young people here. Congratulations for all the students that are in the audience today from all across the School City of Hammond that are coming here to receive scholarships today. Congratulations. It's great to see all these young faces out there coming to City Hall to watch their government in action. I want to start off and thank Councilman Kalwinski and the Hammond Mohawks for throwing a great party yesterday. I mean, it's a Memorial Day Parade, so I wouldn't say a party, but the weather was perfect, the residents were out in force, it was a great time all around, lots of entrants, bands, music, just a good time all around in North Hammond yesterday. Hammond Mohawks have been doing it for a long time. I don't remember a much more perfect afternoon, than yesterday. It was packed and perfect weather and we don't get that very often in the region, so congratulations to North Hammond and the Hammond Mohawks. I want to start off also with my activity log. I met with Hammond Sanitary District officials, attorney's, and my administrative staff to discuss pending litigation. We have a couple lawsuits with the Hammond Sanitary District. I don't know if it's going to get to the level where we need to start talking. I'm sure you're vaguely aware of some of the stuff, but it's good to stay close to the district because they're dealing with big numbers over there. Also, another North Hammond story, Councilman Mark, Ms. Sharon Stolarz and I had a phone conversation over the last couple of weeks. She's a really nice resident of North Hammond, and a big fan of Pulaski Park. I know Councilman Mark is also a fan of Pulaski Park, so thank you to Ms. Stolarz for having a nice conversation with your Mayor. We held Mayor's Night Out in the 3rd District. I want to thank Councilman Barry for hosting Mayor's Night Out. It was a great night. Myself, along with a city team, attended the International Convention of Shopping Centers, convention in Las Vegas. The City of Hammond for the first time ever, had a booth at the convention, and talked to hundreds of developers. I'm really glad. It's taken me along time before we had a booth there. I'm really glad we got a booth. I could tell you, we pitched 2 pieces of property. We decided to approach it, instead of a shotgun approach, focus on 2 really develop-able pieces of property. Two properties we were pushing was one in the 4th District. I call it the haunted house property. We didn't pitch it as the haunted house property, but that's what we call it in City Hall. The other is what we call the gateway property in the 2nd District, at the border of the 1st and 2nd District. We had professional handouts, we had people representing hundreds of millions of dollars, and we handed out lots of our materials. I felt really good about the whole trip. I want to

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.-thank everybody that attended. I know there was a few Council members there as well, so I want to thank them for coming along also. Hopefully I'll be able to report in the next couple of months some serious interest to the point where we need to start getting the Council involved, because that's the goal. I had lunch with Bill Hanna from the Dean and Barbara White Foundation. Him and I touched base on what's going on with the YMCA expansion. As you all know, we are under a challenge to get the YMCA expanded to the water park that's going to go towards 165th. We have some obstacles in the way of that. My economic development team and I are working overtime to try to make that happen. I met with David Pavlik. David Pavlik is a person that's very interesting. He's coordinating the investors that are lining up hundreds of millions of dollars to invest in the Hammond Data Center. I can safely say hundreds of millions of dollars are behind this young man. We had a meeting at City Hall talking about everything that's going on with our proposal. It was on the front page of the newspaper, if everything goes the way we hope it goes, we could have a data center worth 7 billion dollars sitting on the Lake Michigan Shoreline right next to our current data center which would present amazing opportunities for the students behind us because we could literally fund a program like College Bound for eternity with an investment like that. So to talk to Mr. Pavlik and to get on the same page as him is very important if this goes the right way. I remember there was a comment in the council meeting about 6 months ago, hey College Bound is great but if we could find a permanent funding source for College Bound, this would be a permanent funding source for College Bound if it goes the way we think. I'll tell you, I think we have a decent shot of landing this thing and we have a development agreement worked out that's extremely beneficial for our city over the next 20 years. Let's keep our fingers crossed. You're going to start to see action on that front, Redevelopment is going to see action on that front, and the City Council is going to start to see action on that front, and we're getting documentation together to prepare to show you what's going on there. We do have obstacles in our way. One of them is power. We're talking about something that would be the largest customer in Nisource. The largest customer by far would be this data center that we're talking about. We have major obstacles to get over, but if we can land this proposal in our city, that's amazing opportunity for our state, not just for Hammond, for Indiana. It'd be one of the biggest. Last but not least, multiple meetings with Personnel, and the Chief of Staff over department head and personnel issues. I spoke a little bit at the Council lunch today. I know I can only meet with 4 of you at a time, but we have a personnel issue going on in the city, and I'd prefer not to talk about it over the microphone. If you want to find out, obviously I will inform my bosses, the Hammond City Council, but it's something I prefer not to talk about over the microphone. I don't know if you have any questions, but I'm here for any questions you have. I know today we have the bond going for the Port Authority. I know we've talked about that before. A lot of work is going to be done with the docks at the Port Authority, the break wall at the Port Authority, this is a very important bond. I don't know if you have any questions. Thank you very much. Have a nice day everybody.

COMMON COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING

Councilwoman Venecz- Over the past 25 years, the Hammond Common Council has been proud to offer 15 \$1000 scholarships to our Hammond students. Some of you who are here this evening, congratulations. You are a recipient of that \$1000. What I'm going to do, I would really like if your principal was here to introduce you. If they are not here, I will certainly do that and you can tell us a little bit about yourself.

COMMON COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP DRAWING cont.

DISTRICT 1	ANNA DE LA TORRE	BISHOP NOLL	PRESENT
DISTRICT 1	JAIME LOZANO OROZCO	HAST	-----
DISTRICT 2	MARCUS BROWDER	HAMMOND CENTRAL	PRESENT
DISTRICT 2	ORIANA NAVA	HAST	PRESENT
DISTRICT 3	BIANCA SOLANO	HAST	PRESENT
DISTRICT 3	GREGORY DOTSON	HAMMOND CENTRAL	-----
DISTRICT 4	GIOVANI BAILEY-HANNAH	HAMMOND CENTRAL	PRESENT
DISTRICT 4	OPEMIPO ADEPOJU	HAST	-----
DISTRICT 5	NYA DOTSON	MORTON	-----
DISTRICT 5	JA'MYARA ELLIS	MORTON	-----
DISTRICT 6	KAELYN FORD	MORTON	-----
DISTRICT 6	EDUARDO ARCEO	MORTON	PRESENT
DISTRICT 2	LYILA VEGA	HAST	-----
DISTRICT 2	BIANCA POINTER-THOMPSON	MORTON	-----
DISTRICT 3	EMMET BYRNES SWIBES	HAST	-----

Councilwoman Venecz- I do want to say thank you to all of the students who came to receive their certificates. Thank you and good luck in the future.

Council President Woerpel- We can take a 2 or 3 minute break so people can leave if they want to.

Council President Woerpel- We will continue with the meeting now.

Councilman Tyler has entered the chambers.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of May 12, 2025 and placed on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from May 13, 2025 through May 21, 2025. Claim #4098 through claim #4498, inclusive. In the amount of \$4,632,345.30.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to amend in claim #4499 for the Homebound Program in the amount of \$8303.00.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

AMENDMENT APPROVED

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

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

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Rakos- HC3 and myself will be proud to announce that the Spring Hessville community cleanup will be Saturday May 31st. We're going to meet at HC3 Headquarters at 2823 Martha behind Hessville Restaurant at 9 a.m. provide a light snack and breakfast in the morning, and then lunch when done. All residents, students, and businesses are invited. We hope to see people there.

Councilman Rakos- The following weekend, June 6th from 5-11 p.m. and Saturday from 12 p.m.-11 p.m. June 6th & 7th, the 6700 & 6800 blocks of Kennedy we will have our Annual Live in the Ville. We will have plenty of activities for the kids and everything else. We have entertainment on both nights. We also have a parade, this time it's a costume parade.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 25-11

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Upcoming meetings:

Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues., June 3; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman

Hessville Crime Watch; Thur., June 19; 6 p.m.; HC3 Community Center

Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., June 12; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

25-11 An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana Approving and Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of Revenue Bonds of the City of Hammond, Indiana, to Procure Funds to Finance Certain Projects Recommended by the Hammond Port Authority, Together with Expenses in Connection With the Issuance of the Bonds

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

Councilwoman Venecz- This is a 25 million dollar bond over 20 years. It's to repair the docks and the break wall at the Marina. The bond will be paid for with all rents, fees, rates, and other charges imposed or any source of income received by the Port Authority.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

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. 9674 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

25-12 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 600 177th Street And 626 177th Street

Councilman Emerson, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title, with an Intent to Consider Notice, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee for June 23, 2025 at 5:15 p.m, with a Public Hearing scheduled for June 23, 2025.

Councilman Emerson- This is an ordinance to C-1 to C-4 local commercial to local commercial, C-1 to C-4 on 6/23/25 and it's for the property commonly known as 600 177th Street and 626 177th Street. Thank you.

AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski- I just want to go back to the Memorial Day event yesterday. That was, again, sponsored by the Hammond Mohawks. I want to thank them for keeping the parade tradition intact. I also want to thank the City of Hammond for all of the work that they did with getting the area prepped as well as bringing bleachers, a podium, and chairs. I want to thank Commissioner Mike Repay for attending and supporting the parade with a financial donation as well as being a guest speaker at the memorial service. It takes a lot of planning and effort to pull this off and it was done very well. I want to especially recognize Hammond ROTC and the posting of colors by the ROTC. It was incredibly professionally done and I can tell that it's growing, the ROTC in Hammond, and kudos to all the adults who are mentoring those young people. I also want to give a tip of the hat to the Hammond Academy of Performing Arts for the band that came and played tunes at the memorial service. They did a fine job, as well as a couple of the soloists on their instruments were just a wonderful addition. I want to thank all of the people who attended the memorial service. The parade is fun and exciting, but it is really intended to get the crowd to the memorial services so we can pay homage to those who paid the final cost and price for freedom, so thank you to everyone who participated in the Memorial Day Service and made it a success.

Council President Woerpel- I have 2 things. Number 1, I'd like to thank the Hammond Police Department who I contacted about some graffiti over there on the old Pioneer Tap and it was removed, so thank you. I know Gary

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Woerpel cont.- and your comments at the last meeting, you brought up the NIPSCO lights being out. I know, I can't speak for everyone, but I know in my district, there's an app that we use in the engineering office to report burnt out lights. There's some that I reported 4 or 5 times over a year period that don't get fixed for whatever reason. Then there's others that when you report them, they're fixed immediately, so it's kind of in response to what you brought up at the last meeting, it's not that they go unnoticed. I usually make a request to the engineering office and then I follow up and they show me the email that they sent that reports it on that app.

Councilwoman Venecz- I wanted to thank the Hammond Police Department for their open house on Saturday. It was really well attended. The police officers interacted with the kids, and the kids were digging it. It was just really nice to see so many people out there and I wanted to say thank you.

Council President Woerpel- That reminds me of one other thing. We also attended the Police Memorial Service, that because of the cold and the rain got moved inside the Hammond Civic Center. I always recommend that if you want to know what the Hammond Police Department does, go to one of them things. It's very sad when they're honoring people that gave their lives for this city and it doesn't matter how long ago it was, they were still willing to do it and it's always a solemn event.

Councilman Emerson- I attended the open house. I used to work at a county jail back in the day and it's amazing to me how technology has changed everything. Wow. It's unbelievable. We got the tour and that's where I realized it's really changed a lot. The tv's were dinky, and this was a barely new jail, the one I worked at. It was unbelievable to see how technology has changed and basically finger printing is all different now and everything regarding the tour was great. I also watched the dogs. It was great with the demonstrating the dogs or the k-9 unit and it was a great day.

Councilman Woerpel- That always blows my mind when you see what they got over there compared to what I remember. I mean, what was downstairs and all the room and the jails and all that.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Gary Droischorf- The lights are still out, and I'm going to come back everyweek to let you guys know an update until they're fixed.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Rakos, 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	27	9	23	14	28	11	25	8	22	H	27	10	24	8	22
Katrina Alexander	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P														
	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P														
Dan Spitale																								
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P														
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P														
Al Salinas	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E														
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P														
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P														
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P														
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P														
Initials	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.



Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:39 p.m.
mg/cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk