The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on October 26, 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, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None
ABSENT: Salinas
TOTAL: 8

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- Hi, how's it going, Councilwoman? It's good to see you all. Thanks, I haven't seen you in a couple weeks. I've seen some of you since then. I have an update on Gavit and Clark High School demolition, update on e-bikes, and then I'll got through the last couple weeks if you don't mind. If you have any questions, I'm available. Gavit High School demolition, we had recently met with representatives from Purdue Northwest, the School City of Hammond, and my administration. So I've reported to the Council in the past, Gavit High School is under a demolition order issued by the Board of Public Works. This order was appealed by the School City of Hammond, and is pending in the Lake Superior Court before Judge Parent in Crown Point. The meeting at Purdue Northwest was about a path forward with Gavit High School. Clark High School is another matter I'll deal with separately if you don't mind. It was a productive meeting and I want to thank PNW Chancellor Holford for coordinating the meeting. I think it was clear to all in the meeting that the Gavit building itself should be demolished. It was also made clear by the PNW representatives that PNW is not interested in the Gavit High School building itself. They are only interested in developing the Gavit High School athletic fields into a future PNW athletic facility. This is the understanding I've had with PNW for the last 5 years at least. It was good that all of us were in the room, and it was made clear. My administration helped coordinate this deal many years ago, and we are all fully in support of PNW's plans. I believe that all along, the School City of Hammond had hoped that PNW could re-purpose Gavit High School and somehow keep it functioning. After this meeting, it was clear to all involved that this is not the case with PNW. The City of Hammond reiterated that we want to move forward with all of Hammond's abandoned schools and that the deal with PNW makes the most sense for the Gavit area. The demolition at Gavit will not be cheap. By some estimates, the demolition could cost as much as $7 million, but as Mayor, I believe knocking down a building that has set vacant for 6 years is appropriate, and I'm glad the city has pushed this issue. If we hadn't pushed this issue with the demo order, we'd still be staring at a vacant, abandoned, former highschool. Now at least, we're moving forward towards resolution and redevelopment. The meeting was productive and I'm hoping we can come to an agreement on demolition, how the demolition will be paid for, and the future of Gavit High School. Now I'm going to cover Clark real quick, and then I'm gonna see if you all have questions, if you don't I'll continue forward if that's ok. Clark High School demolition is short compared to the previous. On another note, in the

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- same vein, the demolition of Clark High School was continues last week, by agreement between the School City, and us while we're working on the details of Gavit. I apologize to Councilman, Mark Kalwinski who showed up to the Board of Public Works thinking that was the day for the meeting, because the meeting we held with the School City, we agreed to continue that. Councilman Mark, it's my fault, I apologize for you being there. I'm hoping to be honest that the deal we're making with Gavit, helps us facilitate the Clark moving forward. I think it's good news, but we won't know it's finally good news until we wrap it all up, but I though it was a very productive meeting. I don't know if you all have questions. Councilman Woerpel and I haven't really spoke about this issue, nor has Councilman Kalwinski.

Councilman Woerpel- I would just say that, I walk a lot in my district, and talk to a lot of people, and it's the number one question I get asked in that area, like what's going to happen with Gavit? Them residents over there have told me about everything from housing projects, to the grocery stores, to apartments and all that and I will say I've read some nonsense about other high schools in the area on social media, and I will say this, the residents are finally happy that something is finally gonna happen with that school.

Mayor McDermott- I appreciate it, thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski- Across town the residents in the 1st District, are curious about what could happen to that site, should the city get it, so I'm getting that they would like to know information and have input on how to progress with that site if in fact we get it.

Mayor McDermott- Let's do it right now, Councilman. There is, the only plan the city has with regard to Clark, if we get possession, we don't have a plan. I just want to, the plan right now with Government, meaning the School City of Hammond, right now the plan is, Clark High School is never going to be a high school again. Let's make that clear. Do you know why, Councilman? I know you know why, because you live there, because there's no parking. Right now, Clark High School doesn't have enough parking for a staff if you wanted to open a school. There's not even close to enough parking for any students that would ever want to use that school. Even if a school, let's say there was a charter school that wanted to buy Clark High School and open a high school there, it's literally not possible because there's no parking. That issue, we could move past that issue once we developed Clark High School's football field's parking lot into a neighborhood, we knew that Clark was never going to be a high school again. So the question is, do we want to continue to stare at Clark High School in the condition it is with no plan whatsoever, or do we want to move forward? I think it's time to move forward. That's where I stand, but Councilman Mark, I have no plans. I've heard all these theories in the 1st District about I have all these grand plans, there's no plan whatsoever, other than, if we continue forward like this, 10 years from now, Clark High School will just look a little bit more deteriorated, and nothing will have changed.

Councilman Kalwinski- I appreciate you stepping out on this, because you're hearing what I'm hearing that we have some nefarious plans for it, etc. so thank you for getting out there.

Mayor McDermott- Thank you, Councilman Mark, I appreciate it.

Councilman Tyler- I know that this, it's not a high school, but there's 2 additional schools in my district, that

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Councilman Tyler cont.-were shut down a few years ago, Wallace and Kenwood, any updates on it?

Mayor McDermott- The good news about that, Councilman Barry, is what we're doing right now with the high schools, we intentionally started with the high schools, no offense, I love the elementary school locations in the 3rd too, we can do things with those locations as a city, but once we work through the high school issue, it'll be smoother to work through. We had a good meeting though. It was the first good meeting I've had with School City, government to government in a long time. It went really well. I'm hoping we can get some momentum out of this, Councilman. Believe me, the schools you're talking about in the 3rd District, are great locations for the city, meaning if we could get a hold of that land, we could do positive things for the 3rd District.

Councilman Tyler- Will you keep me updated on those conversations?

Mayor McDermott- Yes, sir.

Councilman Kalwinski- Is the lawsuit from the School City still out there?

Mayor McDermott- It's an appeal, yeah, I was talking about that, but that's in regards to Clark High School and if we could work through this issue, we'll work through that appeal, and we'll also work through any potential future problems with Clark or Wallace or any of the other schools we're talking about. I'm hopeful that once we work through this issue with Gavit, it will pave the way for everything else. I'm going to move onto e-bikes, another controversial issue. I received a phone call from a Highland Councilman, Doug Turich, who called me about e-bike regulations. It was good timing because we've been asking the police department and the law department to address the concerns I've heard from residents and seen with my own eyes on our bike trails. They are motorized vehicles and some e-bikes, should not be on our bike trails, and they should be regulated. Councilman from Highland is getting a working group together with my Corporate Counsel and City Attorney as well as others. We're hoping residents from North Township, Town of Munster, City of Whiting, and other cities and towns, so that any e-bike ordinances that are passed are consistent amongst all the towns in our area. This will allow users of the trail system that connects our cities and towns to know what the rules are and hopefully the rules will be very similar no matter what community you're in. The goal is to have something passed over the winter so the new rules will be in place by the spring and our great trail system will be safer for everybody including those that want to lawfully use the trails with their e-bikes. I know that the Council people individually have talked to me about this issue, and we get constant calls from the public about e-bikes and how fast they're going. Now we're starting to see a lot of motorized bikes on our bike trails, and it's dangerous. We need to get control of it, and the police can't do anything until we come to grips with this issue. You'll see that come through the winter. Now, the rest of my report, I met with the Executives from the company Clayco who builds large venues and other major construction projects across the world. I held a Mayor's Morning In. It's a virtual morning with the Mayor. I'm gonna have you guys on as guests during that. It's every 2 weeks. It's sort of like a Mayor's Night Out, but it's shorter and it's online. I held my weekly phone call with the Bears Executive team over the proposed economic development deal. I had a meeting with Councilwoman Venecz, Councilman Woerpel, and Hammond Public Library acting leader, Amanda Aguilera about recent problems they've experienced at the Downtown Hammond Library branch. You'll all here more about this at the next Hammond Council meeting if you haven't heard about it already. Is that accurate Councilman Woerpel, or Councilwoman Venecz? Next Council meeting?

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Council President Venecz- We're going to invite Amanda Aguilera to speak this evening during New and Unfinished Business just to give us a clear picture of what's in front of us.

Mayor McDermott- Great, thank you. I had a meeting with Amanda, and I thought it was a very positive thing that the Hammond Public Library system chose a Hammond person to run the library branch. I think that's real positive, personally. If you'll all hear her out, I'll appreciate it. I attended the 39th Annual Volunteer Awards Breakfast at the Hammond Sportsplex. It's always one of my favorite events of the year, and I appreciate all the Council people that were there. I attended a meeting of Shift 2 in the Hammond Central Firehouse as part of our normal monthly meeting and all of Hammond's Firehouses. All the men and women on that particular shift, attend those meetings and I think it's beneficial for all involved. It's really pretty cool getting everybody in there from the brand new firefighters to the Fire Chief and everybody in between and airing it out. I learn a lot about the problems in our firehouse that way, so I appreciate everybody that participates in that. I appeared on WJOB Morning Show with Tom Dabertin and took phone calls, a lot of phone calls. I met with Corporate Counsel and my Chief of Staff to discuss a firefighter grievance. I completely gave in on that grievance on all counts. It doesn't happen very often, but I think it was the right thing to do in that case. LPR policy meeting with the Chiefs of Police, the Captains of the Hammond PD, making sure that Hammond operates their LPR system in a way that doesn't infringe on Hammond resident's civil liberties. That's my report for the last 2 weeks, not sure if you have any questions. I know we already covered a couple. I'm available if you need anything.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to approve the minutes of October 13, 2026 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from October 7, 2026 through October 21, 2026. Claim #8192 through claim #8668, inclusive. In the amount of $5,625,248.34.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Rakos- I'd like to make an announcement, the passing of Doug Paris who was a respected businessman in the Hessville Community for 63 years. He passed away on October 16th, and this past weekend they had a wake and a funeral for him. In a coming meeting, I'm going to ask for an ordinance commemorating

COMMUNICATIONS Cont.

Councilman Rakos cont.- him and possibly dedicating that corner where he stood there for 63 years.

Council President Venecz- He was a nice man.

Councilman Woerpel- I would just like to say that having delivered Doug's mail in the past, I knew Doug a long time and chances are if you were from Hessville, he cut your hair, but he also loved Hammond, and he knew a lot about his history, and I can recall talking to him about the Hammond Tech team that won the State Championship, and him telling me the stories about the players, and the team, and his friends, and one of his best friends, besides Dave Hamm's father in law, Mr. Thompson, was a guy named Jimmy Fannon that went to Hammond Tech, and he talked Doug into becoming a barber, because the football coach said his hair was too long, so they literally stuck a bowl on his head and just cut around it, but Jimmy Fannon wound up being Jimmy Valliant-professional wrestler. Doug will be missed by a lot of people.

Council President Venecz- Absolutely.

Councilman Tyler- I just wanted to share, last Saturday, we did the street renaming for late resident, Cecil Harper. I just wanted to thank everyone that was able to show up and speak on behalf of the family and Mr. Harper, and Mayor, I just wanted to thank you and your administration for being supportive of that street renaming and having staff on hand to help with that ceremony too. I think it was a beautiful ceremony. The family was very happy with how everything went, so I just wanted to thank everybody once again for that.

Council President Venecz- It was an honor to speak, and it was a beautiful day, that's for sure.

Councilman Woerpel- Councilman Tyler reminded me that a couple meetings before we renamed the street for who he was talking about, we honored Tom Burns from Burns Funeral Home, and he passed away this week too.

Council President Venecz- I would like to announce that Mayor's Night Out is coming up this Wednesday, October 28th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Hess Elementary School. That's 3640 Orchard Drive in Hammond. I hope everybody shows and has some questions. I also wanted to announce that Thursday the Hammond Police Department is hosting a trunk or treat from 5-7 p.m. at the Hammond Police Department. It's always very well attended. Come out, meet the police officers who patrol our streets and protect us. Any other communications? (X3) Communications are now closed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE- Councilman Tyler- Nothing to report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE- Councilman Spitale- Yes, we had planning. The plan commission had a public hearing regarding the proposed of South Hammond Station number plan on October 19, 2026. This is per amendment to the composition plan and next meeting might come for the plumbing for the one for the planning. It'd be the November 16th Department of the Planning Development. That'd be the next thing that would be for us. We had quite a few people that were over there about things that were going on with the train and

COMMITTEE REPORTS Cont.

PLANNING COMMITTEE- Councilman Spitale- Cont.- everything. Thank you.

FINANCE COMMITTEE- Councilman Woerpel- The Finance Committee kind of met tonight as Council as a Whole to introduce the 2027 budget and along with those, the budget ordinance being brought out of committee tonight, which is 26-27, 26-28, 26-29, 26-30, and 26-31 will also be brought out tonight.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD - Councilman Woerpel- Capital Improvement Board did not meet this week.

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

East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Tues. November 17; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
Edison Community Watch; Wed. November 4; 6:30 p.m.; Edison School
Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues. December 1; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman Ave.
Hessville Crime Watch; Thur. November 19; 6 p.m.; HC3 Community Center
Irving Community Watch; Tues. November 10; 9:30 a.m.; Irving School
Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur. November 12; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College
Jefferson Crime Watch; Wed. October 14; 6 p.m.; Jefferson School

Council President Venecz- Once again, I encourage everyone to come out and learn about what's going on in your neighborhood, learn about safety tips to keep you and your family and your property safe. There isn't a meeting that I go to that I don't learn something, so please come out, because community is not just about me, it's about us. That concludes committee reports.

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

26-27 City of Hammond 2027 Budget Proposal

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

Mayor McDermott- Last meeting, I talked about general fund budget, total budget increase of $1.7 million, College Bound cost 1.1, no $1.1 College Bound expenses are going to be funded using TIF, which is nice. All employees in this get a 3% raise. I think the only exception to that is the fire department, which gets 3.5. That's true? No, Police gets 3.5. Police department gets 3.5, that was contractual. Other than that everyone gets 3% pay raise, even including the contractual. Interesting to note, $66 million which is more than we collect in property taxes is just the police and the fire department alone. The police department runs $40 million. The Fire department's $26 million. College Bound expenses are $3.5 million a year. Our insurance runs around $12 million a year. Debt is $3.1 million a year. Property taxes in total, we get $49 million, interesting. Gaming, $20-24 million a year. Water sales from neighboring communities keeps going up every year, it's $12 million, interesting. PILOT payments from other units of government is $6 million. This budget is very similar to the budget we passed last year with minor changes. A couple of the increased expenses include landfill fees. Landfill fees went up this year. Recycling went up 5%. Landfill went up 5%. Other than that, real good budget. Total net assessed value for the City of Hammond, I love that number personally, $3.94 billion, almost $4

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE Cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- billion. When I took over as Mayor, it was a little less than $2 billion. It's doubled since I've been Mayor. It helps all of our tax payers in the city. Higher assessed value gives us all a little bit cheaper taxes. I'm available for any questions though. I appreciate the council and your help drafting this. I appreciate Tinisha who is the back up City Controller. Tinisha, Our City Controller had a baby and she's out for the rest of the year, and Tinisha stepped in and did the budget on behalf of Megan in the Controller's Office. I think she did a great job, so I want to say congratulations Tinisha and thank you very much for what you did. I'm available for any questions that you all have.

Council President Venecz- I agree about Tinisha. She's great. I spoke with her, answered every question I had right off the bat. Thank you Tinisha.

Mayor McDermott- Megan does a great job, and one of the things Megan does very well is making sure that if she's not here, she has somebody that can do her job for her and Tinisha proved that she can do that job which is always nice to know that you have a back up City Controller if you need it. Thank you, and great job, Tinisha, and Megan, we miss you and looking forward to when you come back.

Councilman Kalwinksi- The SB-1 is postponed for a year and won't begin until 2029 now?

Mayor McDermott- Yes, Councilman. This budget is normal, what we're used too. Next year, another normal budget. The budget after that, so, it's the budget that we're doing in 2028 for the 2029 budget, that will be the budget where we're going to have estimated $13-15 million in cuts imposed by the State of Indiana and we'll be left with a choice as a Government at that point, do we want to cover that $13 million loss through cuts or do we want to pass a new tool that the state is giving us which is a municipal income tax to make up that revenue. I know where I fall on that issue, but 2 years from now, we may have a different council. I hope not, I like working with you all, but in 2 years if we have a different council, we'll have to grapple, well in 2 years, you may have a different Mayor for all that matters, and if that's the case, we have to make sure that all those people are on the same page. The only way to cut yourself out of a $13 million hole is to lay off hundreds of people. That's no exaggeration. That's something we can grapple with in 2 years. Right now, Councilman Mark, this is a very similar budget to what we passed last year, and probably to the one we will pass next year as well, I imagine. I imagine we're not going to get too crazy with the big question marks out there with SB-1.

Council President Venecz- Mayor, just for the general public, will you please explain what SB-1 is and the effect it's going to have on us as a municipality?

Mayor McDermott- SB-1 is a tax relied bill that was passed by the state. I think the state is moving towards phasing out property taxes which is a problem for anybody in local government, your schools, your cities, your libraries. We use property taxes to fund government. So if you're phasing property taxes out, you have to give us the ability to cover that cost or else the only option is to cut, and to cut, some people say yes, cut. Guys, I just told you we have $60 million in public safety in the City of Hammond. It's literally 2/3 of every dollar we spend goes to public safety, so if you're comfortable with cutting $13-15 million out of our budget, we're just being honest, you're talking about police and firefighters. That's no hyperbole, that's just fact. The interesting part about SB-1 for me, is the intent was to give homeowners $500 of tax relief, and the interesting part is this, so for some people if you're retired for instance, SB-1 is probably a good thing for you, because you'll get $500 in tax relief, and you make no income, so you pay any tax if it's passed. Let's say you're a Hammond family and

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE Cont

Mayor McDermott cont.- you're making $100k a year, some Hammond families are making more than that, but just say you're a Hammond family making $100k a year, and the state's SB-1 gives you $500 of a tax break, but Hammond has to cover it's losses, so it passes a 1% income tax, and you owe $1,000. You got $500 from the state, and you got $1,000 new bill from the City of Hammond, so it's not really a tax relief if you make money, and there's one thing that's interesting about our city, I love this about Hammond, we have low unemployment. We have a bunch of workers, people who make income and it's not necessarily a good thing for people with income. SB-1 is not necessarily a good thing for you. I think it's a scam personally, but I'm just down here trying to run the city. Councilman Mark brought up a good point, 2 budgets from now, we're going to be in a lot different stress levels than we are right now. Maybe it will get changed before then, so let's just keep our fingers crossed. We have 2 full sessions before it takes place, and I have a feeling there's going to be some tweaks to it, because right now as it stands, Councilman Mark, we were talking about this today, as it stands right now, when the Governor and all of his state wide officers are running for re-elections, we're going to be down here in the cities and towns of Indiana passing income taxes, and I'm going to tell the truth, if I have to pass an income tax, it's because the state changed the rules on us and we have no choice but to pass an income tax, but I don't necessarily think the Governor likes that timing. I haven't talked to him about this, but I'd be shocked if there wasn't major changes, Councilman, but we have 2 more budgets before that hits. I appreciate you guys bringing it up.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9721 APPROVED

26-28 2027 Hammond Redevelopment Budget Proposal

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

Councilman Kalwinski- My understanding is that this is the same budget as last year except for the salaries being raised that way, otherwise it's the same budget.

Mayor McDermott- Can I interject real quick? We are also on the same page as the council, in 2 years, the rules are going to change a lot, we're not looking to add a lot to our budget right now so you're finding very consistent budgets to the ones that were passed a year ago, outside of what Councilman indicated to pay increase, 3 % pay increase, so I appreciate you bringing that up, Councilman.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE Cont

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9722 APPROVED

26-29 2027 Hammond Sanitary District Budget Proposal

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

Council President Venecz- Any discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9723 APPROVED

26-30 2027 Hammond City Officials and Employees Salaries

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

Mayor McDermott- The 3% was chosen for the employee pay raise. It literally offsets to rate of inflation this year. The rate of inflation was actually more than 3%. Sometimes the employees get a little bit more than the inflation rate, sometimes they get a little bit less. This year, I think that technically the inflation rate was a little bit higher than 3%, so with a 3% pay raise, the employees still lost a little bit of ground this year, but I think it's a good pay raise, and that's why we picked that number. Most of the time we come here with a 2% pay raise, but the inflation rate was a little higher this year, so I put in for 3%. I appreciate you all's consideration.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9724 APPROVED

26-31 2027 Hammond Police Officers and Firefighters Salaries

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for final passage.

Mayor McDermott- Before it's said that the City of Hammond doesn't love it's firefighters as much as the police officers, I want to point out, police officers have a 3.5% contractually negotiated rate, and firefighters for this particular year only negotiated 3%. There is a disparity in previous years where the firefighters got more,

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE Cont

Mayor McDermott cont.- it's just the path they chose for this 4 year agreement. This year in particular, police are getting a little bit more than fire, but fire negotiated for different things than police did which explains the disparity.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9725 APPROVED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

26-32 An Ordinance Creating New Funds (Fund #2496, Fund #2497, Fund Number#2498) for the FY2027 Comprehensive Highway Injury Reduction Program (CHIRP) Grant Funds

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

Councilman Rakos- This will come out for 3rd and final on our next meeting which will be on November 9th. This is just a, every year, we need to pass the funds to put in grants for the Comprehensive Highway Injury and Reduction Program. This is something we do every year.

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

26R-19 A Declaratory Resolution Determining that a Certain Area of the City of Hammond, Indiana be Designated as the Belle Economic Revitalization Area to Which Deductions from Assessed Valuation May be Requested by an Applicant to the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption with a public hearing on November 9, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Councilman Kalwinski- This is the 2nd step of a 3 step process towards an economic revitalization area which in time will also be forwarding a 10 year tax abatement proposal after the 3rd step of the process is completed. The public hearing that is scheduled for November 9th, is actually prior to the 3rd step, the confirmatory resolution and there have been 2 public hearings during the first 2 steps of this process already. I just wanted to be clear on that. Thank you.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

RESOLUTIONS Cont.

Mayor McDermott- I appreciate Councilman Mark bringing this forward. We previously did a development agreement approved by the council, I think it was during the summer. It was between the City of Hammond, and

Mayor McDermott cont.-Midwest Prairie Builders. They're building a new, so it's 1719-1733 Indy Blvd, over there on the East side of Indy on the Whiting side of the Blvd. Councilman Mark is correct, we agreed to a traditional 10 year tax abatement which doesn't cost any current money. It costs us development money into the future so the first year they'll get 100% off of their property taxes. The second year they'll get 90%, then 80%, then 70%, so we'll get something off this property in the coming years, which is great. Besides a new development, Councilman Mark also pointed out that Dairy Belle, 4th District staple is moving to the 1st District. I think it's going to do very well there. I know a laundry mat is also part of this development. There's an open space, and I like the rumors I'm hearing, but I don't think the 3rd space has been finalized yet. This is going to give residents and Whiting/Robertsdale more options for fine dining, if you consider Dairy Belle fine dining, I know I do.

Councilman Kalwinski - I do.

Mayor McDermott- I do too.

Council President Venecz- Certainly enjoyable, that's for sure.

Councilman Kalwinski- Also, I just want to add that sometimes people want to mention that we shouldn't be giving incentives, however what this will do is put this property on the tax rolls again, and put in businesses on a black that is basically vacant, and not giving any benefit to the city.

Mayor McDermott- I appreciate you bringing that up, Councilman. You know, a lot of people give us credit over the last 20 years about how much development we brought into the city, and if we never used TIF, never used tax abatement, half of that $2 billion would never have appeared. It's a fact of life, and economic development in 2026, the city, like Hammond, needs to be aggressive with TIF, progressive with tax incentives, and if we're not, they'll go to Munster. They'll go to Highland, and we won't see any of these developments opening up in our city. I appreciate you, Councilman Mark for carrying this and pointing that out.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 RESOLUTION NO. R19 ADOPTED

26R-20 A Resolution of the Hammond Common Council Approving a Declaratory Resolution Related to Creation of an Economic Revitalization Area

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved for adoption with a Public Hearing on November 9, 2026 at 6 p.m.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

RESOLUTIONS Cont.

Councilman Woerpel- This is a property known as 5009 Calumet Avenue. At one time is was the Hammond Distillery, and is was currently owned by the City of Hammond, Sanitary District, so basically there was no property taxes collected on the property.

Mayor McDermott- True.

Councilman Woerpel- This allows them a $45 million, I'm sorry, they're investing the $25 million for a company called UESCO and this grants them a 15 year period, which allows the owner of the property located in the area to rehabilitate, or redevelop the property and come back to us in a period of 10 years for a tax abatement on real and business personal property, if I read that correctly.

Mayor McDermott- UESCO Cranes, 5009 Calumet Avenue, I appreciate Councilman Woerpel carrying this. It was supposed to be carried by the District Councilman who couldn't make it to today's meeting. So Councilman Woerpel sort of got drafted last second to carry this bill. Obviously we don't want incentive agreements to fall apart because one of the council people couldn't be at the meeting. UESCO Cranes is moving it's national headquarters, manufacturing, and distribution operations from Illinois, to Hammond, Indiana. I believe it's South Holland, Illinois, moving to Hammond. 100 high quality jobs coming to Hammond boosting the local work force and economic base. They're going to be open in another 2 years. Councilman Woerpel was right, a $25 million dollar investment. This is also part of a 3 step process. The next step will be bringing the actual incentive before you. This is one of those projects I brag about. A lot of people are talking to Hammond about the Bears. One of the projects I talk about a lot is, these are the types of projects that are just only going to intensify for us in the coming decades. It's a steady drum beat of businesses coming from Illinois, coming to Indiana and we're the first stop. UESCO Cranes is a success story. Let's keep our fingers crossed and keep on closing more deals into the future just like this one.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Salinas
Motion carried 8/0/1 RESOLUTION NO. R20 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to suspend the rules, to allow Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of Hammond Public Library, to Speak. AYES: ALL

Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of the Hammond Public Library- I'm Amanda Aguilera, and like they said, I am the current interim Director at the Hammond Public Library, but I've been with the library for over 10 years. I started as the local history librarian and I became the head of adult services and special collections a couple of years ago. I'm just coming today to kind of put in front of you guys a situation that we're going through at the library, so that when the resolution that we are going to need passed in a few weeks comes in front of you, you already know what's going on. So basically, a lot of people already know the library has had issues with water

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Cont.

Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of the Hammond Public Library cont.- in our lower level which is our administrative level, and our technical services level, also our board meeting room, and some programming space that we have. Over the years, they've done small little projects to try to fix them, but they really didn't address the bigger issue and unfortunately July 3rd of this year, there was a storm here in Hammond and we lost power for at least a day at the library, and what happened is, the power went out, and our generator ran for so long, that it actually stopped and we had our sump pumps back up because of that rain during that storm. We had about 2 inches of water in our basement, which basically, it doesn't sound bad, but it was bad because it was sitting there for awhile. At this point, we've paid over $200,000 just for the clean up, to get walls removed, to get flooring removed, and all those kinds of things, and it's been kind of a process. Now we're working with an architectural and engineering firm to see what we need to do to get it fixed and actually we would like to remodel it a little bit so we can add additional public space for programming down there and better utilize our space. We do not need money from the city, but we do need approval from you to use our money since we did not budget for it. We are asking for $700,000 from our rainy day fund and approximately $1.5 million from our operating budget reserve. That still leaves us with a decent amount of money in our reserve, but with that we will get a full remediation, testing, we've already been getting some testing done, but additional testing to figure out what's going on with the grounds and the property that is causing this water issue year after year, and hopefully mitigate and remediate. We would be getting a full remediation for the basement which will be great for the health and safety of our staff and public, because we're trying to add that additional public space. Once we're done with that, we're hoping that we'll have all this additional public space that we can offer the community. We're not asking for anything from the city itself, we just want to get the approval to utilize our money to make that full remediation for the safety of the public, the staff, and to better the community so we have all this additional nice new programming space because I wish I had time to explain to you guys how amazing we have been doing at the library. Just for an example, we had over 16k people for our programs last year alone. We have been really needing extra space which is why we want to go ahead and do that remodel and add extra public space for people to reserve, for us to have programs, and yeah, that's about it. Just kind of a heads up and letting you guys know what we're going to need.

Councilman Woerpel- If Amanda sounds smart, that's because she had a great mailman when she was going to college.

Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of the Hammond Public Library- It's because I went to Purdue Calumet and I got my undergrad there, and I had a great mailman.

Councilman Woerpel- These guys make the mistake of reminding me, hey what did you do for a living? But, anyway, I spend, as hard as this is to believe, Amanda can vouch for this, I spend a lot of time in the Hammond Public Library, and I know that there's some out there that think, well what do we need a library for? I don't think I've ever been in there when there was under 100-200 kids in there working on computers. When this flooding problem happened, she called me and asked me to take a tour. She made it perfectly clear right off the bat, they're not asking us for money, it's just a thing with the state law, that when they do an expenditure above their budget for the year, and they have their own money, their board votes on it, and they just come to us with a yes or no vote. When I called you, I think you were a little skeptical, but then you met Amanda and found out just how smart her mailman made her.

Council President Venecz- Must have been all those books you delivered.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Cont.

Councilman Woerpel- I just wanted to reiterate though that I appreciate you coming in front of us, and I did ask you to bring some numbers as far as how many people use that library.

Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of the Hammond Public Library- 26k public computer usages last year, 150,000 physical material only circulation, 680 programs, which include yoga, bingo, crafting, senior outreach programs. We work with the Hammond Housing Community, the YMCA, School City, The Field Museum, Purdue, and we're just growing and increasing. This might be a blessing in disguise as much as this is our thing right now because we're going to get that nice new public space and we'll be able to expand even more. They told us approximately 6-8 months to get, because what they're going to do is, they're going to come in and do community surveys of our patrons to find out what the patrons are looking for in their programming spaces. What the patrons need, because we have a lot of returning regulars, so they will be able to tell us, hey you know, we always have problems with getting a study room, so that. As they work with that feedback from you know, the community themselves, us, our staff, they will begin to develop that while working with a construction company and getting it up and running. They're telling us, they're hoping 6-8 months for like the drawings and getting things going. I'm hoping not too much after that because unfortunately right now, 1/4 of my staff is displaced, meaning we now have even less public area than we had before because we've got staff in study rooms. We've got staff in the computer lab. We're having to hold computer classes in our book sale room. I wish it was faster, but we are at a point where it's like, it's going to help the safety and the cleanliness of the library. It's going to help with giving us other things that we need so we're already at this point, we might as well push forward and get it done and have something to offer the public from it.

Councilman Woerpel- And just as a side note, to show you the respect she has, there's 2 appointments on the library board that I see here. One is a county appointed, and Board President, Tom Novak and Caryn Janiga is a part of that board. Am I missing anybody else? The woman sitting next to Tom.

Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of the Hammond Public Library- That's Wanda. She's my business manager.

Councilman Woerpel- That's the one that when Amanda doesn't want to deal with me, she goes, go bother her. She does a great job over there. I've heard the library called everything from a homeless shelter to whatever, and believe me, it's not. Any library that can get me to come into it about 12 times a year, has to be doing something right. Of course on Saturday, the day of the parade, but Saturday November 7th, they got this great speaker coming that's gonna tell a couple of stories too.

Amanda Aguilera, Acting Director of the Hammond Public Library- Thank you, and feel free to ask me any questions. I'm happy to talk about the library anytime.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to return to regular business.

AYES: ALL

SPECIAL ZONING ACTION ADOPTED UNDER I.C. 36-7
None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Thaddeus Bilski- Talked about CHIRP, would like to see more police presence at 175th and Calumet/ Hohman

PUBLIC EXPRESSION Cont.

Thaddeus Bilski cont.- and 173rd, would also like to see road bollards at that intersection to secure the bike lane from car traffic.

Lali Cuevas- A representative from the NWI Community Response Team asking the Council to acknowledge and engage in the immigration/surveillance concerns.

Mary Schons- Opposed to building Governor's Parkway and thinks Councilman Rakos is scheming and trying to make money off of the deal.

Ken Rosek- Upset about not getting to speak at last year's Hessville Mayor's Night Out and the cameras not facing the speakers during public expression.

George Stoya- Opposed to subsidies, incentives, and deferrals because it's going to come down to the working people of Hammond to make up for the shortfall.

Councilwoman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, 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	13	27	11	26	8	22	13	27	10	24	14	28	13	26				
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	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				
Mark Kalwinski	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	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	A	P	P	A				
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	P				
Bill Emerson	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	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	E	P	P				
Janet Venecz	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					

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: 7:13 p.m.
mg

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk