

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on March 23, 2026 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Alexander

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Good to see you all on the Council. This is my report for March 23rd. I went through, and I have something for every district for this. Starting off with the 4th District, I visited and toured Hammond's very own Korellis Roofing. I met with the new CEO. I went there with my leadership team and took a tour of the place. We looked at the Corporate Headquarters and got briefed on the kind of work Korellis does. I thought that was mostly a local company, but quite frankly, it's not a local company. I mean it is a local company, but it's also a national company. It was great, and I appreciate everybody for lining that up. I met with the Managing Editor of the local newspaper, Mark Chase, in regards to, him and I have check in lunches every few months, so it's nice to get in touch with Mark and talk to him about some things going on in our city. The 4th District, 2 things in the 4th District, right off the bat, met with a developer that's interested in a large parcel in Hammond's 4th District. He's very interested and he was talking about the area at 165th and Calumet. It's good to see that there's still interest in that site over there. This is a gentleman that could get going right away, which is nice. 2nd District, I met with the CEO of Northlake Auto Recycling, Marty Hollingshead. It's always good to check in on Marty. His business has been located in Hammond for 45 years right there in Downtown Hammond, so it was good to get in and talk to him. I met with a student from Ball State University who wanted to interview me about being Mayor. She's a Political Science student. Her name is Lisette Ariza, who told me she wants my job one day. I didn't realize that until I was halfway through the interview or else I would have never lined it up. It was great. I appreciate Lisette, she's a Ball State student. She's very smart and it was a nice interview. It was nice to meet her. I'm looking forward to her taking over one day. 6th District, we've been talking a lot lately about Foreign Local Brewery, I know Councilman Scott's been appraised of, it's gonna be eventually, it's the old Hose Connections on Kennedy across the street from the old movie theater there. The gentleman that owns it, Mike Glowacki, wants to open a brewery there. He's been having issues with our Inspections Department, so I pulled him in, his attorney, I pulled in my Inspections Department and tried to act as a mediator. We all want to see this development move forward. Obviously, he has to satisfy the local building codes and the state building codes and we're making sure he's going to be successful at that. I hope that I acted like a good mediator, Councilman Scott, because I know you want to see that developed. Hopefully that moves forward. I will remind you all that we got sued a couple years back by the Town of Munster. We didn't get sued, it was the

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.-Hammond Sanitary District that got sued. We hired a firm to represent us, Faegre, Baker, Daniels. I met with attorneys from Faegre, Baker, Daniels in regards to litigation with the Town of Munster over the Hammond Sanitary District. I don't really want to talk about it in this setting, but I'm willing to talk about it in this setting, but I'm willing to talk to you all, you know if you wanna give me a call after and I can update you. That process is moving forward very slowly. It seems to me like, I think the best resolution to the whole thing would be for the Town of Munster, and the City of Hammond to get divorced. Quite frankly, I don't think we need to be business partners anymore. I think if you had a business partner, and you were 80 percent owner of a business, and your business partner of 20 percent sued you, and alleged a bunch of bad things, I think the 80 percent person would be like, you know what, it's time for us to move on and go our own direction. I do feel that way, and I think the attorney's representing the Hammond Sanitary District feel the same way as well, so I'm willing to keep you all in the loop about the details but, overall, I think it's time for us to head in our own direction. Munster obviously has a lot of bad feelings towards us, and maybe Munster should go find another place to send their storm water and we'll go off and we'll represent ourselves. I'm willing to talk to you if you all want to set up an Executive Session or something, I can give you an update on that. It's not us directly, but it's the Hammond Sanitary District. I know we all care about that. I met with members of the United Auto Worker's Local 551. It was an unprecedented meeting. These are the auto workers that represent to Chicago Ford Plant. A lot of times, we don't have communication with these members because they're representing a plant that's in Illinois, but they reminded me that even though they're a Chicago business, thousands of their members in Local 551 live in Hammond and in Northwest Indiana in general. I thought it was a real good meeting. It was nice to meet with them all. Hopefully they'll get more involved with our local community. I met with the Hammond Police Department and the Festival of the Lakes organizers in regards to Saturday's proposed act. I said proposed because Festival of the Lakes is a partnership and an important part of the Festival of the Lakes is the Hammond Police Department and if the Hammond Police Department is concerned about one of our acts, I have to be concerned as the Mayor and we agreed with the Hammond Police Department and we took a different route than we were planning on taking. I'm glad that the police department feels comfortable enough to step up and say hey, we're concerned about this and we're going to move forward and try to find an act that makes everyone feel a little bit better. 5th District, I met with Raquel Sterzyk's first grade class at Jefferson Elementary School. That's always nice. They told me, they wanted to take my job as well. There's a lot of people that are out there gunning for me, just letting you know, election year is coming next year, so I'm keeping an eye on everybody. 3rd District, I played chess with multiple Hammond residents at the McDonald's on 165th and Columbia. Wow! I met the owner of that McDonald's. I met the Managers of the McDonald's and I saw literally 25 people playing chess in McDonald's. They hangout there all day long. This was organized by Billy Shelton. I love Billy Shelton. He's a famous Hammond resident. He's a Gary resident originally. He played in a famous Doo-wop band back in the days. He lives in Hammond now. He's just a great guy. I didn't realize it, he's a chess aficionado. I played him three times. He wiped me out three times. I think I'm decent too, but every time I play with somebody, I lose, so I may not be that good after all. Anyways, Billy Shelton, I wanted to say thanks. Thanks to the owners of that McDonald's for allowing that. It's really cool. I don't know if you've ever got a chance to stop there, Councilman, but it's a pretty cool scene. It's like every day of the week in the morning. They just sit there and play chess and drink coffee. I interviewed multiple candidates for the vacant Assistant Chief position at the Hammond Police Department. We should be done with interviews by next week. The goal is to have this position chosen by April 13th. I think there was over 10 Hammond Police Officers for the Chief position. We've been doing it, and we're still doing it. In fact, I have a Battalion Chief open and we posted it. These things don't need to be posted, but we posted it, and we're going

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MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.-to go through interviews as well. I think it's good for moral. It's hard on me, but it's good for moral. I want to thank the Chiefs for being in the meetings with me. If you want to talk to me about who you'd like to see in that position, I'd appreciate your recommendations, just give me a call, would you? There's a number of people up for it and a lot of people are talking about it, and I'm interested in your opinions. It's interesting to just feel people out and see where they are on the issue. Last but not least, this is about the 1st District, I met with my Economic Development team in regards to an incentive request for the developer at 3518 Sheffield Drive. I know Councilman Mark's been monitoring this. We're all excited for this project, but we all need to get on the same page. They're asking for incentives. It's a \$20,000,000 project and we're trying to give them something. It's great, but it also leaves something on the plate for us because we have to pay our bills too. We're going through that process now, and I'm sure we'll work something out soon, and we'll be back before the Council. I know there's a number of things on the agenda for tonight, but that's all I had unless you all have any questions, Councilwoman.

Council President Venecz- Mayor, I think it's wonderful that there are young people out there looking to take your job. It must mean that you make the job look pretty easy.

Mayor McDermott- I think, yeah. That was really cool. There's a lot of interviews that come in the Mayor's Office, especially during the school year. I do end up granting a lot of them. Especially for the students. I do like talking to students.

Council President Venecz- I think it's great.

Mayor McDermott- Thank you, I appreciate it. Any other questions?

Councilman Salinas- Any updates from the School City of Hammond regarding Clark, Gavit?

Mayor McDermott- Thank you. Thanks for the question. We gave them until March 31st, Councilman.

Councilman Salinas- Yeah, I'm aware of that.

Mayor McDermott- I haven't heard anything.

Councilman Salinas- Ok.

Mayor McDermott- I'm skeptical that I will hear anything, but we did give them until March 31st. I appreciate the question. We'll see what we hear. As a reminder, Councilman, I was asking about, with the status of Clark High School, and the status of Gavit High School, and the fact that the water has been turned off and the power is turned off and they're clearly not in use anymore, we're asking the School City what the plans are with these buildings because we don't have any interest in watching them waste away in our community. We did give them until the 31st, Councilman Al. I can follow that up next meeting.

Councilman Salinas- One other question I had for you, thank you for that, you made mention in your last Address to the Council at our last meeting that Police and Fire were in need for some additional equipment and

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MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Councilman Salinas- gear. I'm not sure what direction we're looking at but myself and the 2nd District would like to support any efforts in any way we can.

Mayor McDermott- Thanks. I'll give you a little preview, we're going to be coming, I'm sure next meeting. Hopefully by the next meeting. Our Police and Fire Departments are in bad need of radios. They're over 10 years old, and I think they're closer to 12 years old. They're badly in need of replacement. These aren't cheap. For all of our Police and Firefighters, that in itself is a few million dollars, and they are also in bad need of another fire engine. So we're going to ask the Council and we have a plan to pay for it that won't cost any additional money than what we're paying right now, and we will approach you guys with the details about that once we work it out. It will be completely limited to public safety. Police Fire, Police radios, and one fire engine. We didn't want to mess it up with putting other requests in there because we felt that if it was purely for the first responders, it'd be stronger to pass. We're not ready to present that, Councilman, but we will be.

Councilman Salinas- I'd like to sponsor that, please put me down for that, thank you.

Mayor McDermott- Ok, I'll talk to Councilman Dave about that. Any other questions? I appreciate you guys sponsoring it, because it's needed. It's been 12 years with the radios, and that's their lifeline. In a fire, that's their lifeline. If they're casing a suspect, that's their lifeline, and if those things go out, we're endangering our officers and we're endangering our firefighters. So I know we're all interested in that. Councilman Al, which is why we didn't want to put other things in there because if we leave it public safety, I think it's a 9-0. If we start adding other stuff to it, that's where we start losing votes, so thank you for bringing that up. Any other questions? I appreciate you guys. Have a nice meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of March 9, 2026 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to approve the claims from March 4, 2026 through March 18, 2026. Claim #2012 through claim #2481, inclusive. In the amount of \$8,687,424.55.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

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Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS

Council President Venecz- The Police Department is once again sponsoring their Hammond Police Academy. It begins April 14th and goes through June 2nd. It's every Tuesday. I know a couple of the Council people have gone through the Citizen's Police Academy, and it is really an eye opening experience. It really gives us an idea of exactly what our men and women do when they are out on the street protecting us. The coolest part of it was going to, I see you back there grinning, going to Valparaiso, they have a virtual scenario set up and you get to work through the scenario as a police officer, so it's really cool. It's very informative, and you're welcome to join. Register by March 30th. The phone number is 219-852-2917.

Councilman Rakos- HC3 wanted to thank all of us that were able to make it to the St. Patrick's Day Parade. It was another very successful parade and a nice little brisk walk like it almost always is. They wanted to thank us.

Council President Venecz- Well thank them for doing that. It's great for the community. Any other communications? (X3)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE COMMITTEE- Councilman Woerpel- Brought out 26-07.

Council President Venecz- Thank you, and 26-08 as well, since you're on the Finance Committee?

Councilman Woerpel- 26-08 wasn't in a Committee, but ok.

Council President Venecz- I thought it was.

Councilman Woerpel- We didn't have a Committee, but yeah.

Council President Venecz- Ok, my fault.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD - Councilman Salinas- The Capital Improvement Board met on March 16th and there were five funding allocations that I would like to share with everyone:

Funding Allocation #310- Establish Railroad Quiet Zone in Downtown Hammond Supplemental #1 Design and RR Coordination- First Group Engineering- in the amount of \$18,000

Funding Allocation #311- Establish Railroad Quiet Zone in Hessville Supplemental #1 Design and RR Coordination- First Group Engineering- in the amount of \$23,000

Funding Allocation #312- Preliminary Engineering Fee Marina District Screen Wall- Norfolk Southern Railroad- in the amount of \$27,739

Funding Allocation #313- Downtown Hammond Train Station Construction Engineering- NIES Engineering - in the amount of \$198,500

COMMITTEE REPORTS Cont.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD- Councilman Salinas cont. -

Funding Allocation #314- Dan Rabin Plaza Lighting and Electrical Improvements Construction- Hawk Enterprises- in the amount of \$135,353.32

CITY PLAN COMMISSION- Councilman Spitale- We have a final passage for 26-07

Council President Venecz- No.

Councilman Spitale- As far as the meeting that we had, nothing to go with as last month.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT- Councilman Tyler- We hope to meet after the next Economic Development meeting which is the first week of April, so we should have a report at the next meeting.

COMMUNITY AND CRIME WATCH COMMITTEE - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

Jefferson Crime Watch; Wed. April 8; 6 p.m.; Jefferson School
Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues. April 7; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman Ave.
Hessville Crime Watch; Thur. April 16; 6 p.m.; HC3 Community Center
Irving Community Watch; Tues. April 14 10; 9:30 a.m.; Irving School
Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur. April 9; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

26-07 An Ordinance Establishing Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Rates for EV Charging Stations Owned and Operated by the City of Hammond

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

Councilman Spitale- The City of Hammond owns and maintains the charge stations within the limits. You've got two different levels here for the charging stations, \$.25 per minute charging, and level number 3 charging stations fast charging, therefore \$.40 per minute.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9702 PASSED

26-08 An Ordinance Amending Ord. No. 4508 and Amended Ord. No. 7023, otherwise known as Sec. 30.25 of the Hammond Municipal Code Regarding Common Council Order of Business

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved for final passage.

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Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE Cont.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to amend 26-08 in its entirety with 26-08A.

Councilman Woerpel- It's an amendment that corrects one line that was left off of this ordinance and it's procedural as far as the agenda, an ordinance about the agenda, and how it has to be developed.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9703 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

26-09 An Ordinance Appropriating the Proceeds of the Annual Action Plan and Dealing with other Matters Pertaining to the Expenditure of Plan Proceeds for Program Year 2026

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, and be referred to Council as a Whole Committee on April 13th at 5:15 p.m., with a public hearing on April 13, 2026.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st and 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

26R-05 A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Hammond Authorizing the Filing of an Annual Action Plan Application and Designating Signatories for Payment Voucher on Letters of Credit for the 2026 Annual Action Plan Programs

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved for adoption.

Councilman Spitale- Authors to submit applications for CDBG, Home, ESG, related to the annual action plan.

RESOLUTIONS Cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R05 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel- I had a problem property in the 5th District that for over a year, the guy would collect from scrapping, different lawnmower parts, and it flooded his yard, and several neighbors complained about it. Last year I contacted Code Enforcement. They went through the proper channels with citing him, and getting him in court and a couple of weeks ago, we got a court order to have the property cleaned up by bid through Code Enforcement and I was notified today, that not only was it cleaned up in its entirety, but the homeowner came in and paid the bill for it being cleaned up. I know people get frustrated as I do when properties aren't cleaned right away when they complain, and I gotta commend the Code Enforcement department for doing it the proper way and getting the guy to pay the bill. Thank you.

Council President Venecz- They are outstanding, aren't they, and that goes to what we talk about at the crime watch meetings all the time, if you see something, say something. That's how things get done.

Councilwoman Alexander- I just want to publicly thank you for reaching out to me during my stay in the hospital. I do appreciate it. Thank you so much and I appreciate you.

Council President Venecz- You're very welcome. I hope you're on the mend.

Councilwoman Alexander- I am, thank you.

Council President Venecz- Wonderful, thank you. Any other new and unfinished business? (X3)

SPECIAL ZONING ACTION ADOPTED UNDER I.C. 36-7

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

George Stoya- Requested for the Council packet to be posted online before the meetings.

Mary Schoons- Thinks the City should use the funds from Governor's Parkway to fund the Pedestrian Bridge on Grand Avenue and not clear cut the Briar East Woods.

Council President Venecz- Wished Scott Miller and Attorney Berger a happy birthday.

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

2026 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

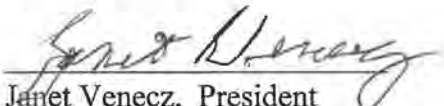
	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	12	26	9	23	9	23									
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	E	P	E									
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	E	P	P	P									
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Initials	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.


Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:37 p.m.
mg

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk