

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on SEPTEMBER 14, 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 observed.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Alexander

ABSENT: Salinas

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Hi Councilwoman. It's good to see you all. Welcome back. This is my report on September 14th. If you remember 3 weeks ago, last time we met, it was all about the storm recovery. I'm happy to say that we're past most of the damage phase and now we're just dealing with piles of rubbish. If you want to take a drive over to Turner Park, or you take a drive over to the Hammond Sportsplex, and look in the parking lot, you'll see about a 20 foot pile of rubbish that came from all of our front yards, all of our parks, from trees that were laying on our cars, and because we declared it a state of emergency, including the Council's designation in the last Council meeting, it gave the city abilities we've never been able to use, namely to be able to go onto your property and to pull trees off your property. We were one of the first cities to do that. I thank the Council for your work with me on that. If you look at a lot of the initial things that we did in Hammond, we all declared an emergency right around the same time, but what we did that was real smart at that point, was we hired that company out of Mississippi to come here and start helping our public works crews and once we got our streets open, we started helping the homeowners. If you look at other cities, and how they responded to the power outage, most of them followed almost exactly with what we did including you know, going on private property, they did it after us, including hiring a company that we already hired. A lot of the cities just simply followed our lead on that. I want to thank the Council for working with us and getting that emergency declaration declared. I want to thank my staff for working so hard to clear our streets. Obviously it was up to NIPSCO when we get turned back on, but I think we did just about everything you could do as a city to put ourselves in a position to get turned back on. For me, it took 5 days, my house. I know some people were shorter. I know some people were longer. I thought it was good that I was in the dark with everybody else. I wouldn't have wanted to been the only house on the block with lights that time. Anyway, like I said, I've had somewhat of a normal schedule for the last 3 weeks. I'll go through some of the highlights. Right after all that occurred, right after the last City Council meeting, in Hammond's 3rd District, right here by Hammond City Hall, I attended the ribbon cutting for Swanel Beverages and their new 24,000 square foot facility. The company was founded in 1941. It's marked it's 85th anniversary as a business. It's 50th year in the City of Hammond. They just built their corporate headquarters right by Hammond City Hall. A multi million dollar investment and all union labor going into it, and it's a good neighbor. It helps us in a lot of ways, so thank you to Swanel Beverage. Congratulations to Councilman Barry in

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott- the 3rd District. I met with Councilman Emerson, to catch up on issues with the 4th District. I appreciate him coming in. Dave Fagan, the Business Manager for the Operating Engineers Local 150, had some people he wanted to introduce to us. I had that meeting. It's always good to be on the same page as our Operating Engineers. If you see right now, driving into Hammond City Hall, on Calumet Avenue, they're in the middle of Calumet Avenue putting in new infrastructure for our U-Haul facility that's going there right now, so it's sort of a pain in the butt getting around right now, but Local 150 is out there working hard for us. I appreciate Dave Fagan and the men and women of Local 150. I met with a 4th District business owner, who owns a building on 175th and Calumet about plans that they have for that location. We've had a history with this location, and it's good to get on the same page. We have a new generation talking to us right now. We're hoping that maybe we communicate better with some of the younger generation, so we're hoping to move forward with a business that we've had a long history with. As I do every month, I met with the Chiefs and the Captains of the Hammond Police Department for our regular monthly meeting. These meetings are very important for me, very valuable. We go through crime stats, we go through community policing, obviously any discipline issues. It's something I've been doing for years. It's always great to get together with the Hammond Police Department. I appreciate Councilwoman Venecz, recognizing two losses that we've held recently. I attended the wake of a former Hammond resident, the mother of retired Hammond Police Officer Bob Gatlin, Jimmie Lambert. She was a friend of all of ours. She was my appointee on the Redevelopment Commission. She was a friend. She was out there when I first started running for Mayor. She's just a good person, a good Hammond resident. She moved out of Hammond in her retirement years and moved to Orange County, French Lick, where she spent most of the rest of her days. She still has a lot of family up here, and she's a big part of the City of Hammond, a big part of why I'm your Mayor. You'll be missed, Jimmie Lambert. Let me jump ahead, while we're talking about it, I attended the celebration of life for Bobbi Costa, who was a constant fixture in my career. 25 years I've been dealing with Bobbi Costa. She's been outstanding leader, shattered the glass ceiling, ran for City Council when women didn't do that, became the City Council President when women didn't do that, ran for County Council when women didn't do that, got elected to County Council. She's always been a leader in our City. She'll be missed very much. She has a lot of family still in Northwest Indiana and in Hammond. 2 great Hammond women we lost over the last few weeks, so I appreciate you all recognizing both of the. They'll both be very much missed. I had lunch with Mayor Spebar, from the City of Whiting, catching up with Mayor Spebar, he wanted to introduce me to some representatives from McColly Real Estate concerning future developments in Hammond. It's exciting to be the Mayor of Hammond right now to see how excited people are about developing our city. I imagine we all know suddenly why a lot of people are excited, but these types of meetings are coming on the regular with me, where I get together with Corporate CEO's, where I'm getting together with people that want to sell real estate for us. We're all just waiting for the big check mark, and once that happens, I have a feeling that's going to be a flood for us. We're going to have a lot of opportunity here that we don't have currently. I held the first bi weekly installment of virtual morning with Mayor Tom. This came from the power outage. We set up, at the Bears recommendation, they thought that I should have a little studio in City Hall, so that when I do a lot of these, I don't do it in front of my computer screen like I've been doing for years, so we have a little area set up in my office where, we got a camera. During the power outage, it was very handy to have that little studio set up there, so we jumped on and we talked to the Hammond residents about what we knew what was going on with the power outage, that morphed into, sort of like a Mayor's Night Out, called Virtual Morning with Mayor Tom, rolls right off the tongue, but we do it every two weeks, and it's about a half hour to 45 minutes long. I hope to have guests, like maybe I'll have you guys on one day, have one of the Council people, when things are going with your district, but we're going to run with that and see how long it

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MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- goes. I attended the Summer Concert Series to see Led Zeppelin cover band, Cashmere. It's a band out of Chicago, famous Led Zeppelin band preform. It was a great night, about 1,000 people there. Anybody that loves Led Zeppelin, they sure missed it. That was a great night. We still have this last weekend of the Summer Concert Series, we have the band, Rico, playing on Friday, they're a cover for Santana, and then the next day, we have local band night, and I wish I knew their name off the top of my head, but I don't. It's going to be great. I know I didn't sell it very well, but we still have this last weekend of the Summer Concert Series. It's free, free parking, free everything. Please come out with the Hammond Port Authority. I met with representatives from the United Steelworkers Local 12775 in regards to a proposal they have pending before the IURC. This is the Local that was locked out by NIPSCO. The steelworkers, we saw them picketing. It lasted, I don't think it lasted more than a month. Barry, do you remember, Councilman?

Councilman Tyler- I think like 4-5 weeks.

Mayor McDermott- 4-5 weeks, that's what I thought it was too. Obviously NIPSCO and steelworkers cleaned that up. Thankfully they cleaned it up in time for our power outage because I can only imagine if they were locked out during the power outage, that would have been a disaster. Thankfully the steelworkers are back on the job. The steelworkers had some interesting points that they wanted to make, it was interesting to hear their perspective on who got turned on first, and why they got turned on first and how NIPSCO prioritized, so it was an interesting meeting. I appreciate them coming in and it's good to have a relationship with the steelworkers. I met with representatives from Hammond's Economic Development Department regarding the development of the Indiana Building in Downtown Hammond. I see Councilman Salinas isn't here right now. We had an RFP out. We went through the RFP's about people that want to take over that building, and we chose a local developer and I think there's going to be an announcement on that soon. It's exciting, as well as a potential developer of City Hall's South Parking lot. That lot over there interests a restaurant type of development, and we already did Zaxby's. Zaxby's is going to be on the North end, we have the South end available right now, and there's a lot of interest which is wonderful. It's always nice to have options. I met with Council President Venecz, regarding multiple issues pending between the Council and the Mayor's office. It's always good to get together with your Council President. I hosted Indiana Secretary of State Candidate Beau Bayh. I'm not getting political, this is just a fact. I hosted Beau Bayh, he's a candidate. His father was the Governor of Indiana, he's running for Indiana Secretary of State. The reason I'm telling you that it's important is because it was at the Hammond's Lost Marsh, at the Emerald Green, and Hammond was showing really well that day. It was a beautiful day at the golf course, there was tons of people from all over the State of Indiana that came here. It was very impressive. Then everybody was asking about the Bears, and we're like yeah, they're looking over there. It was just, it was a good day. I thought it was great. I appreciate everybody that supported that. Obviously we all feel different about who's going to run in that office. I'm sure we have many different opinions, but I thought it was cool that Hammond got to host a big event like that. It was nice to see everybody in Hammond. I was a guest speaker at the Hammond Optimist Club monthly dinner. I spoke about the Bears pretty much the entire time. I don't know what I'm going to talk about if this thing falls apart. Nobody's going to want to hear from me anymore. I was a guest speaker at the Northwest Indiana Mortgage Banker's Association monthly luncheon along with Mayor Costas from Valpo, and Mayor Huddleston from Hobart. I was interviewed by FOX business channel over the potential impact the Chicago Bears would have on the City of Hammond if they chose us as their home. The City of Hammond held a 9/11, 25 year remembrance, at the Hammond Sportsplex. It was a great idea. I appreciate you all and your participation, the participation of the police and fire, and I know we

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Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- don't do them annually anymore, but 25 is a big number and we had a real good turnout. I think it makes us look good as a city. That's quite a bit, but it's been 3 weeks since we've seen you. I know there's other issues coming up, if you have any questions, I'm available to answer them. Thank you, Councilwoman.

Councilman Kalwinski- The bi-weekly virtual meeting, what time do you do that?

Mayor McDermott- Good question, this is my first one. I think we did it at 10 o'clock? No, 10:30 we did it.

Councilman Kalwinski- On?

Mayor McDermott- On Gohammond.

Councilman Kalwinski- On what day of the week?

Mayor McDermott- Fridays. Thank you, because sometimes things happen, so as I was talking on there, we do this, and it's advertised online, so if we change it, we'll change it online, but right now, it's tentatively 10:30, bi-weekly, on Fridays. I think it's a good idea, and I'll be honest with you, we had I don't know, 150 people tuning in live at 1 time. I thought that was pretty good. A lot of people watch it after it's already up. It's always good to communicate, I think. I think it's good to get you all on there too. I'm not going to be able to do every one, and if I can't, I can get one of you in there. You just go to that little studio in City Hall and it's a good thing I think for all of us to get in front of the public. Any other questions? Thank you Councilwoman, good to see you all. Have a nice day.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of August 24, 2026 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to approve the claims from August 19, 2026 through September 9, 2026. Claim #6782 through claim #7289, inclusive. In the amount of \$16,053,174.04.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Salinas

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

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Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE- Councilman Tyler- No, nothing to report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE- Councilman Spitale- No planning.

FINANCE COMMITTEE/CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD- Councilman Woerpel- This will go along with the Capital Improvements Board too. The Capital Improvements board allocated \$250,650 at the last meeting which leaves \$2.2 million in the Capital Improvement Board fund. Of those allocations:

FUNDING ALLOCATION #340- Modifications to Wold Lake Parking Lot D- HWC Engineering - in the amount of \$88,000.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #341- US41/Calumet Ave at Eaton Conversion to Two-Way Westbound- United Consulting- in the amount of \$59,800

FUNDING ALLOCATION #342- Supplemental Sidewalk Program Clark Field- J&J Newell Concrete- in the amount of \$75,000.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #343- Supplemental Work on Hohman Avenue Phase 2- Milestone Contractors LP- in the amount of \$3,350.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #344- Memorial Park Utility Staking- American Structurepoint- in the amount of \$2,500.00

FUNDING ALLOCATION #345- Supplemental Design 165th Street from Kennedy to Kentucky and Michigan Street from Hohman to Calumet/Southeastern 167th street to cul-de-sac- First Group Engineering- in the amount of \$22,000.00

COMMUNITY AND CRIME WATCH COMMITTEE - Councilwoman Venecz -

Mt. Zion Pleasantview Plaza; Wed. September 16; 1 p.m
East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Tues. September 15; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
Edison Community Watch; Wed. October 7; 6:30 p.m.; Edison School
Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues. October 6; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman Ave
Hessville Crime Watch; Thur. September 17; 6 p.m.; HC3 Community Center
Irving Community Watch; Tues. October 13; 6 p.m.; Irving School
South Hohman Neighborhood watch; Thurs. October 22; 6:30 p.m.; Trinity Lutheran Church
Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur. October 8; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College
Jefferson Crime Watch; Wed. October 14; 6 p.m.; Jefferson School

Council President Venecz-We have with our Community Affairs Department with the Police Department, we

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COMMUNITY AND CRIME WATCH COMMITTEE - Councilwoman Venecz - Cont.

Council President Venecz cont.- have a very nice network of crime watches throughout the city, and we make all of the information about your neighborhood available to you throughout the city, you just have to get off the couch and come. I encourage everyone to come out. Meet your community policing officer who does patrol your neighborhood and get some good information to protect you, your family, and your property because community is not just about me, it's about us.

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

26-23 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for the Hammond Park Department (\$16,944.92)

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, with a public hearing on September 28th.

Council President Venecz- Just to be specific, this is \$16.944.92 that is appropriated from the Innkeepers Tax, operating balance to the Hotel/Motel fund that is primarily used, or that is used for advertising.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st and 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Salinas

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

26-24 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds from the Operating Balance for the Hammond Park Department(\$862,000)

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, with a public hearing on September 28th.

Councilman Woerpel- This appropriates \$862,000 from the Park Department to accounts such as special events, 219 Day, key, and cleanup refunds, holiday parade, Veteran parade, Dowling Park, Riverside Park, Irving and Columbia Park, Optimist Park, Hessville Soccer Complex, Sports Hall of Fame, Cinco De Mayo, overtime for special events, part time concession workers, FICA, Medicaid payments and employer share allocations.

Council President Venecz- I would like to point out that at Dowling Park, there is a substantial amount that was allocated to that, and there were several upgrades that were done at Dowling Park. The rest of the parks, it's general maintenance and upkeep.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES Cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st and 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Salinas

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

26-25 An Ordinance Creating New Funds (Fund #2504, #3383, and #4685) for the City of Hammond

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, and be referred to CAW on September 28th at 5:15 p.m.

Councilman Woerpel- The Indiana State Board of Accounts, requires all municipalities to maintain proper fund accounting and identify sources and authorize purposes and revenues and account for expenditures. This is setting up fund #2504, which is the August 2026 emergency fund and it is to receive, count for, and track, and expend revenues and other legally available monies received or made available to the city in connection to the storm that affected the region on August 11, 2026. This also includes qualifying State and Federal money. Fund #3383, a public safety debt fund, it is to receive and account for, and expend bond proceeds, debt service revenues, transfers and other legally available monies associated with the City's 2026 public safety bond debt, including the payment, accounting, administration, and reporting of principal interests and insurance costs. Fund #4685, the police and fire equipment fund, to receive account for, and expend legally available monies for the acquisition, replacement, installation, improvement, and maintenance and related cost of equipment purchased for the City's police and fire departments. Each one of these funds is created separately and there are no receipts or expenditures at this time to appropriate to these funds.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st and 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Salinas

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

26-26 An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana Authorizing the City to Issue its Taxable Economic Development Revenue Bonds (Central Allocation Area Project), and Approving Other Actions in Respect Thereto

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved for 1st and 2nd reading by title, and be referred to Economic Development Committee on September 28th at 5:00 p.m., with a Public Hearing on September 28th.

Councilman Tyler- For everybody following along, this is for the proposed development at 6525 Indianapolis Boulevard. The amount of, the payment is not to exceed \$770,000 and there's also another public hearing, tomorrow too, so the public has a couple opportunities to weigh in if they would like to.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES Cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st and 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Salinas

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to change the October 12, 2026 meeting to October 13, 2026 at 6 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE (change meeting date)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Salinas

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

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

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mary Schoons- Opposed to Governor's Parkway

Ulyssa Cruz Moreno- Wishes to become more involved with City issues, wishes to see more reports to see how residents benefit from investments.

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

AYES: ALL

2026 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

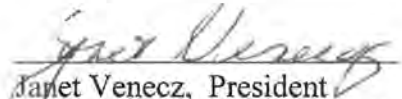
	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	12	26	9	23	9	23	13	27	11	26	8	22	13	27	10	24	14							
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E							
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P							
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	A							
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P							
Bill Emerson	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	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							
Janet Venecz	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							

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: 6:45 p.m.
mg

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk