

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on August 14, 2017 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

Council Coordinator Carmen I. Balboa facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Moment of silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Higgs

TOTAL: 8

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of July 24, 2017 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the claims from July 19, 2017 through August 9, 2017. Claim #4526 through claim #4901, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Torres announced the NAACP's Annual Luncheon on Saturday, September 9th from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Dynasty Hall. One of the guests being honored is Justice Robert D. Rucker, Indiana Supreme Court, retired.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Thanked everyone that participated in the National Night Out event. Announced upcoming meetings:

- East Ham'd Pullman C.W.; Tues., Aug. 15; 6:30 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
- Hessville C.W.; Thur., Aug. 17; Jean Shepherd Center; 7 p.m.
- S. Ham'd C.W.; Thur., Aug. 17; 7 p.m.; Ham'd Housing Authority

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

17-19 An Ordinance creating a new fund (Fund #257) for the City of Hammond, for purposes of Receipting and Accounting for the One-Time Special Distribution of Local Option Income Tax Funds

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Finance Committee.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd Reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried 8/0/1 MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

17R-29 A Resolution Authorizing Approval of Lear Corporation Development Agreement

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

Councilman Woerpel - This is a resolution authorizing the approval of a Development Agreement that the city has reached with Lear Corp. They're not leaving the city, obviously, they are actually gonna build on the south side of Michigan Avenue, just East of the South Shore Railtracks. Currently Lear employs 408 people at their facility on 165th Street. It's estimated that up to 750 jobs could be coming to that facility and as far as the current building goes, we will maintain ownership and it's my understanding we'll look actively for a buyer for that building.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried 8/0/1 RESOLUTION NO. R29 ADOPTED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel - On August 23rd the Finance Committee will be meeting to go over the City Council budget, that's my understanding. That meeting is at 4 p.m. in the caucus room.

Councilman Markovich - This past week the Optimist Club was home to the 10 and under All Stars, Cal Ripkin. Councilman Woerpel was a star there one night when he was able to throw out one of the first pitches for one of the games. He threw a strike but it was debatable how the umpire called it. Some of the things, talking to the people from Hawaii, I mean, that were here. The Optimist was selling corn for \$2 an ear and that first night they were there a week ago Thursday, the kids were just going crazy over it, from Hawaii. The coach even bought like ten to take back to the hotel room after that, for the kids to have. An ear of corn costs \$7 in Hawaii. I mean it was unbelievable what they were talking about. They said even a gallon of milk could cost anywhere from \$8 to \$9 for a gallon of milk in Hawaii. So, these kids were really treated. I mean, one night they took them to Minor Dunn for the hamburgers and the milk shakes, they never really had milk shakes like that before. Something that we take for granted, I guess, you know. Living in different parts of the world you're able to get certain things and then you're not able to get certain things. I know that talking to the ladies, Freddy's Steak House had a Prime Rib dinner one of the days, you know, and they were telling me they went there and they wanted to get those big Prime Rib dinners but they didn't serve it 'til like 4 or 5 o'clock, well they had a game so they come to the Kennedy Café and had pancakes and bacon end eggs and so forth and that. But, just Hammond made it down, well, they were four and 0 and pulled a play and then they lost it in the top of the 6th to the one team. The only good thing about, well, it's not a good thing losing to that team, but the team that beat them ended up beating Hawaii. So they won the whole world series that night. And Hawaii was beating teams from any where from ten to seventeen runs per night at each game, and that. But then on another good note that all the parents are happy about this week is, the kids are going back to school. So naturally all the parents are happy. There were several back to school things going on, supplies. What I want to say right now is that the Hammond F.O.P., at the Civic Center, is having an back to school special for all the kids where they're getting haircuts and they're having food and the fingerprinting and so forth and all of that. So, anybody that's watching now and doesn't know about it, I see we have some kids now, that from 4 o'clock to 8 o'clock at the Civic Center you can go over there and have a good time and the F.O.P. is doing a good bang up job as far as presenting the kids and getting them acclimated that the policemen are their friends and if there's anything going on don't hesitate to talk to one of your policemen.

Councilwoman Venecz - When is that F.O.P. Back to School?

Councilman Markovich - It's going on now, from 4 o'clock to 8 o'clock.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to elaborate on the Cal Ripkin World Series. Just to let you know that there were teams from New Jersey, Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Oregon, North Carolina and Hawaii. I asked one of the coaches from the Hawaiian team how many fund raisers they had. They had four fundraisers and raised \$30 thousand for their children to come here and participate in that World Series Tournament. So it was quite impressive. You saw a lot of people in the crowd and I want to tell you about a gentleman that I met, a Hammond resident. His name is Phil "Hambone" Hamilton. Anybody who is involved in Little League here in Hammond knows this man because he has been umpiring for the past fifty years. I'm going to read you an

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz cont. - excerpt from the Congressional Record of the 115th Congress that was read in its entirety on Tuesday, April 25th, 2017. Visclosky honors Phil “Hambone” Hamilton. “Mr. Speaker, it is my honor and privilege to stand before you and my fellow colleagues today to recognize Mr. Phil “Hambone” Hamilton” as he celebrates the 50th Anniversary of his baseball and softball umpiring career. For his lifetime of devotion to the youth in the community of Northwest Indiana and beyond. Through the sport of baseball and softball, Phil Hamilton is to be commended.” It goes on to read, “As an umpire he has called many games featuring future major league baseball players like LaTroy Hawkins, Kenny Lofton, Lloyd McClendon and Ron Kittle to name a few. Players and coaches alike have observed Phil’s enjoyment, pride and passion for officiating. Consequently, he is highly respected for his dedication, knowledge, and the fairness he brings to the game.” That is just an excerpt from what was read into the Congressional record but I thought it was worth mentioning. It is people like this gentleman who give our youth an opportunity to participate in events such as we had this past week. So thank you to Phil “Hambone” Hamilton for your dedication and all the work that you’ve done for our youth.

Councilman Kalwinski - As fall approaches and summer’s ending and school’s coming, there’s also a date that’s coming in the fall and that’s for the school referendum. I, along with other residents, may be paying an additional real estate tax for a new 400 thousand square foot middle school and high school plus increased operating funds for existing school buildings. I recommend the residents of the 1st District and the entire city determine the financial impact of the School City Referendum on their wallet and what it will mean for them on their real estate tax bill. Although the information from the school city states the average house in Hammond will pay \$10.47 per month, your real estate tax bill is payable in one or two installments. That additional monthly tax of \$10.47 is \$125.64 if you pay your entire tax bill at one time or \$62.82 for the Spring tax bill and another \$62.82 for your Fall tax bill. If your home is reassessed your costs could be higher. I know that some homes in Hammond have been reassessed and have seen some significant increases. The impact of this referendum is especially important information for Hammond seniors and those on a fixed income. Each homeowner should determine the financial impact of the referendum on their home and their finances and then see if they can support the School City Referendum. Hammond homeowners can get the added referendum cost to their real estate tax bill by going to the Hammond School City website at ww.hammond.k12.in.us/referendum and then use the referendum calculator. I just wanted to provide this information now so that people could get a head start on this and the form on the computer will look something like this. You just fill in the numbers and see what you get back.

Councilwoman Venecz - Incidentally, at our next Council Meeting, Dr. Watkins will be here to address the council so everyone can prepare their questions.

Councilman Markovich - Because of what Councilman Kalwinski brought up, it might be a good idea for Mr. Watkins to bring their financial consultants that are putting this referendum on and come back with some sample calculations on somebody’s home that is \$100 thousand or \$150 or \$200 thousand, what is the actual increases gonna be. Because there’s several calculations that whether you’re doing it right or wrong or whatever but \$10 per month doesn’t sound like a lot but when you’re talking \$800 per \$100 thousand assessed valuation that comes out to more than \$12 a month as an increase. I may be wrong, and I stand to be corrected, so as Councilwoman Venecz stated that Mr. Watkins is coming that we probably should send a letter that when he

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Markovich cont. - comes here, brings off any and all information, examples of what the increase would be on \$100, \$150 or \$200 thousand home, what the actual increase is going to be and give an explanation to us and, you know, the people that would be watching and maybe we ought to just put it out there that it would be a good council meeting to attend that everybody will get a lot of information about the School Referendum. In this case, it probably would help the schools out to get their message across to everybody because none of their school board meetings are on the internet, or live, or filmed, or anything, I mean, unless you go there. They have different rules as far as asking questions and giving out information. So this way, you know, we'll have public expression and people can even ask questions after.

Councilman Emerson - Just parenthetically, I think the School Board meetings are on the School City website if you click around you can find them. But, what I really wanted to say, I want to piggyback on what you said Madame President and Councilman Markovich, you know, I was there opening night at the Cal Ripkin World Series. The weather was a little iffy but then it cleared up, and not to be redundant, but just glad to have it in Hammond and Mr. Godbolt and all the people that put it on, this is the second time we've had the World Series here and the weather was great on the rest of the way out.

Councilman Markovich - What Councilman Emerson said about the School City website, and like what Councilman Kalwinski said, the majority of senior citizens don't have website knowledge or capability or so forth so the only thing that's going to happen is if this referendum should pass they won't know about it until they get their tax bill and then there's an increase on it, and then they're gonna be calling us and asking us questions about it. So, just because it's on the website, a lot of people aren't still able to answer that question or like Councilman Kalwinski said, use that form and fill out your taxes.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Malik Burton - I'm an 8th grader at Eggers Middle School and my concern is a community center for the 3rd District to improve the quality of lives for all at risk youth.

Matthew Burton - Attends Hammond High School. My concern is a Little League Field for our 3rd District. I think that if we had a Little League Field it would help the at risk youth learn discipline, sportsmanship and community values. Most importantly to keep many youth off the streets and out of harms way. So basically I'm asking, as a community, how can we get a Little League Field in our 3rd District?

Ken Davidson - Attended the Cal Ripkin Event, it brought a lot of people. Attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the Hammond Sports Complex which is gonna bring that many people on a regular basis to the city of Hammond. It's a great project in an area that is in need of redevelopment. Here with two concerns regarding Public Access. There should be public notice for the caucus meeting prior to the council meeting. It is a public meeting. Requested copies of correspondence to and from the Judge from the Council Office and was told that the Council Office didn't keep any records. It's my understanding public records have to be maintained for a certain period of time. It's actually a crime to destroy public records. I did receive a few letters but there was one missing.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Joe Hero - Complimented the Mayor and Council for their economic development in the city. Indiana Code says you can abolish the court every fourth year starting 2006. You cannot abolish until you pass an ordinance in 2018. I think you should look at that because it makes your ordinance invalid. I think the draft complaint submitted is valid that you cannot take the court out midstream of that term which ends in '19. I think that's an additional problem. Anybody can take that complaint, put their name on it, and file it. If they did it on Jan. 1, 2019 you would have the court for four more years which I don't think was your intention. The other issue, challenging the residency of the judge. The statute says the judge must be a resident of the city during the term of office or the office becomes vacant. I think you have an obligation to make that determination.

Mayor McDermott - Agreed with Mr. Hero's assessment regarding the Judge's residency. If she files a suit against us we will definitely challenge her residency. Secondly, in regards to the 2018-2019 issue. Judge Jorgenson is getting paid through December 31, 2019. It's her right unless she is challenged and removed from office. The question is if we have to do this by ordinance.

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

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President /s/
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk /s/

Time: 6:40 pm
cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting of August 28, 2017.