The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on November 9, 2026 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL
PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Spitale, Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Alexander, Salinas
ABSENT: None
TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- I am here for the Mayor's address tonight. Good evening, everyone. You had mentioned veterans and the City of Hammond, we try to do a good job to celebrate and acknowledge our veterans. We had our Veterans Day Parade this past Saturday and ceremony. Many of you were there. I thought it went really well. We had a good turnout and a beautiful day as we honored our veterans. The day before, we had our Veterans Lunch and Learn at the Sportsplex. That was put on by the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, and we had resources for our veterans and gave them a nice lunch, of course City Hall is closed in honor of Veteran's Day, this Wednesday, we will be closed. Some more events and things on the calendar, we held our persons with disabilities Halloween Party at the Sportsplex. We had over 100 people attend that. It continues to be a nice outreach to our disabled community. We also had a HPD community trunk or treat. I was able to attend that one. The line was all the way down to the old 18th Street. It was a really great turnout for that. We had Mayor's Night Out in the 6th at Hess Elementary School. It was nice to hear from the residents. The very next morning, we had Mayor's Morning In. We continue to have about over 100 people engage with us in real time, plus we ended up having over 1,000 viewing those videos after we're done with them. It's another good way for the community to have access to the Mayor and the administration and let us know what your questions and concerns are. We attended the Riverside Christian ribbon cutting on October 28th. That's in the old Spohn School building that had been occupied by Hammond Baptist for past many years. They sold it as a private transaction to Riverside Christian School and they started school this year. There's around 100 kids attending there, k-5, but the plan is to continue to add a grade each year and eventually be a k-12 facility with high school, full athletics, the whole thing. We are already starting our 219 day planning. Our theme is going to be to honor the trades in our community. That's coming up and it will be here before we know it. We were please to host the Portage Mayor, Austin Bonta. Portage and some of the Porter County municipalities are looking at going in together in Animal Control. They were recommended from the Humane Society to check out the Hammond Animal Control, because they said that we were the gold standard. I was pleased to be there with Mayor Bonta. He was very impressed with how we run our shelter. He had a lot of good questions, and we offered to help them along the way as they pursue that. The Federal Railroad Administration came out to see the Briar East Woods area for our Governor's Parkway overpass. They are not the ones we're currently waiting on for

MAYOR'S ADDRESS Cont.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller cont.-approval, that's the Federal Highway Administration, but they wanted to come out and see the project because they do require approval for that. They were very pleased with the plan and there were no major concerns off of that visit. We continue to meet with FEMA as well. That progresses well. As we initially thought, we should be able to get the majority of those costs, the city had to spend, recovered. In Economic Development, we had our first meeting on the hospital site, and what that looks like, hopefully in 2 weeks, Mayor can share a little bit more publicly where we are with that, but we do continue to progress on that. We had another meeting of our used carlot task force. We are starting to have some good success stories. Councilman Rakos was there, where we see some of the lots where, they're just piled with cars and piled with cars, and they don't have a parking plan. We've been able to remedy quite a few of those at this time, so continue to let us know if you have feedback. You can let me know, and we can add lots to the list if there's a nuisance in your area where they're not following the plan. Councilman Emerson was there as well, but we've seen a lot of good work out of that task force. Lastly, we're finishing up some meetings on House Enrolled Act 1001, which is going to have us justify our permitting cost. It may come to you before they year is over, but they won't be going up. It's not going to be a permit increase, but we do have to justify our permit cost. Hammond wasn't the target here. What they saw in the legislation is there were certain communities that were using their permitting process as a profit center basically, and they were using it to control what kind of projects would come into their communities, in particular, housing. You had certain places you'd have to make a community impact fee on top of the permit fee, and they could be $10-20k just for a single home. Hammond doesn't have that issue, but of course they passed a legislation state wide, and so we do have to comply. We are working through that. As far as 2 upcoming events, I just want to mention, Mayor's Night Out is a makeup for the 4th District. That's next Wednesday, a week from Wednesday, the 18th 6:30 at St. John Bosco and next Friday, November 20th, we have our next Mayor's Morning In, 9:30 on facebook, youtube, and gohammond. I'm available for any questions.

Councilman Kalwinski- Scott, for the Mayor's Day In, for the public, how would they get on that and watch it.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Where we find that most people watch it, is through gohammond, on facebook. They look up gohammond on your facebook, and there will be a livestream there. It's also livestreamed on youtube, but we can see how many people are connecting and the facebook is a much greater audience than youtube, and people just post questions in the comments. We try to get to as many of them as we can. Some of them are maybe inflammatory, or other things like that, but Mayor's good about taking everything, so he'll take even the tough questions.

Council President Venecz- I just wanted to comment on the Veterans Lunch and Learn. Commander Ostrander was outstanding, giving the history of women in the military, even before they were allowed to join the military, and how they contributed, and one that really touched my heart was the gold star family. It was just, the program was outstanding and the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities did a great job, just an outstanding job.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Thank you for that feedback. I'll definitely pass it along to Matt Muta and the rest of the team. Thank you.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of October 26, 2026 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from October 21, 2026 through November 4, 2026. Claim #8669 through claim #9101, inclusive. In the amount of $5,206,411.23.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)
AYES: Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Alexander
Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

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

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

Council President Venecz- Anyone wishing to speak to either one of those items, please approach the podium.

Mary Schons- My name is Mary Schons. I live in Hammond, Indiana. My concern about giving the tax breaks to create these public revitalization areas, is that when we give a tax break to a corporation or a business, that creates a revenue shortfall in the city that is then made up by raising taxes on the residents. I feel that if you're going to raise taxes on our residents, you should not also give a tax break to these businesses. Particularly when the schools have such a budget deficit and we also live in a time where we need to recognize that investing in education is the biggest return on investment that we can do in the city. When we cut taxes on businesses, that's like another teacher, or another support staff member that we can't afford to hire. It's another city worker that may be, takes care of public safety or cleans our streets. There is no greater return on investment than investing in public education, whether it's the teachers or the support staff. It's the children that go on to have good jobs, either in Hammond or elsewhere, and I think we need to think about our priorities in this situation. Thank you.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Scott Miller, 6541 Forest. I just want to say that when the property that UESCO went on, was Sanitary District property that generated a big fat zero in property taxes. The city is not losing any revenue. If we did nothing, and UESCO didn't come, that property would still be generating $0 of tax revenue to the city, and you can go up to the Robertsdale area with the Belle project, and you have nothing going on there at all. Again, not generating anything except the value of the land underneath, which is a very small amount and now we're going to have something, that even after year 2, they're going to start paying property

PUBLIC HEARINGS Cont.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller cont.-taxes on that project. That's my feedback on that. We're not hurting the schools, actually, give it a little time and the schools will benefit from both of these projects.

Council President Venecz- Thank you. Some common sense. Anyone else?

Councilman Salinas- I'd also like to note that both projects are creating jobs as well. We're not taking jobs from anyone. I believe UESCO is going to be offering a very high range to their employees as well. Their owner was very proud to be able to bring that to Hammond. I want to make sure we note that as well.

Council President Venecz- Anyone else care to speak on either one of those? (X3) Public hearings are now closed.

COMMUNICATIONS
None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE- Councilman Tyler- Nothing to report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE- Councilman Spitale- Nothing to report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE- Councilman Woerpel- Nothing to report.

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. December 2; 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. November 11; 6 p.m.; Jefferson School

Council President Venecz- I would also like to announce that Hammond Community Watch is once again offering the ring doorbell program. The flyer is on the Edison Community Watch facebook page. It's also on the gohammond facebook page. The deadline for submissions is November 14th. There will be a drawing at the police department. The police will draw the names on November 20th, and after that, everyone will be notified whether or not they qualify to receive the ring doorbell. Once again, we always try to give everyone information to keep our city safe, to keep our city a city that we are proud to call our home, and I encourage everyone to come out to a crime watch meeting or a community meeting and find out what's going on in your neighborhood, and get some pertinent, accurate information, because community is not just about me, it's about us.

Councilman Rakos brought out 26-32.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

ORDINANCE THIRD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

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

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

Councilman Rakos- Hammond Police Department is the recipient of a $30,000 grant through the Comprehensive Highway Injury Reduction Program. It's Federal. $30,000 comes from the government and Hammond does not have any portion of the $30,000

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)
AYES: Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Alexander
Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9726 APPROVED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES
None.

RESOLUTIONS

26R-21 A Resolution of the Hammond City Council Confirming Resolution No. 26R-20 that Designated and Established a Certain Area of the City of Hammond, Indiana as an Economic Revitalization Area

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved for adoption.

Councilman Woerpel- All this resolution does is confirm that the declaratory resolution that we passed last week that establishes an economic development area, that like, Chief of Staff, Scott Miller said allows them to build and build a building on property we were collecting zero taxes on. It will also create jobs.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R21 ADOPTED

26R-22 A Resolution of the Hammond City Council Granting UESCO Industries, Inc. An Assessed Valuation Deduction (Tax Abatement) for Tangible Real Property under Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

RESOLUTIONS Cont.

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved for adoption.

Councilman Woerpel- This is a tax abatement stretched out over 10 years. Basically what it does is it allows us to collect half the taxes that this business will generate on property we weren't collecting any taxes on.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R22 ADOPTED

26R-23 A Resolution of the Hammond City Council Confirming Resolution No. 26R-19 that Designated and Established a Certain Area of the City of Hammond, Indiana as the Belle Economic Revitalization Area to Which Deductions of Assessed Value May be Requested by an Applicant to the Common Council of the City of Hammond Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption.

Councilman Kalwinski- This is the final step creating the Belle Economic Revitalization Area on Indianapolis Boulevard between 1709-1733, which is where the laundry, proposed ice cream shop, and a 3rd building will be going up, thank you.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)
AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R23 ADOPTED

26R-24A Resolution of the Hammond City Council Granting Midwest Prairie Builders LLC an Assessed Valuation Deduction (Tax Abatement) for Qualified Tangible Real Property Improvements Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

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

Councilman Kalwinski- This resolution allows for the process of the tax abatement to move forward. It's a standard 10 year tax abatement. The first year it's 100 percent. Following that year there will be a graduated amount of revenue collected up until the last year, year 10 where 100 percent will be collected on taxes, thank you.

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

RESOLUTIONS Cont.

Council President Venecz- Any other discussion? (X3)

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

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel- I just received a text from Councilman Salinas that the minutes for the Capital Improvement Board were in his desk drawer and he asked me to read them real quick if that's ok.

Council President Venecz- Ok, go right ahead.

Councilman Woerpel- I see 2 funding allocations. One allocation was Lake Ave Valves/Clark Field Road Improvements for the Hammond Water Department in the amount of $99,846.11, and I also see a funding allocation of General Engineering Services to First Group Engineering in the amount of $50,000. I was absent at that meeting, so it's my understanding those were the only 2 things passed. My bad for not seeing that message earlier, I'm sorry.

Councilwoman Alexander- I just wanted to inform the residents that we are accepting donations for the holiday treats and toy giveaway that we do in December. Menards has a basket out, or a box, from now until December 14th to collect toys that we've been giving out to kids in the City of Hammond ages 0-12. More information will be coming with the actual date of the giveaway and all that but we're definitely collecting toys and donations for the giveaway this year.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to reappoint Janet Venecz to the H.A.S.T Board for a 3 year term beginning January 1, 2027 and ending December 31, 2029.

Council President Venecz- Any discussion? (X3)

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

Councilman Woerpel- Just a question for Mr. Miller, Scott. I know that I looked at the date wrong but I'm meeting early, is there a Christmas Tree Lighting on the 27th of November?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- It's the day after Thanksgiving, if that's the 27th, yes there is.

Councilman Woerpel- I looked at the calendar wrong, I thought our next meeting was on the 30th, that's why I

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Cont.

Councilman Woerpel cont.-brought it up, but we have a meeting before then.

Council President Venecz- I would like to give notice that the Hammond Common Council had an Executive Session, Thursday, November 5th, at 5:30 p.m. pursuant to Indiana code 5-14-1.5 and 5-14-1.5-5-6.1b4 and the purpose of the meeting was with regard to personnel. There were 8 present and 1 absent. Also, I passed out, at the beginning before the meeting began, I received from Tinisha Greenwell, and legally, I need to read this, so you can look over the information. I've given Clerk Golec a copy of it already for file. As Council President, I have received and will place on file the 2027 Hammond Redevelopment Commission spending plan, pursuant to Indiana Code 36-7-14-12.7 and you have that, Clerk Golec?

City Clerk, Robert J. Golec- Yes.

Council President Venecz- Ok, wonderful and that will be placed on file, so if anyone has any questions, you can feel free to contact Tinisha.

Councilman Salinas- I just wanted to make mention that for those of us that know Wanda Puckett, she is a long time resident at Turner Park, and dedicated her career as a crossing guard at various locations, I know all the children definitely love seeing her and hearing her voice, and interacting with her, I just wanted to ask everybody to keep her in their prayers. She underwent a heart surgery. I know that she is a strong woman, and I know that she will get through it, but she's definitely going to be in recovery status for awhile, so if we can please keep Wanda Puckett in our thoughts and prayers, I'd appreciate that. Thank you.

Councilman Tyler- I just wanted to announce that our 8th annual turkey giveaway will be Saturday, November 21st, at 9 a.m. at the Ophelia Steen Center again. We'll be releasing more information later this week.

Council President Venecz- I wanted to mention to all the council people, we have a sign up sheet for the gaming grant committee and the CIB board for next year, so feel free to sign your name. Anything else? Anyone else? New and unfinished business is now closed.

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

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mary Schons- Opposed to Governor's Parkway and townhomes.

Ken Rosek- Enjoyed the Veteran's Day Parade, as a veteran himself. Doesn't like the way that Mayor's Night Out is ran.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to adjourn. AYES: ALL

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk

2026 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	12	26	9	23	9	23	13	27	11	26	8	22	13	27	10	24	14	28	13	26	9			
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P	P	P	E			
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	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	E			
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	P	P			
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Scott Rakos	P	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	P			
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG				

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: 6:49 p.m.
mg

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk