

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on March 26, 2018 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson. Moved to accept the minutes from the Common Council meeting of March 12, 2018 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from March 7, 2018 through March 21, 2018. Claim #1591 through claim #1961, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from Dean Button, City Engineer, regarding tree removals.

Councilman Higgs announced that in the last six months two homes had been broken into on the street that he lives and grew up on. He went door to door and gave out flyers notifying neighbors.

Councilman Higgs read an announcement by the Hammond City Police looking for applicants to the Hammond Academy Board Scholarship Program which is sponsoring Hammond citizens wanting to become Hammond Police Officers.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Woerpel - What this is, is the 2018 CDBG Budget. It's this thick. It's Federal dollars and it's worth \$2.7 million. Those of you that came to caucus today would know that we got our 2017 dollars in January but this is a very important budget that we have to look at and pass. That's all I wanted to say.

Councilman Higgs - Just to add to that, the programs that are provided through the CDBG Allocation are very vital to the community. They help with a number of issues that affect the entire city, shelter and emergency assistance for the elderly and whatnot. So it's very vital that we have those programs in position for those that are less fortunate.

RESOLUTIONS

18R-11 Authorizing the Filing of an Annual Action Plan Application and Designating Signatories for Payment Voucher on Letters of Credit for the 2018 Annual Action Plan Programs

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

Councilman Spitale - This resolution is to apply for this grant that we were just talking about.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R11 ADOPTED

18R-12 Appropriating Money from the Clerk's Perpetuation Fund

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

Councilman Rakos - This is the request from the Clerk's Office, \$50 thousand worth of funds, the Perpetuation Fund. The money collected in the Perpetuation fund is for all Civil, Criminal Infraction and Ordinance Violations and copying fees. This request will be for the preservation of records and the improvement of record keeping systems and equipment. No tax dollars are being used.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R12 ADOPTED

RESOLUTIONS cont.

18R-13 Supporting the Use of 2019 Gaming Funds to Complete Hammond’s ‘Blue Net’ Perimeter

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

Councilman Spitale - The city of Hammond is proud to announce this “Hammond’s Blue Net”. It’s a string of thirty three (33) permanently mounted license plate reading cameras are now permanently mounted and fully operating in all exits and entrances in the city of Hammond. Thirty three (33) permanent locations aided by two mobile units that are continuously operating in police cars and operating at all times in the streets of Hammond.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R13 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Tamara McCoy - Came in behalf of the Daycare facility that she has. Within the last two years has had a state representative that has been coming out and harassing them. Things are missing from the files. Has to request the information repeatedly from the parents. Is concerned and needs help.

Eakta Kamal - In support of Hammond passing a DACA resolution. Hammond has over 2000 DACA residents and they should be supported by their own city.

Marta Frank - In support of a DACA resolution. Goes to school with students who are here in America under DACA. Has never considered anyone who was brought here to America any less American than she is.

Alexandra Hay - In support of a DACA resolution. Understand that the biggest fear is retribution from the state for going against the government. You can’t let bullies dictate your policy. Believes that because the Governor signed SB419 which allows DACA recipients to apply for licenses it would not appear that there would be retribution.

Chris Ussery - In support of DACA resolution. He speaks about a question he put on his facebook page, would you like to see the Hammond City Council pass a resolution supporting DACA? Since he has put that question on his page, Governor Holcomb signed the bill allowing DACA recipients to obtain professional licenses, in their chosen fields. The Governor seems to think that our DACA people are important members of our professional community. People need to know that they are valued and welcomed in their community.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Carl Wolf - In support of DACA resolution. Speaks about how President Trump has decided to punish those did step forward through the threat of deportation, from the only country they have ever known. Also speaks about what things Mayor McDermott thinks is worth while to challenge the Attorney General on. Why can't the City support DACA?

Elizabeth Palacio - In support of DACA resolution. Don't know if you know, but less than ten (10) miles away from here, at the Gary Airport, they deport our immigrants from our City, every Friday without fail. The Governor has signed the bill for DACA recipients. Please reconsider this ordinance, this DACA resolution, to pass it. These are our friends and our neighbors.

George Stoya - Speaks about the issues of DACA. People don't understand the Mayor's position on DACA and he hasn't been given a fair treatment.

Linda Anguiano - In support of DACA resolution. Speaks about how she and her family has lived in Hessville her whole life. In her nice little neighborhood of Hessville, there was a petition going around, out of 250 homes, they didn't want these 2 Mexican families, from the Harbor, to live in there nice white neighborhood. Her parents name wasn't on the petition, because they thought they were Italian. Her parents protected her from that discrimination for eighteen (18) years, she didn't find out til she was off to college. There are over two hundred (200) DACA residents in Hammond. This is something that won't cost you in the long run and we have to look at the future, we don't have to make decisions out of fear.

Max Wolf - In support of DACA resolution. This has gotten old, this is the fourth time we've come. The reason we are still here, talking about it is because you guys aren't doing anything about it.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Torres, moved to return to New and Unfinished Business.

ROLL CALL VOTE (refer back to new and unfinished business)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Woerpel, Venecz

NAYS: Emerson, Rakos

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

7/0/2

MOTION PASSED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs - First issue, first thing I'd like to address, to say, thank you to my mom for coming out. The last Council Meeting, of course, I'm my mother's child and she knows her child. I really appreciate even in her elderly years and me being a caregiver to her, she was able to come out and make it very clear to what transpired at our home when I got a little ill. And for that I'm grateful and thank God for having her. Secondly, I needed some clarity as to your issue ma'am, so if you can come up and give me some more clarity on that. And as you step up, I want to make something perfectly clear. I was elected in this position to serve the people and as long as I'm in this position I will continue to do that. And sometimes no matter what you do, is not good enough. And sometimes you are attacked, criticized and mistreated. And for that, I don't really understand, maybe it's not for me to understand, but in time God will give me the sense to understand.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Markovich - Point of order. If Councilman wish's to have people speak under new and unfinished business, we have to take a vote on that.

Council President - As soon as he's done speaking.

Councilman Higgs - I just wanted to make that clear, because even I've never done anything personally to anyone with my colleagues on here on the council. But for some reasons or another it seems to keep happening, there's a no vote just to have, to express a concern or something in particular to the residents of the City of Hammond and for that, I'm puzzled with. But whatever it is I would hope that you would set it aside and certainly I have nothing against anyone here. So whatever is going on with you, I pray that you remove it from your heart. If we could have a vote if necessary for her to speak.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Markovich, moved to allow Tamara McCoy to speak.

AYES: ALL

Tamara McCoy - My concern is that we have a daycare and we are recently being harassed over the last two (2) years by a State Representative. She's been out several times and she'll tell us to do something, we do it and she comes back and finds something else wrong. And most recently, our experience has been last two (2) weeks ago, she came out and we noticed things missing from our files. From birth certificates, things that we require when people sign up and we know they had to give it to us for their children, they medical records and things like that. So we were getting different demands from her stating these items were not in the file, however we know they are in the file, because we can't register you without those items. So each person when we register them we require certain documents. So it's kinda getting to be a nightmare. And I'm concerned because I've seen her close daycares. So, I'm just reaching out now for what other steps we can take.

Councilman Markovich - You say State Representatives, so is that Linda Lawson your talking about?

Unnamed Female - State Representative, yes. In Indianapolis.

Councilman Markovich - A State person that works for the State. Not the State Representative. You have that persons name?

Unnamed Female - Yes.

Councilman Higgs - You need to be clear with that. Because they will be accused for something and they didn't do it. So you better we clear.

Tamara McCoy - Ok, I apologize. It's a State Representative, consultant.

Unnamed Female - And basically what she was saying is true. It's basically at this point, first she had you spending money, spending money, put the fence here, we do it. Take the divider down, it's more like, it's not only this facility, we're new. But she has closed a lot of facilities and then writing up stuff, going in there breaking stuff, doing things that's really she should not be in that position. It's at the point, I have missed

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Unnamed Female - doctors appointments, dentist appointments, it's more like a personal attack. But also it's on a personal level.

Tamara McCoy - She's made comments such as, you only have kids.....

Unnamed Female - You only have black poor kids that's on assistance anyway. And all five (5) of my workers heard her.

Councilman Woerpel - Can I ask what level you are?

Unnamed Female - What level, right now, I'm a one (1). Because dealing with her, I mean I've been serving Indiana since 2008, I was at level three (3). My husband got sick, things happen, so I came back and opened a center. So for me to get to level four (4) is nothing.

Councilman Woerpel - Is it a residential?

Unnamed Female - No it's a home, I mean it's a, yes residential I'm sorry.

Councilman Woerpel - Your talking about the inspectors, I think you had one on Woodmar St, at one time or on 169th. Didn't your work at one there?

Unnamed Female - No no, I had one, but she won't let me get it opened. Because she don't like ministries. You have a choice of ? three (3). There's three (3) licensed, unlicensed or ministry. She don't like ministry.

Councilman Woerpel - There's level one (1) up to four (4), right?

Unnamed Female - There's one (1) to four (4), yes.

Councilman Woerpel - And what your saying is, they're coming in and inspecting and harassing you while they are inspecting it?

Unnamed Female - Well, what happened to be clear on what happened. I wrote to the Governor's office, when I wrote to the Governor's office and her. Then they say that she have to come out with someone with her. That means that two (2) of them, because of the things that she was doing. And I reported her to the Governor's office. So, however, she been coming out by herself. Just nitpicking, nitpicking you know, I say you told us. So I called my worker, that been working with me, from day one (1). I say what did she tell us about the fence? She say oh, she say the right side is for the smaller kids and the bigger side is for the after school kids. I don't care what I say, you should know the rules. I say well if you the license consultant, if you telling me one thing, I'm doing what you saying, then you coming back, it's like a know win. It's a constant battle, we don't know what to do.

Councilman Woerpel - I guess my question is, it's the State so, what is it your asking the Council to do? I mean?

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Unnamed Female - I just want you guys to be aware. Because I'm sure you all see these daycares opening and closing, opening and closing. It's not the person. We put big money into these facilities. So we know what we doing. It's just her.

Councilman Woerpel - I understand..

Councilman Higgs - I would request that you probably contact the NAACP and them actively...

Unnamed Female - We've already done it, we in process of doing it. I'm going all the way. It's crazy.

Councilman Higgs - I'm a life member and you know. I won't go into detail with that. But, they should be actively participating in your course of action, as well. They should be addressing your concerns. I understand and I sympathize with you. Because, sitting here being, in this position is not easy for me, as well. Specially when you speak to the issues. And like I said, previously I have no hostility, no hatred towards any of my collages here. But sometimes I feel the same way your discussing this issue. That's the same way I feel. But if anything that I can do personally to help you, I'm certainly willing to do. I think, you sent a letter to the Governor, I can't believe that they're not responding....

Unnamed Female - They sent it back to her supervisor, which plays games with her too. Once got revealed, I'm like both of them playing games. So, it's like a no win battle. So, I did reach out to a lot of, like with what you said, already done that. But he told me to make sure I come here first.

Councilman Higgs - Who told you that? The president of the NAACP?

Unnamed Female - No, someone else.

Councilman Higgs - Well, we don't control the Governors office.

Unnamed Female - Well, I know that. I know that. I know that. He said just come talk to ? which here you all don't have all the...

Councilman Higgs - Well it's on record now and certainly if anything outside of ? that I can assist with. Feel free to contact me. But I sympathize with you and hopefully you can get it addressed. Because no one wants to continuously put money in a business and can't move forward. That's like saying, we don't want you here and your business is just closed. And that's not fair.

Unnamed Female - And it's not her choice, you can not tell me where you don't want me. Because that make me really fight to be there.

Tamara McCoy - Thank you for your time.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Woerpel - I want to go back to a comment that was made during public expression, about what it takes courage to do. I agree with you guys on DACA. It's no lip service, I spent thirty-seven (37) years on the street walking up to peoples doors everyday. I've seen discrimination. I've seen families split apart, whether it's a divorce, death, whatever. But what takes courage is, to weigh a document. That some of your speakers say is important, some say it symbolic. But your asking us to take a document, that by what some of the speakers said is symbolic. And weigh that against 2.7 million dollars in federal dollars. The easy thing for me to do, and I've said this before, and as long as you guys keep coming, and say it. I'll repeat it, the easy thing for me to do is vote yes on it and walk around and knock on doors next year and say, vote for me because look what I supported. That's easy, but the hard thing is to say, I don't want to risk 2.7 million dollars of the taxpayers money. Don't lecture me on courage. It takes more guts to do what we are doing, then it does to stand there and pass something symbolic. That's all I got to say.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Torres, moved to return to the regular order of business.

AYES: ALL

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:10 p.m.
cb/jt

Minutes approved by the Hammond Common Council on April 9, 2018.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*