

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on July 28, 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.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

#### ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: Alexander

TOTAL: 8

#### MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - Nice to see you all. This is my address for the meeting of July 28, 2025. Not a lot to report business wise because about half of this period in Festival of the Lakes. So, I'll start off with the Festival of the Lakes wrap up. A big thank you to all of our sponsors for helping make the 2025 Festival of the Lakes one of the best we've had in a long time. I want to go through the Platinum Corporate Sponsors and the Council Sponsors, so thank you. First off, the Platinum Corporate Sponsors; BP America, Hammond Port Authority, Hammond Sanitary District; Horseshoe Casino Hammond; the Times Media Company; and the Hammond Urban Enterprise Association. The Council Sponsors; 5<sup>th</sup> District Councilman Dave Woerpel, 6<sup>th</sup> District Councilman Scott Rakos, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman Barry Tyler, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilman Al Salinas, and 4<sup>th</sup> District Councilman Bill Emerson. In a wrap up of each day, Wednesday, July 16, John Fogerty, we had, a Wednesday night show, keep in mind, we had over 8 thousand in attendance, which is a huge success for a Wednesday show. I compared very favorably to other Wednesday's we've had. One of the best we've had in a long time. We try to compare apples to apples when we do fest shows because you can't compare a Wednesday to a Friday, so. Thursday, we had Country night. July 17<sup>th</sup>, we had Brantley Gilbert, we had over 8 thousand in attendance that day as well. I think that was huge success. It was one of our better Country Nights in a long time. Akon, Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, wonderful evening, great weather, more than 16 thousand people in attendance. Akon was not only a wonderful performer, but also a great person. Like, walked around the VIP talking to people. Talking to sponsors, talking to regular fans, taking pictures with them. You don't pay for this stuff. They do it if they're nice, and Akon was that guy. Super cool. Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, Third Eye Blind, over 10 thousand in attendance that day. And last, but not least, Latin Night never disappoints. It was our biggest night. Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, with La Arrolladora, nearly 20 thousand in attendance. A fantastic way to close out the Festival. It was huge. Again, Latin Night never disappoints. We knew it was gonna be a big night based on VIP Experience sales, so. Other items to report. Swingers Lounge, I visited Swingers Lounge, it's the new lounge in the Sportsplex. It's not a new lounge. It's the same lounge, it's reprogrammed as a golf lounge. So, it's two golf simulators in there. They're in the process of changing it over to a golf bar. It's really cool though. These are state of the art simulators. We're gonna be doing, I imagine in the next few weeks, we'll be doing a ribbon

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

## MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - cutting and you'll all be invited, so. Hammond Economic Development meeting, attended a meeting with Hammond Economic Development team to address businesses that fail to submit required paperwork for their EZ2 Deduction offered by the HUEA. I'm not sure if this is gonna come to you, I'm just telling you I'm taking a pretty hard stance on this issue. Okay? We give incentives to these businesses through the urban Enterprise Association. The business has to complete paperwork every year to get the incentive. If they fail to do the paperwork for a year, two years, sometimes even longer, and then they come to us and they say, "Hey, I didn't get my benefit." It's because of them. It's because of their failure, it's not because of ours, and it's too hard to unwind. Once that monies been paid out to us, to the County, to the libraries, to the schools, it hard to unwind that. So, I've taken a pretty tough stance on this. I don't know if you're gonna hear about it. I'm just putting it on your radar, okay? So if you have businesses in the Urban Enterprise Association and they're mad at the Mayor, I just want you to know, everybody, it's like filing your taxes. We all have to file our taxes every year by April 15<sup>th</sup>. We all know that. If you don't file your taxes bad things happen. This is their tax form, and they didn't file it. Sometimes for a couple years, so. I'm taking a pretty aggressive stance on that. If you have a problem with that I'm willing to talk, okay? Pulaski Park Senior Center, I attended a commemorative plaque unveiling for Milan Kruszynski's mother, Ann, at the Pulaski Park Senior Center. I want to thank Councilman Mark for being out there. It was a nice event for Ann Kruszynski who lobbied hard to make that Senior Center a reality. So, it was nice to do that for her. Code Enforcement, you guys know we've been working a lot on Code Enforcement over the last couple of months. I think we're done finally. Conducted interviews, we had over six interviews for two spots. I took one person from the Hammond Sanitary District, David Kincaid, for one of those open spots and I took another gentleman, Louis Terry, some people know him as Ren Terry, he's a new hire into the City of Hammond. He's coming in. I don't know who's gonna be in what district. But Ren and David, congratulations on your new jobs in Hammond Code Enforcement. They're both great people. I think you're going to love working with them. They're like customer service oriented. David literally had a background in hotels, taking care of people. Ren is a people person. I think these are great qualities to have for Code Enforcement Officers because they are dealing with conflict and they're dealing with people who are upset and you've got to be a people oriented person. So we decided to bring a new person into the City, that's Ren. Dave Kincaid, I think, when you guys get to know him you are going to be very impressed. I attended Mayor Pete Land's Golf Outing. That's diplomacy, I guess. I don't know why I put it in here, but I think I put it in here because I think it's good when we have relationships with other cities. So, I went out there and did the thing for the Mayor of Crown Point. We have a great relationship with Crown Point and I think that's good for all of us, so. That's all I really have for the last two weeks. Again, I want to say thanks to all the Council members for all your support during the Festival of the Lakes. We were dodging rain the whole time but we had good crowds each night and it was safe and fun. So, thank you very much. If you have any questions I'm available to answer them, Mr. President.

Council President Woerpel - Anyone have any questions for the Mayor? I have one, Mayor. First of all, I've known David since he was a little kid. I think he played baseball for Dave Hamm at one time. But I could be wrong. Lately I've been getting a couple of questions about the parking of semi's overnight in vacant parking lots. What is the process with that? Like ...

Mayor McDermott - Call Hammond P.D. I mean, I imagine it's probably ... are you talking about, like, by the Sportsplex for you?

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Council President Woerpel - Yes.

Mayor McDermott - Yeah, I know. That's our property too. Well, actually it depends on where they're parking. But, yeah, it's a problem over there.

Council President Woerpel - I mean, is it just a matter of calling the police every time?

Mayor McDermott - Why don't we ... yeah, why don't you do me a favor, Councilman, why don't you call my office in the morning and we'll set something up with P.D. That's a problem over there. Unfortunately, you know, I don't mind being a nice guy and letting a semi here or there park. But before long you have a truck stop. Then truck stop brings a host of problems along with it and that areas not zoned, right? So. That is a problem.

Council President Woerpel - I wasn't trying to call anybody out. It's just I've gotten several calls within the last two or three weeks. You know?

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir. I agree.

Councilman Tyler - Mayor, it's not a question. I just wanted to say thank you to the Parks Department. There was a ... I mean, I feel like the greatest Parks Department that I've been in contact with. But, there was a resident that was dealing with a wasp issue in one of their parkway trees and Devin just went out there and took care of it. It was a handicapped resident, so they needed some support. But he just went out there and took care of it. So, I just wanted to thank the Administration and the Park Department for taking care of it.

Mayor McDermott - Devin ... I appreciate you bringing that up, Councilman Barry. Devin's crazy. He's not afraid of any animal in the City. If it's a cobra, it could be a boa constrictor, call Devin, that guys crazy. In a good way. That's one of the reasons we hired him. That guy's not afraid of any animal in the City so he's usually the guy we go to in tough spots like that. So, Hessville guy also. So, thanks, Councilman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes from July 14, 2025 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to approve the claims from July 15, 2025 through July 23, 2025. Claim #5834 through claims #6789, inclusive. In the amount of \$3,716,882.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to amend in claim:

#6790	Hammond Police Dept. Health	City Clerk	\$550.00
	and Wellness Unit Golf Outing		

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried

8/0/1

AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED  
(as amended)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Tyler - I think I announced this a few meetings ago, but there is a group called the Delta Institute that is working with the Hammond Park Department to do an analysis of forestry in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. They're looking at places where the district may be hotter than other places because of lack of tree coverage and they are looking to host a community working group meeting Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 p.m. at the Hammond Public Library. If you are interested in attending and being part of that conversation, please reach out to me and we can get you on the invitation. It is a small working group. They are looking to host additional meetings in the future with the larger public but really want people who are interested in forestry, interested in the environment, to help with the analysis to be a part of the working group so that we can figure out a plan to get more trees across the district and make sure that we are being as environmentally friendly and safe as possible.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 25-15.

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

Wed., Aug. 13; Community Watch at Mt. Zion Pleasantview Plaza; 1 p.m.

Whiting/Robertsdale; Calumet College; Thur., Aug. 14; 6:30 p.m.

National Night Out will be celebrated Tues., Aug. 5, from 5 to 8 p.m. up at the Pav. It's an opportunity for our residents to come out and meet our police and fire and view some of their equipment. Take part in a lot of the activities that are planned for the children and it's just a great family night out.

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Salinas - Update from meeting on July 21<sup>st</sup>: There were five funding allocations:

- #259 Roadway Improvement on Willow at State Street. It was awarded to Hawk Enterprises in the amount of \$7,100. This dealt with the straightening of Willow Court. There's a jaggedness to that intersection there at State and Willow Court. I know personally I've seen several cars and accidents. One in which was flipped over. So, I'm glad to see that we're taking action on that.
- #260 Establishment of the railroad Quiet Zone in Downtown Hammond. \$70 thousand. Those Downtown Quiet Zone railroad crossings included Willow Court, State, Sibley, Sohl and Oakley crossings.
- #261 Summer Street reconstruction change orders 5, 6, and 7. That was with Rieth-Riley Construction Company in the amount of \$14,171.16. That was the City's 20% match amount. Those change orders had to deal with a 36 inch water main that there was some difficulty actually getting the water shut off.
- #262 Another establishment of a railroad Quiet Zone in the Hessville area of Hammond. That was awarded to First Group Engineering in the amount of \$51,750. Those Quiet Zones included Kennedy, 169<sup>th</sup>, 173<sup>rd</sup> and Grand Avenue.
- #263 A bollard replacement on Martha and Kennedy. This was due to a vehicle accident that took place. That is in the amount of \$5,020.40, awarded to Hawk Enterprises.

Capital Improvement Board - Council President Woerpel - 173<sup>rd</sup> was peeled today, right, from Kennedy to Orchard, Councilman Rakos? They closed it in its entirety, it is now open again and it's my understanding it will be repaved on Wednesday and it will be fully closed during the day but reopened at night. If I'm not mistaken, they're supposed to do 169<sup>th</sup> from Northcote to Indianapolis Blvd. tomorrow and close it for the day and then reopen it in the evening and then pave it on Thursday.

Councilman Tyler - I just have a question for anybody on the Capital Improvement Board. Can you just share a little bit more about what the cost for creating the Quiet Zones, what the cost is covering?

Councilman Salinas - It was more of the State. That was the application process. Getting the zones approved, it wasn't the actual cost for them to put them in.

Councilman Tyler - Are there costs for it to be implemented?

Councilman Salinas - They're very expensive.

Councilman Rakos - Very, very expensive.

Councilman Tyler - It is? Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Councilman Salinas - Perhaps we could get some information from Dean.

Scott Miller, Chief of Staff - The railroad companies, once you obtain permission from them. They do pass on all of the costs to implement the Quiet Zones to the municipality. So, they want to make sure that you have the type of gates, and typically they build the median out so you can't drive around the gates, you know, when they're down But we would, the city, would have to either find a funding source or find, you know, ourselves to fund those, that project. I believe it's more to see the feasibility of what's gonna happen is what was approved know. We don't have a long term funding source identified for gates. Obviously we'd like to offer that amenity across the City.

Councilman Kalwinski - I believe Whiting did the Quiet Zone by the park and I believe it was a half a million to three quarter per intersection. And that was a few years back.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE

25-15            An Ordinance Creating New Fund #2492 for Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Funds  
Awarded to the City of Hammond Police Department

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

Councilwoman Venecz - This simply establishes new fund for the receipt and the distribution of the funds from the grant that the police department received in the amount of \$36,267.66.

Council President Woerpel - To clarify though, it has nothing to do with money tonight. It creates the line item.

Councilwoman Venecz - The line item plain and simple.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried

8/0/1

ORDINANCE NO. 9678 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz - I should have mentioned this under Communications. But I just wanted to make clear that fireworks are now illegal after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I hear them often in my neighborhood. I'm sure other people so in their neighborhoods as well. Feel free to call the Police Department and report those who are shooting off fireworks now illegally. The thing is, when you make that call, you must have a specific address of when the fireworks are being shot off because the Police can not chase smoke. So, please, have the proper address and report it to 911. Thank you.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Tyler, 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					
Katrina Alexander	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	A	A	P	A					
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P					
Janet Veneez	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P					
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P					
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	A	P	P					
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P					
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P					
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P					
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P					
Initials	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G					

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: 6:25

cb

*Prepared by*  
*Robert J. Golec*  
*Hammond City Clerk*