

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on September 28, 2015 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

Council Coordinator Carmen I. Balboa facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.  
Invocation by Councilman Higgs.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Markovich, Uylaki

TOTAL: 7

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to accept the minutes of September 14, 2015 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve claims from September 9, 2015 through September 24, 2015. Claim #5019 through claim #5359, inclusive.

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to amend in claim:

#5360 Higgs, Councilman Anthony Common Council

\$2,483.21

Councilman Kalwinski - That claim is for travel to attend a workshop in Orlando, Florida by Councilman Higgs.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich, Uylaki

Motion carried

7/0/2

CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich, Uylaki

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 15-33            2016 Civil City Budget Proposal
- 15-36            2016 Redevelopment Budget Proposal
- 15-37            2016 Sanitary District Budget Proposal
- 15-40            Amend Chapter 77, Schedule XII, of the Hammond Municipal Code as it relates to  
Parking Schedules for 1117 Merrill

Laurie Czulno - Indiana's Gateway only publishes a summary page and does not publish any detailed information. The City Controller did make available a copy in her office for review. It would behoove the city to put it's proposed detailed budget on its website.

Alvin Cheeks - In favor of Redevelopment Budget. Grew up on Merrill Street. Neighborhood need some relief in terms of church parking. Ordinance should have went to the Council before the Board of Works. I'm not against this but I am against the way it was put forth to the council.

Anthony Higgs - 3rd District Councilman - Against how the yellow lines that were placed in the driveways in the 1100 block. There are also handicapped individuals that live in the 1000 block which will also be affected by two churches there. Not opposed to ordinance, but to the procedure that was followed. If you put signs at one church you have to look also throughout the city and that may become a problem.

Herman Pope, Pastor of the New Hope Baptist Church - Not being a politician, I did not know the proper procedure for signs. I went to the Board of works, they didn't tell me I had done anything wrong. I don't understand the opposition. We are a part of the community. We had a problem with the neighbor and I was trying to circumvent that. This was not to anger anyone, it was give respect at funerals.

Carlotta Blake-King - Wondering if there is anything in the Redevelopment budget that is going to address the blight in our city. We tear down but we're not putting anything in it's place. There are various Federal programs. I don't now if Redevelopment is using them. I know there is money assessed for this, I don't see the dollars being there. Where are we with this sale of water and the lawsuit that was filed and denied? Not in opposition of 15-40 but do have questions. When there is not service going on at the church, can I park there and not be ticketed?

George Stoya - Regarding the water issue and the court ruling, has there been any discussion? Have we not lost a water contract to Chicago heights? Are we gonna be paying more for water?

## COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from Cal Bellamy thanking him for responding in regards to a Candidates Ethics Action Pledge.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence on behalf of Minister Louis Farrakhan, Elijah Mohammed and the Nation of Islam thanking him for his support and participation in attending their recent Justice (unclear) Leadership Summit.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from the Circuit Court of the 6th Judicial Circuit of Michigan thanking him for his attendance at the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from Johnny Perez, Deputy Director of Public Works, regarding a tree at 6323 Jackson Street. Informing him that the situation of the tree has been reviewed and assessed that it needs a more skilled crew to complete the job.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 15-38, 15-39 and 15-40.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:

Wed., Oct. 7; Edison Community Watch; Edison School; 6:30 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 2; Edison Comm. Watch on the Road; 1 p.m.; Golden Manor

Irving Comm. Watch; Fri., Oct. 2; 9:15 a.m.; Irving School

Jefferson Crime Watch; Wed., Sept. 30, 6:30 p.m.; Jefferson School

Pulaski Park Neighborhood Assoc.; Tue., Sept. 29, 6:30 p.m.; American Legion

Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Oct. 8, 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

Edison Community Watch is Partnering with the East Side Community Council once again this year along with Home Depot and will be hosting Trunk or Treat on Halloween from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Home Depot. Anyone interested can contact Councilwoman Venecz or Leroy Howard.

## ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

15-38            Creating a New Fund (Fund #208) for the City of Hammond Fire Department for Special Event Compensation

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

Councilman Higgs - Can I get a general idea of what this fund is proposed to be doing in regards to the Fire dept.?

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Fire Chief Jeff Smith - In the past, the guys would work special events at the Marina for the Port Authority and they would get paid from the Port Authority and it would get put on their payroll check. State Board of Accounts came in and told us that we weren't allowed to do that anymore. Contacted the City Controller (unclear), they suggested that we create a separate fund that's only for special events so that when these guys work, the paycheck will come to the Controller's Office, will go into that fund, and that fund will pay those guys. It will never carry a balance except for a couple days until they get paid. Before it went on their payroll check and they said it wasn't the right way to do it.

Councilman Higgs - So what you're saying is any special events that the fire department works...

Fire Chief Smith - The guys work as EMT's....

Councilman Higgs - Before you explain, my question is to you, is there any firemen that work a special event, when they work the special event that company or organization would have to present a check to the City Controller, in turn the City Controller will refund those firemen that work that event.

Controller Garay - This would be for events that would be held with outside entities that are connected to the city, like the Port Authority. So not a special event for like the city of Hammond itself. So if the Port Authority wants to hire the Fire Department for a concert, they would pay for that and they would send a check to the city, it would go in this non-reverting fund. This basically allows us to not take away from the overtime accounts that are used and the purpose for those are to use the firemen on their overtime purposes in the general use of the city. So, we would otherwise have to come in and give an additional appropriation and send it up to the state to do an additional appropriation. This allows us to create a fund for only those special event situations where they would be used by an outside entity.

Councilman Higgs - In general, have they been identified?

Controller Garay - It happens mostly with the Port Authority, when they have events over the summer. Our ordinances require that they have public safety officers available for those events and they have to hire our firemen for that. Rather than allowing that to come out of their over time that you set aside in the budget every year, this makes it a separate fund so it doesn't take away from those numbers.

Councilman Higgs - Jeff, is there a certain fee that you guys charge for these events?

Fire Chief Smith - It's set in ordinance, I believe. If there's alcohol served it's \$30 an hour, if it's non-alcohol it's \$25 an hour. So like one of the concerts that they had at the Pavilion this year, not the Festival of the Lakes Concert, any other concert, it's usually paid through the promoter. The promoter will send the check to the Controller's Office and then that's how the guys at work will end up getting paid.

Controller Garay - This mirrors the ordinance that you guys already have in place for the police department. They're used more often and so it was put in place in past years. Now with the more events that we're starting to hold at Pavilion especially in the summertime, which is ran through the Port Authority, this need has come up.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 15-38)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich, Uylaki

Motion carried

7/0/2

ORDINANCE NO. 9311 PASSED

15-39 Amending Ord. 8282, also known as Section 150.072 of the Hammond Municipal Code as it pertains to the Registration of Vacant and Abandoned Buildings

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for passage.

Councilman Higgs - I'd like Councilwoman Venecz to explain this particular ordinance so that we get a general idea of what is going to take place.

Councilwoman Venecz - This ordinance originally referred only to commercial and industrial properties that were abandoned and vacant. Now we are expanding it to include residential properties. The property must be vacant for 90 days. It can not be up for sale. If it's up for sale it is exempt from this. If it is vacant or abandoned for more than 90 days the owner of the property will be required to register with the city at a cost of \$300.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 15-39)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Emerson, Opinker

NAYS: Higgs, Hinojosa

ABSENT: Markovich, Uylaki

Motion carried

5/2/2

ORDINANCE NO. 9312 PASSED

15-40 Amend Chapter 77, Schedule XII, of the Hammond Municipal Code as it relates to Parking Schedules for 1117 Merrill

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for passage.

Councilwoman Venecz - As you heard during Public Hearings, this is regard to Church Only Parking signs in front of New Hope Church. I did canvass the neighborhood, the 1100 block of Merrill. Nine of the residents had no problem with the signs, five of the residents were not home, one was vacant, and only one had a problem with the signs. The problem that the individual had was more with their concern with handicapped parking and I did advise them how to go about getting a handicapped sign in front of their house.

Councilman Higgs - Being a member of New Hope Church, I'm gonna abstain from my vote.

Councilwoman Venecz - I don't believe that we can abstain. If you are on the floor you must vote.

Council President Opinker - That is correct.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 15-40)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Higgs, Emerson, Hinojosa, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich, Uylaki

Motion carried

6/0/3

ORDINANCE NO. 9313 PASSED

#### INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

None

#### RESOLUTIONS

None

#### NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to cancel the council meeting on October 12, 2015 due to City Hall being closed that day. AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to reschedule that council meeting to October 13, 2015, same time, same station, 6 p.m. AYES: ALL

Councilman Higgs - I received a correspondence from one of my constituents at 51 Glendale Parkway where there are dumpsters and there are garbage that are being placed all over there. So I am requesting that the Inspection Department go and inspect this property at 51 Glendale Parkway, it's just adjacent to Detroit St. So that they can inspect it and look at all the debris that's all throughout the alley and it's just terrible. So, I'm requesting that the Inspection Department go out and inspect. I so move.

Councilman Hinojosa - Second.

AYES: ALL

#### LETTER SENT: SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

Councilman Hinojosa - Earlier in caucus we were spoken to by Donita Washington and she would like letter of recommendation of her son to go to an internship and speaking to the president, therefore I'd like to make a letter of recommendation by the Hammond City Council for Jacarr Washington and have this sent to Brent Stinson, Intern Director of the Democratic Party.

Councilman Higgs - Second.

Councilman Higgs - I'd like to be added on that letter submitted as well.

Councilwoman Venecz - Aren't all of our names going to be listed?

Council President Opinker - Yes that's from the council as a whole.

#### NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Opinker - All those in favor? All opposed?

AYES: ALL

#### LETTER SENT: SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

Councilman Higgs - The Annual Hammond Fire Department Fire Prevention Open House at the Central Station, 6110 Calumet Avenue is Sat., Oct. 3, 2015 at 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Station Tours and appearance by Fire

Dog Sparky. Free raffle, smoke detectors, smart t.v., Horseshoe Casino Value Tickets, Jack Binion's Steakhouse, Lost Marsh Twosomes. Hotdogs and chips.

**PUBLIC EXPRESSION**

Anne Herbert - Thanked council for passing 15-40 for the parking at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church at 1117 Merrill Street.

Mary Ellen Slacyk - Everyone has the right to legal recourse. Just because somebody is in a position of authority doesn't mean they have to leave their rights at the door.

Ola Smith - If you want respect, you have to give respect. I have come to many council meetings and I have seen the disdain on your faces. Personal issues should not be brought to the council. You are making significant charges against one person when you don't know the whole story. That's not for you to make that judgement, that's why there is a court of law.

Carlotta Blake-Smith - Sorry that 15-40 was passed and it wasn't resolved some other way. Had the opportunity to look at the MX Cartoon facebook page. It's pretty messy and I considerate it hate mongering, racist and sexist. What appalled me more than anything was that some of you folks I am looking at are part of that group. You buy into that and I resent that my tax dollars is paying your salary to buy into that crap.

Cathy Hall - I have a question, you voted on \$300 for vacant property, if it's vacant the owner has to pay \$300?

Alvin Cheeks - I don't like the way I was treated in the council's caucus two weeks ago. I have the right to disagree with anybody. If they want a sign, so be it, but it's creating chaos in my community. It's pitting one religion against another.

Councilman Hinojosa, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

ael Opinker, President

ATTEST:

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Hammond Common Council

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting of October 13, 2015.

Time: 6:55pm

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