The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on December 08, 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

Mayor McDermott- Thanks, Council President Woerpel. Good to see you all, Happy Holidays. Thanks to everybody watching at home and that came out for the meeting. This is my report for December 8th. The Press release we issued about the Hammond Police Department, I know most of you are aware of this already, I hope you'll indulge me so I can read it off. "After decades of extraordinary service to the City of Hammond, we are preparing to honor and thank several remarkable leaders in the Hammond Police Department as they head into retirement. Chief William "Andy" Short is concluding an incredible 38-year career that began in 1988. In 2021, Andy made history as Hammond's first African American Chief of Police. Over nearly four decades, Andy served in Patrol, K-9, SWAT, Internal Affairs, and ultimately as Chief of Police. His dedication to leadership, professionalism, and community engagement especially with our youth, has left a lasting mark on this city. Captain Ezequiel Hinojosa is also retiring after 47 years of service, most of them with Criminal Investigations Division. That's the Detective Bureau. Zeke's commitment to solving crimes and protecting Hammond residents spans nearly half a century, an extraordinary record of service. Also congratulations to Assistant Chief Jeffrey Long, who will step into the role of acting Chief of Police on January 1, 2026. Chief-designee Long is a U.S. Army veteran and lifelong Hammond resident who has served this department since 1989 in Patrol, SWAT, and as Assistant Chief of Police. We are proud to have Jeff's experience and steady leadership going forward in the Hammond Police Department. Last but not least, congratulations as well to Captain Christopher Gootee, who has been promoted to Captain of the Criminal Investigations Division. Captain Gootee joined the department in 2005 and has served in multiple specialized roles bringing deep knowledge and professionalism to this critical assignment. Congratulations to all 4 of those Hammond Police Officers." I wanted to summarize my schedule over the last couple of weeks, obviously we had a holiday in the middle of it so it's not as long as normal. I met with potential developer's who are interested in the old Franciscan Hospital site. I can't discuss the nature of the meeting other than if it happens, we would be very lucky as a city. This could greatly ease the blow we suffered when we lost the hospital in the first place. It's one of those projects that the more I talk about it, the less likely it is to happen, but it's spectacular. I want to thank Economic Development, and a lot of people

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott Cont.-that are making these talks possible. Obviously when I can talk more, I will be the first to talk to you all. I met internally with my Economic Development Staff to go over submissions to the Redevelopment Commission's RFP for the City of Hammond's spare liquor license. We had 5 submissions for this RFP. Liquor licenses, we just had a liquor license sold in the City of Hammond for $40,000. We put out RFP, minimum bid, $35,000. $5,000 below the last RFP liquor license bought in the City of Hammond. We had 5 submissions. 2 of them right off the bat were deemed invalid, they just didn't work. One of them was package liquor, the other was gonna be a brewery so they have different types of licenses they need, so 2 of them right off the bat were eliminated so to speak. They have to comply with the RFP, they didn't. We have 3 submissions left. I'm not going to get into details. One was for $70,000 over 5 years, which is above the last sale price of $40,000. One was for $50,000, and one was for $5,000. I think anybody in this room if they had that spare liquor license as an asset, would do everything they can to make as much money as possible when they sell it. I'm taking that same approach as the City's Mayor. More will come out soon about who was ultimately chosen, but I'm gonna make the best deal for the City of Hammond. If you have any questions, I'm willing to talk. Please call me so we don't have to do it on the record. I know there's a number of Councilmen interested in this issue. I'm willing to share with you all the details, I just don't think it's appropriate to do it in an open meeting. I did want you to know the big picture details and if you were in possession of that liquor license and it was your asset, I think I know what almost everybody would do, they'd try to get the most money possible for it. With us facing State mandated cuts next year with SB-1, we gotta make the best deals we can when we have assets. We welcomed the Carden Circus once again in 2025 to the Hammond Civic Center. This is a partnership that's been going strong for decades in Hammond and has entertained our residents and visiting neighbors from Illinois and did so successfully again this past Thanksgiving weekend. We had seven shows beginning on Black Friday and although the snow hit us big on Saturday, residents came for all shows during the weekend. We will be hosting this tradition again in 2026 on the Friday after Thanksgiving. I want to thank Juan, Jim, and everybody over at Parks Department that worked so hard over a holiday weekend to make that. It was spectacular. I know that a number of you got out to see the shows. I just drove around the parking lots. It's pretty cool to see a lot of cars like that coming to shows we're hosting. Congratulations to the Civic Center Staff. I had a meeting with the Governor Mike Braun, he came to Hammond, went to Meat by Linz, had a meeting with him. We talked about projects that are going on in the City of Hammond right now. He got to see one of our great projects, Meats by Linz. He got to see another great project The Banc. He had an event there that night if you guys didn't know about it. It was nice to see the Governor in the City of Hammond. We had an opportunity to talk for about 15 minutes. It was productive. I want to thank him for coming to Hammond. It was good to see the Governor here. I attended a ground breaking for Calumet College's intermural sports facility located on New York Avenue. Councilman and Mark were in attendance for the coldest groundbreaking in the history of the city. It was so cold that day. It was outdoors. It's great though, Cal College, got the Lilly Grant, and they're doing a lot of work on their campus, and they're doing a lot of work on their sports facilities. In Hammond, we host a lot of their intermural sports and that's what that field is going to be used for, so congratulations Chancellor Amy and the Cal College on a great project. I attended a meeting to discuss a potential grievance filed against the City of Hammond by the Hammond FOP over changes to the healthcare policy that the City of Hammond was forced to enact. I'll talk more about this if you give me a call off the record as well, but it's annoying, I'll be honest with you. As a reminder, the Hammond Police Department in their last contract got over 20 percent pay raises. That's far more than every other city employee in the City of Hammond and every employee in the City of Hammond, including the Mayor, including you all that gets health insurance has the same increases and last years, over the last couple years, the City of Hammond has been shouldering 98 percent of all healthcare costs. We're trying to

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott Cont.- re-balance that to where it should be. I don't appreciate the Hammond FOP and their grievance. I think we gotta go into this budget cutting session, which is what we're facing in the next year, united and it seems like our biggest department is out in left field. I don't think they know what they hell they're doing to be honest with you. I'm not very thrilled about that. Hopefully a wiser head will prevail and they'll withdraw that grievance. I attended the annual Hammond Holiday Parade on Indianapolis Blvd in Hammond. It seems like each year, this event gets bigger and bigger. It was a great day. I saw just about every Councilperson out there. I think there was every Councilperson out there. That's a cool parade. I want to congratulate everybody involved, and I want to thank all the Council people and all of the elected officials that attended. Last but not least, I attended the South Shore event in the City, held by the South Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau in Downtown Chicago with a contingent of Hammond Personnel. It was a great opportunity to mingle with the leaders of Northwest Indiana and Downtown Chicago. At this event there was a lot of government, a lot of education, and a lot of business all in one room. I think it's a real valuable event and I want to thank everybody that helped out with that as well. That's all I have unless you all have questions, Councilman. Thank you for letting me speak, and Merry Christmas to everyone that celebrates.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of November 24, 2025 minutes and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, move to approve the claims from November 19, 2025 through December 3, 2025. Claim #10574 through #11027, inclusive. In the amount of $9,104,336.53.

ROLL CALL VOTE
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS
None

COMMUNICATIONS
None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

COMMUNITY AND CRIME WATCH COMMITTEE - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:
Irving Community Watch; Tues., Dec. 9; 9:30 a.m.; Irving School
Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Dec. 11; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College
Jefferson Crime Watch; Tue., Jan. 13; 6 p.m.; Jefferson School

COMMITTEE REPORTS Cont.

Councilwoman Venecz- From all of us related to Crime Watch, and the Community Watch groups, we wish everyone a safe and happy holiday, because community is not just about me, it's about us.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD - Councilman Salinas - The Capital Improvement Board met on December 1st, and during that meeting we had 3 Funding Allocations:

FUNDING ALLOCATION #295- General Geotechnical Engineering Services- Advanced Engineering Services- in the amount of $50,000.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #296- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon on 169th at Woodmar- Hawk Enterprises- in the amount of $26,000.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #297- Replace Pole, Mast Arm and Foundation Traffic Signal Pole SW Corner Columbia Ave at Summer Street- Midwestern Electric- in the amount of $26,764.00

ORDINANCE 3rd READING- FINAL PASSAGE
None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

25-33 An Ordinance fixing the Salaries for Elected City Officials for the City of Hammond, Indiana Commencing January 1, 2026 Be it Ordained by the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, and be referred to the Council as a Whole Committee for December 22nd at 5:15 p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz- This ordinance outlines 2% pay increases for the Mayor, the Clerk, and the Council People. AYES:ALL

25-34 An Ordinance to Appropriate Monies into the 2025 Gaming Fund

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, be referred to the Council as a Whole Committee for December 22nd at 5:15 p.m., and a Public Hearing on December 22nd. AYES:ALL

25-35 An Ordinance Authorizing the City Controller to Transfer Funds From One Line Item to Another Within Various City 2025 Budgets

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, and be referred to the Council as a Whole Committee for December 22nd at 5:15 p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz- This is an annual clean up ordinance, moving line items from 1 line item to another at the end of the year. AYES: ALL

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES Cont.

25-36 An Ordinance Respecting and Ratifying the Actions of the City of Hammond Board of Public Works and Safety Related to Traffic Regulation for 2025

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title.

Councilman Rakos- This is, last year, or the beginning of this year, we passed an ordinance regarding the Board of Public Works being responsible for making the changes with our traffic patterns and basically our safety. The Council is going to ratify these actions so that traffic schedules within the city records can be pulled and officially recognize the actions of the board taken during 2025. AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

25R-24 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Kristen Hill as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

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

Councilman Emerson- I move for the Attorney for The Hammond Human Relations Commission, and active in many groups in the City of Hammond. Thank you from the City of Hammond. She has been on for 11 years and thank you for her, for, thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R24 ADOPTED

25R-25 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Ivonne Rocha as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for passage

Councilman Salinas- Ms. Rocha has been a member since 2018. She's a photographer who owns her own business, The Mair Photographia and Video in Hammond, Indiana. She's also very involved with HHCC. The Human Relations Commission is required to have someone from the business community, and Ivonne meets that requirement.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R25 ADOPTED

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to reappoint Greg Myricks to the Hammond Redevelopment Commission.

Councilman Tyler- I talked to Mr. Myrick and I think he is trying to wind down, so probably next year, we will be looking for somebody else to take his spot potentially. I know we have some other interesting people who have reached out, so we'll probably be planning to have those conversations sometime throughout 2026, but I just want to thank Mr. Myrick on his work on the Redevelopment Commission. I do believe he's been on there close to 10 years or so. I know he enjoys it, and the commission enjoys having him on there. He contributes a lot of information, a lot of time, and a lot of energy, so thanks again, and congratulations on your reappointment.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

Councilwoman Alexander- I wanted to thank Councilman Tyler for writing a resolution to my family this past weekend as we memorialized my niece, and thank you to my fellow colleagues for sending condolences. We do appreciate it and just continue to keep us in your prayers as we go through this time, thanks.

Council President Woerpel- I did receive a message from our friend Gary and Sylvester and he wants to wish everybody a Merry Christmas from Florida. I guess Sylvester is laying out on the beach.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mary Schoons- Wanted to know the status of the Grand Avenue overpass, suggested moving the pedestrian bridge to Grand Avenue, and suggested that the Governor's Parkway money could cover the budget shortfall for 2026.

George Stoya- Expressed opinion that the Elected Officials should not give themselves 2 % raises.

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to adjourn. AYES: ALL

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

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	13	27	10	24	8	
Katrina Alexander	P	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	A	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	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	P	P	P	
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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.

Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:31 p.m.
mg/cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk