

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on April 13, 2015 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Invocation by Janet Venecz.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the minutes of March 9, 2015 and place on file. A YES:

ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from March 18, 2015 through April 8, 2015. Claim #1906 through claim #2264, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE

A YES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

15-09            An Ordinance Designating the First Block of Highland Street as “Honorary John J. Latko Street”

The son of John J. Latko thanked the council.

COMMUNICATIONS

None

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole - Councilman Higgs - Brought out 15-09.

Council as a Whole - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 15-10

Community and Crime Watch Meeting Committee - Councilwoman Venecz -

Tues., Apr. 21; East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; 6:30 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center

Thur., Apr. 16; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepherd Center; 7 p.m. The speaker that night will be Bernard Carter, Lake County Prosecutor. He is a very powerful speaker.

Thur., Apr. 23; Indi-Illi Crime Watch; First Methodist Church; 6:30 p.m.

Lafayette Neighborhood Watch; Wed., Apr. 15; Lafayette School; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., Apr. 16; South Hammond Crime Watch; Hammond Housing Authority; 7:00 p.m.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE

15-09            An Ordinance Designating the First Block of Highland Street as “Honorary John J. Latko Street”

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for final passage.

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Markovich, moved to add the entire council as sponsors.

Councilman Emerson - I know the gentleman's family is here and I have a great deal of respect, hearing about and reading about your father. To be honored and survive Pearl Harbor is a real honor. After reading this, very impressive. However, I wanted to look at the history of what the council has approved in the past, before I was on the council and by doing a little research, not much, we have honorary streets named after veteran's, and by the way, I don't have any problem with anything else he's done. I think he's led a full life. I believe it says in the ordinance he passed away in his 90's and did a lot of things with his life. Our honorary street in the 4<sup>th</sup> District, the 800 to 1100 block of River Drive was named after Corporal Joe Hernandez who was killed in Afghanistan. It's four blocks. Our honorary street in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, the 800-900 block of Carroll is named after Staff Sergeant Rojas, who was killed in Afghanistan. You know I sponsored a resolution two years ago, actually almost three years, of a gentleman, a Hammond resident, Specialist Rachowicz who was wounded, purple heart, three men around him were wounded, and we gave him a plaque and his whole family was here and he was in the naval hospital at the

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
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time. We also have an honorary park over by the Civic Center named after Private Windrich, in the 5800 block of Madison, named after him. He's a Medal of Honor winner. Killed in action in Korea on Dec. 2, 1950 at 29 years old. So, my point here is the bar has been set and as a veteran myself these three gentlemen, and there may be more, have paid the supreme sacrifice for an honorary street. So, had we come up with a plaque, had we come up with a framed copy of the ordinance, I'd be more than happy to vote for that. But I do think that because the bar has been I just can't support it the way it's written. Thank you.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

A YES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: Emerson

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 8/1/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9291 PASSED

15-10 Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana, Authorizing the City to Issue its Taxable Economic Development Revenue Bonds, Series 2015 (Gateway Area Project), and Approving other actions in respect thereto

Councilman Hinojosa - Just so the public knows, this is gonna be for a total for bonds issued for \$1.7 million dollars for the interest rate not to exceed 8% and we'll hopefully get a good interest rate.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

A YES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9292 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

15-12 To Amend Ord.'s 4109, 5039 and 4298, known as Sec.'s 121.35, 121.36, 121.37, 121.38, 121.39, 121.40 and 121.41 of the code as it pertains to Pet Shops.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee. A YES:

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Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

ALL

Councilwoman Venecz - As we discussed at length in caucus, this ordinance is replacing the Ordinance 15-11 that was introduced at the last meeting with several amendments.

15-13            Repealing Ord. 9277 which Authorized the Issuance and Sale of 36.5 Million Dollars Revenue Bonds

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title.

Councilman Hinojosa - Reason I'm asking to pull this is because it's gonna go under a privatization for \$36.5 million. We do not know what the interest rate is going to be. In my opinion this is to pay debt out of the \$36.5 million if I understand everything right here. Out of the \$36.5 million, \$30 million is gonna be to pay \$23 million in debt, leaving \$8 million and then there's another \$6.5 million where \$3.6 stays in reserve with the bond company and, I guess, another \$3 million is for charges and wherever else it's going. But in my opinion I

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Hinojosa cont. - think this is paying one credit card to pay another credit card. My estimate was, and I was a million and a half off if this correct, but by my estimate that these bond payments for 18 years was gonna be \$5 million for 20 years but it's 18 years and from what I heard from the debt person there that is doing this that it's gonna be roughly around \$3.5 million for the next 18 years. But I still don't have a clear understanding as far as where the \$30 million is going to. What debt are we gonna pay? Okay, we owe \$23 million if somebody could explain a little more detail, that \$23 million, how do we accumulate \$23 million? Give us some figures. Where's the \$23 million at? How did that occur, from where? And then there's the other \$6.5 million, okay \$3.6 is supposed to go into reserve, that stays with the bond company. Where's that \$23 million in debt? What did we do to accumulate \$23 million? And why don't we use, if in 2015 we're getting \$8 million a year from the Chicago Heights water deal, why don't we just use that \$8 million and pay out the debt that we have right now? Why do we have to accumulate more debt and then extra money with the debt so instead of owing \$23 million, now we're gonna owe \$36.5 million and it's gonna be privatized. Privatized to who? I know I heard a person, somebody named Daley from Chicago and Mayor saying something about they only want to give us half or somebody wants to give us half. Is it half? Is it the whole thing? But, in my opinion here we're borrowing \$36.5 million to pay \$23 million. That doesn't make sense. Like I said, this is from paying one credit card, borrow from one credit card to pay another credit card and you still have debt. In my opinion we need to use the Chicago heights water, if we're getting \$8 million in 2015 and it has the potential to climb even higher, why don't we use it to pay off the debt? Why do we have to buy more debt? That's

*Prepared by  
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my question.

Mayor McDermott - I'd like to point out that Councilman Hinojosa keeps referring to this as something that the Hammond taxpayer is going to have to pay, in this case the Hammond water payer. That's absolutely false. It's Chicago Heights water revenue. We sell water to Chicago Heights. When I took over as mayor the water stream from Chicago Heights was less than \$1 million a year. Because of contract changes we made with the mayor of Chicago Heights, over his objections by the way, we were sued in Federal Court. We went to Federal Court, fought for the contract that they ultimately signed in Chicago Heights and that contract's revenue now is \$8 million a year. An 800% increase in the last few years and it's only projected to go up. What we're proposing with this bond issue, and I'd like to point out that Councilman Hinojosa voted for this issue when it was in the city budget. We had this bond revenue built in the city budget, he voted yes on it, and then he voted against it in the very next meeting, which is inconsistent. But, we're proposing to take this revenue, plug it into our budget, fix our deficit, and move forward with a clean balance sheet. If you tell us to reverse course and you approve what the councilman's recommending, I have no problem with it. I'll pull it. Tighten up our belt even more and we'll fix it over the next few years. We're going in the right direction. You want to fix it now or you want to fix it three or four years from now. It's up to you. We were given marching orders by the Hammond City Council with a 9-0 vote on the budget. We were given marching orders from the Hammond City Council with a 8-1 vote on the bond issuance. Now that we're six months into the process, Councilman Hinojosa wants us to go backwards, and that's fine. You want to go backwards, I will kill this thing tomorrow, and then we'll sit back down and we'll come up with a new budget and we have to go down to the state and get it re-approved by the state because we voted on it. Councilman Hinojosa voted on it. You want to stop all that, reverse course, do our budget over again, let's do it. And you're right, Councilman Hinojosa, this administration created a brand new revenue stream, it's 800% larger than it was when I took over as mayor, and we could wait a few years and we could get through this. It'll be tough times for the next few years, and if that's what you want I got no problem

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.**

Mayor McDermott cont. - with it. I'm the mayor, I work with the council. If you have five votes that say, "Mayor, we're going this direction." I promise you, I will kill this bond issue tomorrow without a problem. I will sleep well tonight. I say let's just get it over with. Let's vote it up or down. If you guys don't want us to do this let's just stop wasting time. I've got a lot of people making a lot of money, let's kill it right now. Why are we waiting two more weeks? Let's kill it today if you want to kill it, please.

Councilman Higgs - My concern is, as it relates to this particular ordinance, is the fact that the debt services has to be paid no matter what. The reality of it is if you don't pay the debt services there's gonna be an interest rate that is gonna go up anyway. I guess my question would be, as I asked in caucus, what is the debt of our city currently? If the Controller could answer....

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Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

Mayor McDermott - The deficit? It's a deficit of about \$12 or \$13 million a year right now, deficit. That's an annual recurring thing. We mean that our budget is more than....without using gaming by the way, we used gaming this year. That deficit adds up over time if you don't address it. We're trying to address it now with this. If you don't want us to, no problem. Let's just come to a resolution tonight.

Councilman Higgs - You know, patience is a virtue. I guess my question, again, was, currently, you said annually, what is the deficit of our city as we speak? The debt.

Mayor McDermott - General fund debt? \$23 million right now.

Councilman Higgs - Initially you said \$12 million, that's why .....

Mayor McDermott - That's our deficit. It's a recurring. And what we usually do, and all of you are aware of this because we have these conversations once a year, Councilman Hinojosa's been in eleven of these conversations with the budget, we use gaming to shore up that deficit. If you don't use gaming to shore up that deficit that's fine, but we have to cut our expenses or raise our revenue. We can't raise revenue because we have property tax caps. Which means we cut expenses. So you do things like decide whether or not your city has a Health Department, alright, I remember where you were on that issue. Decide whether or not you're gonna provide public transportation. Decide whether or not 210 police officers is the number we actually need. Decide whether or not 155 firemen is the actual number we need. Let's be honest, 75-80% of our expenses are police and fire. So if you want to cut budget that's a whole nother matter. We've been having these discussions for twelve years saying, "Okay, I don't want to cut police officers because I like having 210 Hammond Police Officers. I don't want to cut fire engines or firemen because I like having 155 firemen." If we've changed our opinion on that then now is the time to discuss it.

Councilman Higgs - I guess my question would be is if we was to repeal this bond issuance, how would it affect the city, Mayor? And if you could explain it. Hopefully the times will print this correctly.

Mayor McDermott - Why does that have anything to do if the Times is here or not? Let's just talk.

**INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.**

Councilman Higgs - Well, the reason I say that, Mayor, is because previously there's been council meetings where things have been edited out of council meetings and all types of things have occurred. So I want to make sure that my voice is being heard as it relates to asking questions for my constituents who I happen to represent in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District. No disrespect. You are the administrator of the city, but I happen to represent a portion of the city.

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Hammond City Clerk*

Mayor McDermott - I understand. I appreciate that, Councilman. If you vote right now to repeal this ordinance I will tell all the financial advisors, the banks that are interested in this, the lawyers that are working on this, the deal is dead. We're not going forward with this. What that will do to our City Controller is blow a hole in our budget, because we already voted 9-0 on a budget that already included this revenue. So we'd have to go back, re-open that budget, adjust it, tighten our belts, go back down state, bring the budget to the state, have them approve our amended budget, and we'd probably have to do that in 2016, and we'd probably have to do that in 2017. By that time, the \$8 million per year will probably pay off what we are trying to do right now in one year.

Councilwoman Venecz - So, if this were repealed, the phone calls that I've been getting about sidewalks, about trees, about cleaning up alleys, about debris laying around vacant building, all of that stuff is going to be cut. The people who ask for lights, the people who want their streets to be done. We currently have trash pick up once a week. Maybe that will go to once every two weeks. This is what you are asking of our residents. I don't know about the phone calls that you people get, but I know about the phone calls that I get and they have to do with quality of life issues. We cut the budget, that stuff is out. You're not gonna be able to complain about that tenant who lives three doors down who throws all the junk in the alley. You're gonna be over there cleaning it up. This is a choice I'm just saying.

Mayor McDermott - I would just ask that let's just get this done tonight. If we're gonna play games, I mean if we're playing games because there's an election on May 5<sup>th</sup>, this is hurting the bond rating. What Chico's doing right now is creating risk in our bond. Risk equals higher interest rates. So the more risk we create, which is being, you know, happening right now, it's gonna only drive the interest rate up. So I suggest we get it over right now. If you want to kill the bond, let's kill it now. Let's all agree, 9-0, we're gonna take this up or down and vote it up or down. We voted for the budget 9-0, we voted for this. You gave us our marching orders. If you guys are going back, do it tonight please. Don't string this out for another two weeks. Let's just get it done because we've got a job to do. We're doing what you told us to do. Now because there's an election coming and somebody's grandstanding you're talking about going back on our word which is making our job harder to sell this bond.

Councilman Higgs - First and foremost let me say this, my main concern is making sure the citizens are represented to the best of their ability in providing the services that are needed. I don't play hiding go seek or hide behind a rock or other stuff. The reality of it is that it's important that we have discussion and dialogue and address the concerns for our citizens by allowing you as well as Councilman Hinojosa to speak on the issue opens and enlightens us so that we make a very conscientious decision in deciding on which direction to go. In saying that, if this council so choose to they can reopen it and kill it.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

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Mayor McDermott - Then do it.

Councilman Higgs - Okay, you've already explained that, Mayor. What you really need to understand is the fact that we all have a right to speak and by you approaching it in this way it makes no sense. You already expressed your concern and as an administrator of the city you let us know that and how it would affect the city. The rest of it is not needed, seriously.

Council President Opinker - As per Robert's Rules of Order, you're given two opportunities to speak on each ordinance. I give you guys ample amount of time to speak on it. Councilman Higgs and Councilman Hinojosa, you guys are done. Councilwoman Venecz you have one more.

Mayor McDermott - We've already had two discussions on this. Mr. President. We voted on it in the budget and we were given authorization to move forward and we did what we were told. Now we're having the third discussion, Councilman Higgs, and I agree you have the right to do what you're doing but it's not making our job any easier and it's hurting our bond, and if that's what you're trying to do, congratulations, you're sabotaging this bond and it's making it harder to sell. It's gonna be higher risk because of what we're going through right now and maybe we don't want to do this. So kill it. Just do this tonight. Just don't string this out two more weeks. Let's just do it now. Up or down. I'm fine either way.

Councilman Kalwinski - I want to be clear about the vote. If we vote yes then, for this ordinance, then we're repealing, we're stopping the bond issuance process and a no vote is to continue with the bond issuance.

Council President Opinker - That's correct.

Councilwoman Venecz - He didn't want it to go to committee?

Mayor McDermott - He's trying to put this in committee.

Councilman Higgs - Point of order.

Council President Opinker - It's been first and second to put in committee.

Councilman Higgs - Point of Order.

Councilwoman Venecz - We're voting if it goes into committee.

Councilman Markovich - I believe that when the motion was made that there was no committee listed to put it in.



Councilman Higgs - Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Council President Opinker - That is correct. Do we have a committee?

Councilman Higgs - I called point of order. I was trying to give you some clarity as to which direction to get this resolved but for some reason or another I was overlooked. The reality of it is it was never put into committee and in order to pass this it would have to be on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Final.

Council President Opinker - This was for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.

Councilman Higgs - Right, so I mean it's just being put in committee so what's the big deal? But, again, for clarity, if you so choose to any one of the council members can say they want to reopen this under New and Unfinished Business and kill it.

Councilman Hinojosa - I understand that Councilwoman Venecz is saying that it's gonna be used, that we're gonna be stopping for using this money for trees and sidewalks and streets. You know what, each district councilman is only getting a million and a half dollars a year, this year 2015, and who knows where we're gonna get for the next couple years. About a half million dollars is not even enough to do one complete street. One complete street is approximately \$600 thousand. We only get \$500 thousand. Now I'm hearing that part of this \$36 million, according to Councilwoman Venecz, is that we're gonna be using some of this money for streets and sidewalks also. But here's what I'm looking at, if we're gonna borrow \$36.5 million I think that's too much. If we only have a debt of \$23 million, if that's true, I wish we had a better clarification as far as what debt that is and where it came from, but if it's \$23 million and we're getting \$8 million from Chicago Heights, let's subtract \$5 million from the 23, that equals \$18 and that gives you another three to play with for a reserve and all that. I would like an amendment to make that \$36.5 to... well, it already says to repeal it, nope, I think we'll just call for the vote. I know where the vote's gonna go anyways.

Council President Opinker - Councilman Hinojosa, what committee are you putting this in?

Councilman Hinojosa - Even if we put this in committee for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading, that doesn't stop the \$36.5 million. The \$36.5 is still a go. This is only to repeal it. This is going in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and this is just to repeal it. I'll put it in Council as a Whole.

Mayor McDermott - This is water revenue from Chicago Heights. Not one Hammond water customer will see one red cent increase in their bill. Not a penny, to a Hammond resident, to a Hoosier, not a penny. Not

even anybody in Cal City. Not even anybody in Lansing. This is one of our streams. It's is a small part of it. It's Illinois money coming over here to help us run our government. This is good business where I come from. It's like I wish we could do stuff like this with fireworks. Where all of these people from Chicago come over to our city, buy our fireworks, wouldn't it be nice if we had a little tax for the City of Hammond on there and we could help finance the Hammond Fire Department? Or if people come over and buy guns from Cabela's, wouldn't it be nice if we had a tax where we help pay for Police Officer's vests. This is the same kind of thinking. We're using Illinois money to help finance our books in Hammond, Indiana. This is good business where I come from. Illinois money.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Kalwinski - If I'm clear, Councilman Hinojosa is asking for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading and Council as a Whole.

Council President Opinker - That is correct.

Councilman Kalwinski - If we put it in committee then we don't vote on it today. It goes into committee. Correct?

Council President Opinker - That is correct.

Councilman Higgs - But also, Councilman Kalwinski, you also can open it back up under New and Unfinished Business, if you get a motion and a second you can also kill it.

Council President Opinker - That's also correct.

Council President Opinker - So, we're calling for the vote, all those in favor 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and placing 15-13 in Council as a Whole, say Aye? Opposed?

Council President Opinker - Roll Call Vote, Clerk Golec.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1<sup>st</sup> & 2nd Reading)

A YES: Hinojosa

NAYS: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Opinker

ABSENT: None

Motion failed

8/1/0

1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> READING FAILED

15-14 To Create a New Section of Chapter 37 (City Policy) Prohibiting Discrimination Based upon Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

Sponsored by Janet Venecz

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title. A YES:  
ALL

RESOLUTIONS

15R-05            Confirming Resolution No. R15 (14r. 15) that Designated and Established a Certain Area of the City of Hammond, Indiana as an Economic Revitalization Area to Which Deductions from 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 Emerson, moved for adoption with a public hearing scheduled for April 27, 2015. A YES: ALL

15R-07            Regarding so-called “Religious Freedom” Statute

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

Councilman Higgs - Certainly, as you know, the Governor recently signed that into law, discriminatory actions and I feel as though it’s just ridiculous and it really makes me sad to be a Hoosier. It reminds of the Civil Rights Movement when blacks were only allowed to go in certain washrooms. That’s the indication that it gives me and it just saddens me that he would even sign something into law of this nature.

Mayor McDermott - I want to thank Councilman Higgs and Councilwoman Venecz for bringing up an ordinance and a resolution that deals with this issue. What happened with our RFRA passing, Senate Bill 101 passing, is an embarrassment to our state. Actually a lot of the language that Councilman Higgs uses in his resolution is the same type of language I was using on behalf of our Governor who I feel embarrassed the State of Indiana nationally. I just got back from Florida for Easter break with my family

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

and in a small newspaper where we were staying there was an article about Indiana and making fun of us. It's a national embarrassment, SB 101. I think there's been a lot of council's across the State of Indiana that have come out with similar type of ordinances that the council woman is proposing and similar type of resolutions that the councilman is presenting. In fact, I know Councilman Dave Hamm on the Lake County Council, they just passed something very similar to what you're contemplating right now. So I just wanted to give you my full support and say thank you for bringing this up. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

A YES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION R07 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to suspend the rules for passage of 15-14.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved for final passage.

Councilwoman Venecz - Just because of the importance of this ordinance and I think it's very important that the general public know that, and I'm sure everyone in this room understands that we as Hoosiers are very hospitable and welcoming people. For our state legislature and our Governor to single out a group of people was reprehensible. I saw in a ... and I will read through the ordinance but if you will indulge me for just one moment. Before I came here this evening there was an article online in the Times, "Indiana trying to improve reputation following religious freedom fiasco. The two year state budget proposal approved last week by the Senate Appropriations Committee added \$1 million to tourism funding specifically to undo the damage RFRA caused the state's reputation." That was money that was completely uncalled for to be spent had our state legislators and our governor used their head. "However, the republican controlled General Assembly has declined to consider adding lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender Hoosiers as a protected class under Indiana Civil Rights Law leaving them open to discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations for reasons other than religion." So, they still refuse to accept it.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

Councilwoman Venecz reads 15-14 in its entirety.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

A YES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Uylaki, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9293 PASSED

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Hinojosa, moved to return to the regular order of business.

A YES: ALL

Councilman Hinojosa - I was amazed at this calculator that \$3.5 million times 18 years is \$63 million. We're borrowing \$36.5 million that \$3.5 million, if not higher, well, \$3.5 million times 18 years is \$63 million. That's \$26 million in interest. I still don't see why we're doing this when we're getting \$8 million from Chicago Heights. Let's use that and pay the \$23 million in three years and be done with it. Why get in debt for \$63 million. Again, there's that credit card paying a card. It don't make no sense at all.

Councilwoman Venecz - I do believe we voted on that and case closed, thank you.

Councilman Higgs - Just to bring it down a little bit. I would like a letter sent to the department heads from the Board of Works as well as the Streets and San for a property at 5603, between Maywood and Calumet, has been cleaned up and the debris has been sitting in the alley for about two weeks. I've called and asked for Gary Gleason. He didn't come to the phone. I called and asked for Mr. Perez, and he was nice enough to return my phone call. I think it's ridiculous when a councilman reaches out to department heads and request that

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs cont. - something be cleaned up throughout the district and it takes them two weeks to get it cleaned. So I am requesting that a letter be sent to that department and certainly there are other properties within my district that I am constantly sending letters in regards to and for some reason or another they are being neglected. I would appreciate it and I'm glad the Mayor is here so he can, certainly, hear me out, in terms of some of the vacant properties that's been boarded up for a number of years where I've sent letters and called as well. I don't know what it is when it comes to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, it takes quite a bit of time to get these things accomplished but this is some I do on the regular and we can pull them up. It's not just because it's election time. This is something I do year round. So, I would appreciate Mayor is you could please talk to your department heads and have them pay some attention to these deplorable properties within my district.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

Mayor McDermott - 5603 Calumet?

Councilman Higgs - Correct, in the alley between Maywood and Calumet. Thank you so much.

Mayor McDermott - I just submitted it, See Click Fix. It took me about 12 seconds. I put 5603 Calumet, illegal dumping. Councilman Higgs is arguing about a lack of cleanup. I didn't have a picture but I put 5603 Calumet.

Councilman Emerson - I'd just like to announce that the Hammond High School JROTC is having a 5K run April 25<sup>th</sup>, that's a Saturday, to celebrate the 99<sup>th</sup> year of ROTC, their anniversary. For those of you who don't know, that is sort of the entry point a lot of young folks get interested in the military through ROTC. So, it begins 11 a.m. at Hammond High on April 25<sup>th</sup>.

**PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

Carlotta Blake-King - Announced that on June 25<sup>th</sup>, Tom Bielik, an alumni from Hammond High, he and Theodore McClendon is doing the Tomfoolery Review to raise money for a technology program. It's gonna help their arts and music program there. Applauded Venecz and Higgs for getting that resolution in the books regarding gender and the religious freedom act. Things need to be explained clearer. They should be so simple that even a child could understand.

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Hinojosa, moved to adjourn.

A YES:  
ALL

ATTEST:

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Michael Opinker, President  
Hammond Common Council

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Common Council meeting of April 27, 2015.

Time: 7:15 pm

cb