

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on June 22, 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.

Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Hi, thanks Councilwoman. It's nice to see you all. This is my address for June 22, 2026, a lot of Bears stuff still. I was interviewed by Indianapolis TV Reporter, Emily Longnecker regarding the possibility of the Chicago Bears relocating their home field to Hammond, Indiana. I was also interviewed by ABC Channel 7 Chicago's News Craig Wall in regards to the same topic. I was also interviewed by NBC Channel 5 Chicago, Rose Schmidt, regarding the possibility of the Bears relocating their home fields to Hammond, Indiana. Here's something different, lunch with Democratic nominee for Lake County Council, Christina Signorelli, concerning her upcoming general election campaign for Lake County Council. We met at El Taco. It was the first time her and I sat down and talked. She seems like a very lovely young lady, and I think she's going to work hard for us. I appeared on 104.3, The Score Radio Show, with Mully & Haugh regarding the possibility of the Chicago Bears relocating their home fields to Hammond, Indiana. I met with the Hammond Police Department Chiefs and Captains for our regular monthly meeting. We do that every month, obviously, every Captain, and both of the Chiefs in there. Sometimes we have Lieutenants in there, but it's a good meeting. I thank them very much for that. I know I've got Rich Ray, Captain Rich Ray in the back. He's been recently been promoted to Patrol Captain, which is a big deal in the police department, so Rich, Congratulations Rich. I know I mentioned it before, but I know a lot of people don't realize Patrol Captain is like one of the quarterbacks in the police department. It's good to see him. I know he's going to do a great job there. I had lunch with Phil Taillon from the South Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau regarding upcoming issues we need to coordinate on. It was actually, well I'm under an NDA still, and during a lot of the heat of the Bears and all the interviews, I couldn't say anything. It was nice actually to see Phil and people that weren't under NDA, out there answering some questions and representing the city. I thanked him for that. It was nice to see because he's not under and NDA which is nice in this regard. I met with a group of Doctors and Investors who want to develop the old St. Margaret Hospital site in Downtown Hammond. Councilman Salinas, I know they want to meet with you. They first have to complete and RFP. You might have started hearing rumblings about this. It's a really great project for Downtown Hammond if it comes to fruition, but we have to go through and RFP process before it gets official like that. If they're talking to you, they're just trying to get ahead of the game, but they need to comply with the RFP first. I'm sure you'll be hearing about that. I was interviewed by Gary Dick of

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- Inside Indiana Business, regarding the possibility of the Chicago Bears relocating their home fields to Hammond, Indiana. I was interviewed by The Cow Guy. Remember him? He's on a national TV show now. I was interviewed by The Cow Guy about the possibility of the Bears relocating to Hammond, Indiana. These are really easy minutes to write. I was interviewed by Melissa and Austin on Chicago's very own Country music station US99. Anybody listen to that? I don't, but I got a chance to talk to them about the possibility of the Chicago Bears relocating to Hammond, and our upcoming Jelly Roll concert. I got that in there which was nice. I had an internal meeting on sending strategy for the out lots North of the YMCA building. Councilman Barry, you and I should probably get together and talk about this plan that we're moving forward with. These buildings, some of them have leases extending out to 2030's in them. Obviously, we have a billionaire that wants to help us extend the YMCA and put a waterpark there, which would be great for Hammond families, so we're trying to balance the needs of the lessees and maybe relocate them. We are getting ready to move forward on that. Maybe I'll have my office reach to you, or if you could reach out, we could set that up, so we can have you on the same page. Thank you. I had a meeting with developers from Arizona, on a property in Hessville, Councilman Rakos, I'm not sure this is going to go down in the next year, but it's something people are talking about. I don't know if it's, like, it might be early to talk about, but anyway, these people have a lot of money and they're looking at our city real closely, and they're looking in your district. I think I talked to you a little bit about this, but it's still pretty early in the ball game on that. I had lunch with Leann Angerman, she's a District Manager for U.S. Senator Jim Banks, regarding updates on economic development and other city needs from U.S. Senator Jim Banks, which will come in handy because with this Bears project, we do need some heavy lifting from the Federal Government, so it's nice that Senator Young, and Senator Banks are both on board with this. It's very nice, actually. I appeared on WJOB Morning Show with Tom Dabertin in regards to the possibility of the Bears moving to Hammond. I had a meeting with the Bears Lobbyists and PR Team for an update on the potential for the Bears Stadium being built in Hammond. That was nice. They came to City Hall and we had a nice meeting with them. It's all the people that lobby both State Governments and people that represent the Bears, PR wise, giving us some tips, talking to the Councilman about not talking about the Packers, you know things like that. It was nice to talk to them. Although I wasn't able to attend, I do want to thank and congratulate all the City Employees and all the volunteers who work so hard to make Juneteenth and MLK Park a tremendous success. It was a big turnout. It was a really nice event. Lots of people worked really hard on it. I know the Council People work really hard on that. I know Katrina, Councilman Barry, a lot of other people work really hard on that. I just want to congratulate and thank everybody. It was a peaceful, nice event on Juneteenth. It was great. I'm real proud of the City of Hammond for being one of the first in the entire region to celebrate Juneteenth, and now it's a national holiday. It was a nice event, so thank you very much. I attended a benefit for Rick Strabavy to help him with medical payments and physical therapy needs. He's a great son of an awesome Hammond family, the Strabavy family. His brother Tom is a Captain in the Hammond Police Department. They had a big event at the Knights of Columbus in Hammond. The one in Robertsdale, right there on 119th. Rick is in great need of medical assistance. If you're interested, there's a Gofundme for Rick Strabavy on Gofundme and they're trying to raise a lot of money for it, and he needs it, so if you want to help out a great Hammond Family, look up Rick Strabavy on Gofundme. Last but not least, I attended the Summer Concert Series at the PAV. This week we had, The Sounds of Simon and Garfunkel. It was a gorgeous night at the PAV, just about as perfect as it gets, quite frankly. We had probably 3-400 people out there. It was a really nice night, real chill. Next Saturday is a famous Indianapolis based Grateful Dead Band, from Indy, called Hyrider. It's a great band. They play every year. They travel up from Indianapolis for the show. We have the Summer Concert Series every Saturday, free parking, free admission, free everything.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.-You can bring your own booze, bring your own food, but we do have food trucks out there as well. I know we don't have a lot on the council agenda tonight. I'm available for any questions if you have them.

Councilman Kalwinski- Updates regarding the deal with the Data Center?

Mayor McDermott- Thanks. I'm not super confident. This is the last meeting we have before the end of the month and there's no extension, like I promised you. I'm not super confident. I talked to NIPSCO, and NIPSCO said they're ready to go on this project. I thought that was the hold up, but now that's not the hold up apparently. Councilman Mark, we're all going to be waiting on bated breath for the end of the month. I promised you, I promised the Council, we were not going to keep extending this into infinity, and we're not. On June 30th, this deal dies. We'll all get together and figure out our strategy going forward. It's unfortunate if it dies. We spent 2 years on this project. We have great community impact benefits built in to this project. The possibility of funding College Bound for 20 years built into this. I just honestly, I think they were blowing us off for a long time, this is my feeling, that they were just not taking our deadline seriously, just like, extend, extend, extend, extend, and now this one we said we're not extending anymore, and I don't think they believed us. I think they believe us now. I'm not super confident it's going to happen, but if it does, we have a deal. We have a contract in place, so if it happens before June 30th, we'll all be surprised and shocked, and happy I imagine, because we have a good deal worked out for us in there. If it doesn't, I suggest we lay low for awhile and figure out what's going on.

Councilman Kalwinski- Thank you.

Mayor McDermott- Thank, Councilman. Councilman Mark, could I follow up one more thing about the Bears?

Councilman Kalwinski- Yes.

Mayor McDermott- I want to reiterate, that there is zero home takings that are planned. Never even discussed. I do want to reiterate, because I know that there has been talk about another site and it's true. There is another site that the Bears are looking at. I think it's super exciting myself. I can't really talk about it because I'm under NDA, but I do want to reiterate that. I still have people coming up to me saying, is my home going to get taken? Zero. It's all South of the PAV. There's nothing North of the PAV that's going to be done. The new neighborhoods going to be fine. The Water Gardens are going to be fine. I do want to repeat that and I'm glad we get that out there so people understand that anything that's taken is just a business, and usually a very old business that's not going to break a lot of hearts if it goes away.

Councilman Kalwinski- In your meeting with them, did they suggest when they will go public with absolutely they're on board in Hammond?

Mayor McDermott- No they didn't, but I do, ok, good question, they are looking at a new site, that's no secret, and if it's anything like the first couple sites we were looking through, it takes a couple. They have to do the soil. They have to do the stability of the ground. They have to make sure that they know what they're getting into. They have to make sure we can get all the cars in, and out. I actually think this new location is a lot better.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- think it's a lot better in a lot of ways that I can't really discuss, but I think it would be spectacular, I'll be honest with you. I really hope this new site works the best. I think it works the best, I just hope it works for environmental reasons and traffic reasons.

Councilman Kalwinski- Thanks.

Mayor McDermott- Yeah, any other questions? Thank you everybody, it was good to see you all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the minutes of June 8, 2026 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from June 3, 2026 through June 17, 2026. Claim #4490 through claim #4905, inclusive. In the amount of \$8,746,844.49.

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

26R-11 A Resolution of the Hammond Common Council Approving a Declaratory Resolution Related to the Creation of an Economic Revitalization Area

Council President Venecz- Anyone wishing to speak on Resolution 26R-11, please approach the podium.

George Stoya- Looking over my notes, this things already been enacted, so my understanding of public hearings is, there's supposed to be something pending. There's nothing pending here, so have you guys circumvented the process? What's going on here? I don't understand why this is even on this thing here. Its already a done deal. What you got to say Kalwinski? Anything? Way to go.

Council President Venecz- Is Juan still here? No, ok. Is anyone else wishing to speak on 26R-11? (X3) Public hearing is now closed.

COMMUNICATIONS

Council President Venecz- The Council, I am assuming, I did receive a letter from Mr. George Stoya that I would like to put on file, Clerk Golec.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS Cont.

City Clerk Golec- So noted. We have it.

Council President Venecz- Oh you do, ok wonderful. Thank you. The June 24th, 12-2 p.m. the Hammond Police Department will be hosting another picnic in the park at Columbia Park. 12-2 p.m., come out and meet the police officers who patrol your neighborhood, and especially for the children to come and meet the police officers. I also wanted to announce that July 3rd, the City of Hammond is celebrating Independence Day, our 250th anniversary at the Pavilion at Wolf Lake. The Bill Porter Orchestra begins at 7 p.m. and fireworks at 9:30. That is July 3rd once again, so everyone please come out and enjoy the fireworks and celebrate our 250th birthday. Another announcement I'd like to make is, it's a little bit in advance, but the Hammond Police Department is very actively involved in the organization of National Night Out. For this year, that will be on Tuesday, August 4th, 4:30-8 p.m. at the Pavilion at Wolf Lake. There are many activities for adults and children alike. Enjoy a free, fun, family night with neighbors and first responders. Get up close with the vehicles from the Hammond Police and Fire Departments, The Lake County Sheriffs helicopter, plus K-9 demonstrations, vendors giveaway, pontoon rides, and the first 500 children will receive swag bags, so keep that in mind for August 4th. Any other communications?

Councilman Woerpel- Is that picnic on Tuesday or Thursday this week?

Council President Venecz- The 24th.

Councilman Woerpel- I thought I heard somebody at that last one say they moved it this week. I could be incorrect. No? The 24th is a Wednesday, right?

Council President Venecz- Columbia Park.

Councilman Woerpel- Wednesday? Ok, thank you. I thought I heard something about it being moved is all, because I thought it was on Thursday.

Council President Venecz- Oh, ok. Any other communications? (X3)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PLANNING COMMITTEE- Councilman Spitale- The Plan Commission met on June 15th approval to a 2 lot subdivision in a new commercial development near southeast corner of Indianapolis Boulevard and 165th.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE- Councilman Tyler- Nothing to report tonight.

FINANCE COMMITTEE- Councilman Woerpel- Nothing other than what the Capital Improvements Board has.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD - Councilman Salinas- Capital Improvement Board met on June 15th and we had 3 funding allocations that we approved. I'll go ahead and recite them now.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS Cont.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD- Councilman Salinas- Cont.

FUNDING ALLOCATION #327- Sportsplex Grinder- Salyer Plumbing- in the amount of \$122,500.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #328- Resurface 179th St.-Cooperative Intergovernmental Agreement- Highland-Little Calumet Commission- Hammond- in the amount of \$300,000.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #329- 2026 Sidewalk Program- JJ Newell Concrete- in the amount of \$300,000.00

Councilman Woerpel- It wasn't in committee, but 26-18 will be coming out tonight.

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

Mt.Zion Pleasantview Plaza; Weds. July 8; 1 p.m.

East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Tues. July 21; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center

Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues. September 1; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman Ave.

Hessville Crime Watch; Thur. August 20; 6 p.m.; HC3 Community Center

Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur. July 9; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Council President Venecz- Just because we are not meeting, does not mean that you should let your guard down with what is going on in your neighborhood. Please don't be afraid to call 911. That is the number. Years ago we used to say it was only for emergencies, but now its for everything. So please keep an eye on your neighborhood and if something doesn't look right, doesn't feel right, please call 911, because community is not just about me, it's about us. Thank you.

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

26-18 An Ordinance of the City of Hammond to Amend Title VII, Chapter 72, Section 72.003 of the Hammond Municipal Code, as it Pertains to Parking Prohibited in Certain Areas-Bicycle Lanes

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

Councilman Woerpel- This is a one line amendment to an existing ordinance that Clerk Golec read. The amendment reads, in or on any bicycle lane, buffered bicycle lane, green bicycle lane, or areas where bicycles are intended for primary use at a roadway. That's added in to where parking is prohibited.

Council President Venecz- Any discussion? (X3)

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. 9713 APPROVED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

- 26-19 An Ordinance of the City of Hammond to Amend Title VII, Chapter 76, Schedule XV, of the Hammond Municipal Code as it pertains to Bike Paths

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

Councilman Woerpel- This is literally a one page ordinance that is an amendment to section 1, schedule XV of chapter 76, of the bike path ordinance that just names bike paths. These are added in with existing bike paths that weren't part of the ordinance before. They include, Marquette, Greenway, Eriackawana, Monon trail, Wolf Lake, Lake George bike trail, Little Calumet River bike trail, and the Downtown Wolf Lake connector.

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-15 A Resolution of the Hammond Common Council Approving and Entering into a Joint Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Lake county, Indiana, regarding the Cameron Street Light Project

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

Councilman Kalwinski- This resolution came about in my efforts to reach out to Lake County Commissioner Mike Repay, and to my Lake County Councilwoman Christine Sid to support financially the completion of the 4 block of Cameron Avenue Lighting Project and so they agreed to support that project financially with County money and that's why this resolution is before you right now, also, I want to thank, Commissioner Mike Repay and Lake County Councilwoman Christine Sid for supporting Hammond in this way. It's much appreciated by myself, and the residents who will benefit by completion of this project. Again, thank you to the Commissioner, and the Lake County Councilwoman.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R15 APPROVED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Council President Venecz- I don't know how it is in anybody else's neighborhood, but fireworks have been going off in my neighborhood for a couple of weeks now and well past my bedtime, I might add. (Read the fireworks ordinance) If I could chase smoke, I would, but I can't, so if you're neighbor is shooting off fireworks

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Cont.

Council President Venecz cont.- and it is outside of these parameters, please feel free to call the police. Give them a specific address. Fortunately we got plenty of rain yesterday, so I don't think we're in any danger of any brush fires starting from tall grass, but I just wanted to put that out there.

Councilman Woerpel- I think you might be referring to a complaint that was intended in my district because I heard the same thing and I just, you can call the police, which I suggest, but understand that the police aren't gonna go out there and arrest somebody just because a neighbor says so.

Council President Venecz- They have to see them.

Councilman Woerpel- I even heard about that, like well we called the police, and they didn't do anything, well, what are they supposed to do, like bring out detectives to see if there's blown up paper in the front yard? A couple of residents just don't seem to understand, whether it's that or loud music or stuff like that. There are ordinances against it. It's just a matter of you, you know you're laying in bed and you get rattled by a car going down the Boulevard, you know at 2 in the morning, and if you call the police, I don't think they're going to find that person is all I'm saying.

Council President Venecz- I agree, Councilman, it is a difficult situation and very disrespectful. On behalf of people who are doing that.

Councilwoman Alexander- I know that you just read that ordinance, but as we get into the holiday season, I just ask that you properly put your fireworks away, put them out with water so you don't start any garage fires or anything because that is common and we see it far too much when people are blowing off fireworks, they think that it's out, but the little embers inside can start something serious so make sure you have your water hoses, buckets, whatever you're going to use to make sure that those fires are put out properly after you are done. Don't just put your fireworks in the garbage cans because they will melt and start a fire.

Council President Venecz- Any other new and unfinished business? (X3)

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

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mary Schoons- Opposes Governor's Parkway, would like a pedestrian bridge on Grand Avenue, and requested a fireworks ban.

George Stoya- Suggested he write to the Attorney General to have them come and observe the way Hammond does things because he thinks its incorrect.

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

AYES: ALL

**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	13	27	11	26	8	22												
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P												
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P												
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P												
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P												
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P												
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P												
Scott Rakos	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												
Janet Venecz	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												

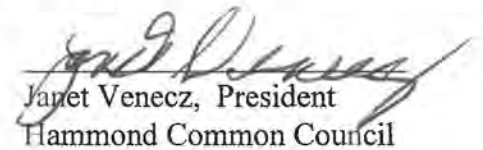
E=ELECTRONIC

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: 6:39 p.m.
mg

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*