

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on October 21, 2019 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Robert A. Markovich presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Moment of Silence was held.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: Higgs

TOTAL: 8

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of October 7, 2019 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to approve the claims from October 4, 2019 through October 16, 2019. Claim #5670 through claim #5873, inclusive.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to amend in claims:

#5874 H.A.S.T. Common Council \$100.00

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED
(as amended)

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Woerpel- Today I received an email from a gentleman that. I believe the Mayor's Office was attached to, and it concerns of wire hanging off of a telephone pole at 1420 173rd street. The wire, basically, is down real low. I went and took pictures of it and it's not a NIPSCO wire, it actually is a cable service company wire. I went over to Xfinity and talked to the manager, he was going to check and see if the wire belonged to Comcast. Since that conversation I talked with the City Engineer, Dean Button, he said that there's a company he can deal with and locate the owner of the wire and get the problem corrected, that wire has been hanging for a little bit... a lot of the issue was with all the dead trees along 173rd, those wires were hidden in the trees and since the trees were taken out that wire has been hanging down. I just want to make the person that sent the email aware that we're on top of it and we will get it resolved.

Mayor McDermott- This is totally a unacceptable situation. It's literally 6 feet if not a little bit lower off the ground, you can easily touch it. I don't think it's a power wire it's one of the lower wires. Who put the stilts up over there was that the City?

Councilman Woerpel- That was actually the homeowner that did that because he has a van that he was afraid would touch his roof how low it is.

Mayor McDermott- Yes, it will literally tear it out when he's backing out of his driveway. It's an unacceptable situation. I'm glad you brought that up. In fact, I think the City Attorney should uh... I'll make sure the City Engineer, and Corporate Counsel send a letter off to whom ever is responsible. That has to be fixed immediately. I agree Councilman, I see it everyday I take my kid to school.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Wed., Nov. 6th, Edison Community Watch Edison School; 6:30p.m.

Fri., Nov. 8th, Edison of the Road; Golden Manor Senior Building; 1 p.m.

Fri., Nov. 1st, Irving Community Watch at Irving School; 9:15 a.m.

Tues .,Oct. 29th, Pulaski Park; American Legion 6:30 p.m.

South Hohman will meet Thur., Oct, 24; at Trinity Lutheran Church; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., Nov. 19; Whiting Robertsdale Crime Watch Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 19-20, 19-21,- 19-22, -19-23 and 19-24.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE cont

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried

8/0/1

ORDINANCE NO. 9450 PASSED

19-24 An Ordinance Fixing the Salaries and Wages of all Policemen and Firemen of the City of Hammond Indiana other than those Fixed by Statute or by Ordinance heretofore Enacted and Fixing the Effective Date thereof

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried

8/0/1

ORDINANCE NO. 9451 PASSED

Mayor McDermott- I would like to say thank you to the Council. We worked on this budget for a very long time. We were meeting over the summer. I want to thank Heather and her staff for working hard on this budget, lot of work goes into it. I know it was real quick on the vote tonight. I want to show the residents... as we all know we've been talking about this for months so, I think it was a good budget. We got through the tax caps unscathed. We still have a lot of money left over for infrastructure work and each Council District and City Wide. Thank you very much to the Hammond City Council on passing another budget. And again to Heather and her staff who worked ridiculous hours to get this ready all at the same time we were getting audited from the State Board of Accounts. I want to say thanks and congratulations everybody.

Councilman Woerpel - I want to thank the administration, Heather, and the Mayor and all that because when I read this stuff ... when people say everything is hidden or whatever this and that. Nothing was hidden. The Mayor had several conversations with us. Heather I think I met with you 3 or 4 times over the budget. It was all right there out in the open now. I just want to Thank you Heather.

Mayor McDermott- I met with each Council Person in my office. Not everyone was at the same meeting but I met with everyone about the plan the administration came up with. I want to remind you we're all high fiving because we just completed a budget but there are people who are losing their jobs at the end of the year in the Court and a couple of people in the Clerks office. I want to remind everyone if you're losing your job at the end of the year... I know a lot of City employees are watching right now put in for the open jobs we're doing our best to relocate employees. I've done a pretty good job but we're still working real hard to relocate all the employees that are losing there job. I just want to say thank you and our work isn't done yet.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

19R-30 A Resolution Confirming the Appointment of Laurie Czulno as a Commissioner of the Hammond Historic Preservation Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

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

Mayor McDermott-I want to thank Laurie, for being a member of the public and being very active and participates in the Lil Cal Basin Authority, participates in City Council meetings, every 2 weeks we see her in the audience and she's here again today. For being a great Hammond resident, and also being interested in serving on this Commission that does not get a lot interest, so. I appreciate her stepping up and putting her resume forward and I strongly support her and I hope you do to. So, thank you very much and if you have any questions Laurie is here to answer them.

Councilman Emerson - I would agree with the Mayor. I would like to add when I first attending the Little Calumet River Basin meetings Laurie would be there almost at every meeting and as well as the Council Meeting, she would have two huge binders that were like the size of Chicago phone books, and my point in bringing that up is that kind of dedication is what we look for. And Hammond has a rich history as you know Mr. President back to the meat packing days and even before that. I'm sure that she would be an asset to the committee.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R30 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, Supported by Councilman Torres, moved to reschedule the meeting of November 11th be moved to November 4th due to Veterans Day, and the meeting of November 25th moved to November 18th due to the way Thanksgiving falls. AYES: ALL

Councilwoman Venecz- I would like to make a Motion giving Mayor McDermott comments recently about people within the City, particularly the Court, who will be losing their jobs at the end of the year, we have a position open in our City Council Office for a secretary and I would like to re open the application process so those employees who are going to lose their job at the end of the year will have an additional opportunity to submit an application for that position.

Council President Markovich- Any other New and Unfinished Business.

Councilwoman Venecz- That's in the form of a Motion.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to open the Application Process for a Council Office Secretary.

Councilwoman Venecz- Thank you for that enthusiasm. I recall when we voted to close the Court that we pledged to the employees of the Court that we would give them the opportunity to fill any position that became open in the City of Hammond, this has been such a arduous process. We did receive some applications and the people do happen to live in Hammond. I feel strongly that we need to give our City employees those who have spent a lot of time here at City Hall, those who have dedicated there employment to the City of Hammond, and those who are active with the City. I feel strongly that we need to offer them the opportunity again.

Councilman Woerpel- What's the Motion?

Councilwoman Venecz- That we open up the application process one more time for those who are losing their jobs with the court.

Council President Markovich- That's a personnel issue so.... I've talked to several Council Persons and they wouldn't like to discuss this on the floor.

Councilwoman Venecz- Point of Order.

Council President Markovich- State your Point of Order.

Councilwoman Venecz- You're not to engage in discussion and as far as this being a personnel matter, we're not speaking about any one individual in particular, this is generalities. If you want to talk personalities then I absolutely agree with you but we are not discussing personalties we're discussing opening up the job for those who are losing their job.

Council President Markovich- I'm not going to talk about debate but I will tell you what the process was. We hired someone back over a year ago that was in there for 8 months and all they did was answer the phone, didn't learn anything. So, we have a secretary that became ill so we had to go ahead and fill that position and in the mean time we did have somebody that was training in here and was working with the School City, but was offered a full time job with the School City. We went through the bid process, which we don't have to because the Mayor, Judge and Clerk's Office when ever they fill position they don't go through the bid process whatever reason, they do however they fill the jobs is beyond me. So, we did open up the bid process so, we took applications from city employees which is for two weeks, then Sharon Daniels opened it up on the website for people on the outside. Two weeks ago we received about 40 applications and the specifics were you had to fill out a job application and submit a resume. You'd be surprised how many people can't follow instructions okay, you see ads in the paper if you want to apply for a job. Take for instance the Fire Department.

Councilman Rakos- Point of Order.

Councilman Woerpel- If you're going to debate step down.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont

Council President Markovich- I'll step down.

Councilwoman Venecz- Call for the vote.

Councilman Markovich- If you want to try and silence me it's not going to happen. I'm just telling you what had happened fair and square and not how the others were hired prior to.

Council Vice President Woerpel- Clerk Golec, there has been a call for the vote.

Councilman Markovich- I'm not done.

Council Vice President Woerpel- There has been a call for the vote.

ROLL CALL VOTE (call for the vote)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski, Markovich

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried

6/2/1

MOTION PASSED

Councilman Markovich - Point of Order. What are we voting on?

Councilwoman Venecz- To re- open the application process to give City employees who are going to lose their job at the end of the year.

Clerk Golec- Was there a second?

Councilman Spitale- I gave the second.

ROLL CALL VOTE (open application process)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski, Markovich

ABSENT: Higgs

Motion carried

6/2/1

MOTION PASSED

Councilman Markovich- We have a process here in the City of Hammond how to bid on jobs. And one of the things is when there is an opening they have what they call a bid process. That bid process was opened for 2 weeks, we took application from city workers, then Sharon Daniels opened it up to the outside and put it on the web site, then we took additional applications. One of the requirements was that you had to fill out a job application and resume. Now in the past city workers just put in a bid and we don't know anything about them what their background or education is. So, that's why it was brought up that you have to fill out a job application and we went back thorough this 9 or 10 months ago when we had an opening, our secretary became ill. And during that time we had a dead line for 2 weeks for in house employees then it went outside. Sharon

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont

Councilman Markovich cont-Daniels dropped off about 40 or 50 applications, we had our secretary go ahead and look through all the applications to see who was really qualified for this job. So, she spent about 8 hrs going through all of that people just apply to apply with no experience what so ever. So, we got down to 5 people and she called them up and 2 of them already accepted other employment so, we're down to 3 people she called them up and did a phone interview. What I did was last week I came and looked at all the applications also and we told them... I had Susan make copies of the 2 people that applied this is after the deadline and we've been doing this for 2 months now to give copies to everybody, put it in their packets, it's down to 2 people and then the suggestion was made, Susan our secretary is going out of town leaving Thursday, and we needed someone in here. So, to help she's here Tuesday, and Wednesday and from 10:30 to whatever we're gonna have a custodian come in and answer the phone for the next week and a half. We were down to 2 people, my suggestion was through our administrative assistant who she would like to come in and work in the office and what we would have done is go ahead and have her come in tomorrow and sit with our administrative assistant, come in Tuesday and Wednesday and leave then we would have the girl come in at 10:30 the next week to answer phones then when our administrative assistant would come back she would bring in this lady and have her fill the position which would be a 90 day probationary period. Now we want to open it up after we spent all this time, went through qualifications. It sounds like, and it's probably true, that they want to open it up again because somebody's got a special person they want to apply and they're gonna make sure that person gets the position. Now we have to wait on that person to decide January 1st. I'm available January 1st, but in the mean time the City Council office has no one doing the work and god forbid something should happen to our administrative assistant. Talking to Sharon Daniels, we don't even have college bound people come in there and out in there hours that they can do and so forth. And that's where it is. I got all the Councilmen involved and talked to them, this is what we need. I'm leaving, I won't be here January 1st, but I wanted them to have the best person. But it sounds like politics is being played and whether the most qualified persons will get the position or not it's gonna be out of my hands. It's evident by the vote, you talk to people you talk to other Councilmen you have their word and all of a sudden their word changes. Politics is involved and that's what it is and that's the way it's been for the last 32 years that I've been Councilmen, and no matter what you do if it's right or wrong if you got 5 votes that's what gonna happen. Common sense doesn't make anything... as far as what's the best for the people, the tax payers and so forth and that. That's what's going on. I won't get into specifics but I'm sure it's gonna come out now who is being planned or who special dispensations being made for certain people. We went through this process for administrative secretary, Janet Venecz, wanted to hire somebody from Highland, somebody from Highland to take a Hammond job. I brought up the Hiring Ordinance, which was endorsed by Mayor McDermott, he signed because she's not a Hammond person that's why she didn't get it. Also that person is losing her job she didn't apply for any other position in the City, because she can't she doesn't live in Hammond. Councilwoman Venecz wanted to go ahead and hire someone who didn't live in Hammond. Now we have to re open it just for one individual special person. It will be interesting to see what's gonna happen in the 2 weeks, we gotta wait the

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont

Councilman Markovich cont- the taxpayers gotta wait till January 1st. If this person was so interested in the position you don't care about the Judge, the Judge doesn't care about you the office is being closed. If you want this position you apply right now the office is being closed, but that person didn't apply during the 2 week time period. And all of a sudden there's an application. I haven't even seen the application the Councilmen haven't

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

seen the application but there's somebody special out there they want to get this position and that's what's going on. It's out of my control it's out of my hands they're playing politics. It's not what you know it's who you know and whether the best person is gonna get the position or not god only knows.

Councilwoman Venecz- I don't want to beleaguer the fact of the matter is we as a City Council, made a promise to those employees who were going to lose their jobs in the Clerks Office and the Judges Office, now back when I was president I tried to get someone in here who was very qualified a City employee for 25 years, worked in the Clerks Office, her husband has worked as a Police Officer in the City of Hammond, to serve and protect the City of Hammond because the Police Officers can live outside of the City of Hammond, that couple decided to move to Highland, but oh no there 25 years, of service to the City, wasn't good enough and she was very very qualified for the job. How dare Councilman Markovich, sit here and say politics is being played. You're the one who has played politics for 32 years, Councilman Markovich, and I resent that implication, I've had it we have 3 more meetings until the beginning of the year we've gone the entire time that you've been president without a second person in the office. So, what's another 2 more months. It makes no difference you've been farting around this entire year, not hiring anybody now you're going to accuse somebody of playing politics. I'm done with it we got 3 more meetings of this nonsense.

Councilman Markovich- Wow, politics huh, been farting around I guess huh, you know lets talk about politics. Janet Venecz, husband had a job for 10 years in redevelopment paid \$ 30,000 a year for ten years, didn't have a job description god only knows...

Councilwoman Venecz- This is not personal... you said before you didn't want to discuss personnel issues and now you're bringing my husband into this no no no no don't you even do that Councilman Markovich.

Councilman Markovich- So, there was a position in Redevelopment and a certain person was in that position, so after 10 years they retired and then we went ahead on the outside we came up with a \$1000.00 a year for longevity for a pension, so they took the pension for \$10,000 and didn't work anymore and all of a sudden that position was never filled again. So, that leaves me to believe politics was involved just to create a position for certain individuals or whatever and that's what happened but that's here nor there. Again we can go ahead and talk about 25 years, or this or that. If you want a job here in Hammond, live here in the City of Hammond. We got an election with no opposition. I'm sure the hiring ordinance would have an issue and people would be voting different ways it would be interesting to see who's going to apply now after we spent 2 months. I was farting around for 2 months. I did it systematically took the applications, brought them to everyone's attention. You know what, there was other position in the City, they could've bid on but no one bid on those positions. Why not were they just waiting for a certain thing in a play to politics. And I can concur with the Mayor, yea, we wanna hire people, Councilman Markovich that are losing their jobs, but you know what, I've never seen jobs posting for the Mayor, Judge, or Clerk's Office when there's an opening. That's why I asked during the Budget Hearing and I was interrupted. I want to know the names of this position all these people get hired in these position and you never even see the bid process, well how the hell did they get hired in these positions? Again, I'm leaving, so I really have nothing to say about it.

Mayor McDermott- I don't appreciate being dragged into this mud fight. Every job that's open, I know the Clerk does it the same way, as the Judge does it the same way, as the Mayor does it for every single job that's open, we follow procedure. I don't appreciate any insinuation that we do otherwise if it's in my office or the Sanitary District or Port Authority, we go through the same mechanism even with Utilities. Every single time, absolute

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont

Mayor McDermott cont- true not one employee hasn't gone through that process, not one Bob. You just passed a \$65 million dollar budget, we did it in about 3 minutes, and you're talking about one damn employee for an hour. Why don't you guys get your stuff straight and come back in, do it in 2 weeks from now. Seriously, this is embarrassing, this is embarrassing Councilmen, you're talking about one job . We have 900 employees working for our city you're talking about one job. You're blowing this whole meeting up over one lousy job you don't have your votes. Why don't we come back and do this not on the record, the reporters are having a field day with you guys, you're given them material for the next 2 weeks.

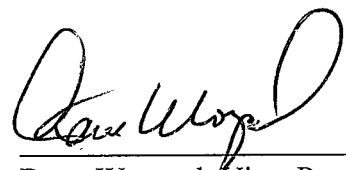
Councilman Markovich- I was asked not to bring it out on the council floor and I assured several councilmen that it wouldn't be brought out on the council floor. It was brought out on the council floor so that's where we're at. Mayor I agree with you 100% that was a personnel issue and when I tried to say it was a personnel issue I was out voted so, there's where it's at so now you got it now you see what's going on.

Councilman Kalwinski- I appreciate the Mayor's stand and how he did the process like it's supposed to be done and we did it too and now we're re doing it, so just wanted to put that out there, thank you.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

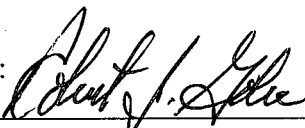
Eric Meier- You might be familiar with the Wilborn Case about 2 years ago there was a person who raped multiple women and now the kid is going to be re bonded. I was wondering if this council can send a letter to the Judge this is going before.

George Stoya- I verily thoroughly enjoyed the discussion. I disagree somewhat with the Mayor about it being embarrassing but we never get to hear about stuff like this, to see how you Councilmen think. What I didn't like this Council suppressing Mr. Markovich. I don't know what's going here sometimes. So these discussions do have informational value, most certainly they have perspective and that's what we the citizens need when it comes voting time to make sure we have the right person for the job.



Dave Woerpel, Vice President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:55 p.m

dw

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*