

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on October 1, 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.
Invocation by Council President Venecz.

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 September 24, 2018 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from September 19, 2018 through September 26, 2018. Claim #5688 through claim #5822, 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

- 18-19 2019 City of Hammond Budget Proposal
- 18-20 2019 Hammond Sanitary District Budget Proposal
- 18-21 2019 Hammond Redevelopment Budget Proposal

George Stoya - My only concern is, we are now in the fateful year of 2020 or thereabouts. And I'm just worried about the City's fiscal health going into the next, I don't know, five (5) ten (10) years, whatever. I haven't heard much about where we stand. Granted, I wasn't privy to a lot of the meetings, but I'd be sure happy to hear something that, "Hey, we are doing ok", to spite the, I'm gonna call it a truing up of the 1-2-3 tax rates and I just hope we are ok. Thank you.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs - Since the Mayor's here I was just wondering when are we gonna have the ribbon cutting for the MLK Park? If you can give me a general idea?

Mayor McDermott - Councilman Higgs, I know that we have phases set aside for MLK Park renovation. And the first phase that I've requested to have done is the pavilion part, where we have quotes honoring Dr. King, plaques honoring Dr. King. I wanted that done by January so that we could have it ready in time for MLK March and we are going to start the March, I have spoken to the Ministerial Alliance about this as well, that instead of leaving the City Hall parking lot, like we have done forever, we'll leave from another block further away. Which be on MLK Park and the MLK Pavilion, the area of that and we'd leave. I don't know if it's gonna be a ribbon cutting that will be the first phase of it that's done. I imagine the ribbon cutting with the splash pad and everything would be more in the Spring. And I also didn't want George to think we were blowing him off, I want to assure George that the Council, the Mayor, City Controller have been in constant discussions about the circuit breaker is gonna have on us next year. That's been a lot of conversation about how to cut the budget and how to get ready for next year. So, I don't want George to think that we're not talking about it. We are very aware that next years budget's gonna be a lot harder than this years budget. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilman Woerpel - Council as a whole met in Caucus and we will report out nothing.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Announced upcoming meetings:

Wed., Oct. 10; C.W.; Mt. Zion Pleasant View Plaza; 2 p.m.

Wed., Oct. 3; Edison C.W.; Edison School; 6:30 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 12; Edison C.W. on the Road; Golden Manor; 1 p.m.

Tues., Oct. 2; Harrison Park C.W.; VFW; 6:30 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 5, Irving C.W.; Irving School; 9:15 a.m.

Thur., Oct. 11; Whiting/Robertsdale C.W.; Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz - I would like to announce that Edison C.W., the Eastside Community Council and Home Depot are sponsoring our 7th Annual Trunk or Treat event at Home Depot. That will be Saturday, October 27th from 6-7:30 p.m. Dress up the kids, bring them out, and they can trunk or treat, from trunk to trunk. If there are any organizations who are interested in participating in passing out candy to the children and advertising their organization, you can contact me my information is on those City Website. I think that wraps it up for the Community and Crime Watch groups. Everyone please come out to a Community or Crime Watch meeting, you will get a lot of information and find out a lot of what's going on in the City. Because community is not just about me, it's about us.

ORDINANCE 3rd READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

18-19 City of Hammond 2019 Budget Proposal

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to Finance and Council as a Whole Committees. AYES: ALL

18-20 2019 Budget Proposal Sanitary District of Hammond

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Finance Committee. AYES: ALL

18-21 2019 Budget Proposal Hammond Redevelopment

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

18-22 2019 Civil City Salary Ordinance

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to Finance and Council as a Whole Committees.

Councilman Torres - The only thing I think I'm going to state is, somebody handed us this, I'm sure it was Heather, highlights the secretaries. My point was that the Council Secretary is, last year we managed to upgrade her to a full time position, but she makes \$32,000 a year. The Administrative Secretary \$42,025, the assistant makes \$32,000. Even though I noticed that some other secretaries do not make, some of them make \$33 and \$34. That's still living in the poverty stages. I just want to state that, these handouts that Redevelopment puts out, the Federal Government poverty level, less say for a family of four (4), is \$51,900. They consider that a poverty level, which they can qualify for certain programs. I believe at one point, our city should make an effort to bring the bottom tier as high as possible over \$50,000 or we can work on that gradually, to get people making reasonable wages at least about the poverty level. I know nothing is going to be done this year but, one suggestion I got is what some cities are doing, freezing the upper tiers, lets say over \$60,000 or \$75,000, whatever that levels going to be, and freeze them and give a higher rate to the people in the bottom tier. So they can eventually catch up. Thank you.

Councilman Higgs - At one point, Councilman Torres, it was unfortunate I argued the discussion to my fellow colleagues, in regards, to the fact not just having one secretary, but at one point they were talking about eliminating the position altogether. I was traumatized by the fact of trying putting all the work of nine (9) people on one person. So, I applaud your efforts, in regards, to addressing the poverty level as it states. But also, I mean, you have to realize that, I guess, we are fortunate to have two secretaries at this point. Because, one person can not do the work. If you are really actually active in the community, the work that's put on one secretary from this office, from one Councilman, I know alone, it's \$52,000 is nothing. So, thank God the position for the second secretary has been posted and we possibly will have two. Because the money that they make for the work, that this job entails. We should get a raise too, about ten percent (10%), if you're really out

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Higgs cont. - there working. But, I mean, it is what it is.

Council President Venecz - So, there was a motion by Councilman Higgs for 1st and 2nd reading, for Council as a Whole, who was the second? Who seconded that? Ok, Councilman Spitale. Thank you very much, I lost my train of thought there. Is there any other discussion? Any other discussion? Any other discussion? All those in favor? Motion carries. AYES: ALL

18-23 2019 Police and Fire Salary Ordinance

Councilman Higgs, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Finance and Council as a Whole Committees. AYES: ALL

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Prov Blanchard-Harris - The topic I'd like to discuss this evening is the indecorous behavior that I experienced as an constituent of the 3rd District, week before last. The gentleman that spoke thought that my Councilman was breaking the continuity of this meeting by announcing what was going on at this wonderful complex. I saw it, just as the Councilman stated, that there are people that don't come to the Council meeting. I did not understand what specificity what point of order meant. Point of order and that's what I kept hearing, my Councilman state. So, you know what I did, I googled it. And I understand that point of order is to bring back on task any topic. Just to make an example, there were children here and those children followed that indecorous behavior because they taunted this Councilman. Round and round, point of, point of, point of, point of order, point of order. Let these be teachable moments. I've seen many of you fine gentlemen with your families. We are all parents, grandparents, kids need to learn. So what they saw in here, they took right outside, in that parking lot, around a van that said some kind of daycare. So I took the liberty to print up what point of order meant. So perhaps someone would let them know. Because not only was it disrespectful to the Councilman, it's disrespectful to the body of this Council for this fine city. Thank you for the work that you do.

George Stoya - What a fortuity, anyway. I just want to go on record to say that, anytime whether it's Councilman Higgs or any other Councilman abuses the protocol and procedures in progress of Robert's Rules of Order, the administrative procedure of this legislative forum, I'm gonna say something, and if you don't like it, too damn bad. You guys got to remember, you are representatives, you know, you have certain authorizations to do certain things pursuant to the provisions of Indiana Code. That's where your authority lies. We the people are whom you work for, you are our agents. And I know sometimes all this leadership stuff, you guys get all caught up in that stuff. But, in fact, you are public servants and guess who the master is? We the people. So, all this stuff about decorum, yeah sometimes things get rough, too bad. You abuse the thing like Councilman Higgs

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

George Stoya cont. - did, I'm calling you on it. So, also with respect to the budget, I have concerns. Because I'm looking for reassurances that everything isn't gonna be priced and that we aren't gonna be gouged as citizens to help plug gaps in the monies that we need to run this city. For example, I'm particularly worried about the Sanitary District. The director of the Sanitary District repeatedly says that there's always room, we can rise it even more. The feeling is that he has a blank check, and I don't like that. I just don't like it. I don't like giving anybody in the city a blank check. It may be virtual, it may be actual, it may be in theory, I don't know which. But what I'm looking for is, what made this town great and has held us through all these hard times, this last probably twenty (20) years, I think it began before the Mayor here took office, has been the people willing to stay and not abandon the city. But I'm telling you, if you start gouging us and people are gonna start looking around. So, that's all I got to say.

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

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:30 p.m.
jt

Minutes approved at the Common Council Meeting of October 15, 2018.