

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL  
APRIL 11, 2016

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on April 11, 2016 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 Councilman Higgs.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

ABSENT: Markovich

TOTAL: 8

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to accept the minutes of March 28, 2016 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to accept the claims from March 23, 2016 through April 6, 2016. Claim #1968 through claim #2287, inclusive.

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

#2288 Michael Nagy Engineer/ Citywide

\$56,708.57

#2289 Lake County Treasurer Engineer/ Citywide

\$ 1,291.43

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich

Motion carried

8/0/1

AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

AYES: Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Markovich

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED

(as amended)

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

## MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

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## COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from the USEPA regarding their investigation of contamination at a site at 150 Marble Street.

Councilman Higgs announced the Mayor's Annual Prayer Breakfast on Thur., May 5th from 8 to 10 a.m. at the Dynasty Banquet Hall.

Councilman Higgs announced the North Hammond Memorial Day Parade sponsored by the Hammond Mohawks on May 30th starting at the Cavalier Inn.

Councilman Higgs announce the College Bound Exemption Committee meeting on Mon., Apr. 18th at Hammond City Hall, Suite 113 at 5:30 p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz read a letter from the Hammond Library Foundation President asking for support of the Hammond Public Library Foundation Partners which is a group of advocates who volunteer their time to assist the Hammond Public Library Foundation with programming and fund-raising.

Councilman Higgs announced the Hammond Reads Essay Contest Awards celebration on Tues., April 19 at Morton Senior High from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Councilman Higgs announced the All Saints Church Parish Festival on Sept. 3rd and 4th to raise funds for the parish and also asked for donations to the church.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Tues., Apr. 19; East Ham'd Pullman C.W.; Ophelia Steen Center; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., Apr. 21; Hessville C.W.; Jean Shepherd Center; 7:00 p.m.

Indi-Illi C.W.; Thur., Apr. 21; 1st Methodist Church; 6:30 p.m.

Lafayette Neighborhood Watch; Wed., Apr. 20; Lafayette School; 6:30 p.m.

S. Ham'd C.W.; Thur. Apr. 21; Ham'd Housing Authority; 7:00 p.m.

Whiting/Robertsdale C.W.; Thur., Apr. 14; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

## ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

## INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

16-13 Amending Ch. 76, Schedule VII, of the Code as it relates to through Truck Routes Streets in the 1st District

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

16-14 Creating a New Fund for the Police Department for Video Recording Funds

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

16-15 Reclassify Property from S-1 Open Space and Recreational Facilities to S-2 Institutional to Construct, Operate and Maintain a Fire Station

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee. AYES: ALL

#### RESOLUTIONS

None

#### NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Higgs- In caucus, Councilman Opinker, the president of the caucus discussed that he is stepping down from being on the boards. He feels as if there is no need for him or any of my colleagues to be paid on boards, lucrative boards, however there is one particular board that the council has to by statute and that's Planning. So, I just wanted to put that out there so everyone's minds and hearts are clear as to what is about to transpire as it relates to me and my colleagues. I don't currently sit on any of the boards but what is gonna happen is there will be appointments for those particular boards and that's the Contractor's Board, HVAC and Electrical Board. So, just wanted that out there.

Councilman Torres - As Councilwoman Venecz was talking about the Hammond Public Library which sits in my district. I just wanted everybody to know they're running numerous beautiful programs out of there and the Director, Ms. Greenleaf, is in the audience today and I just want to let her know that I wasn't here whenever the rally was but they definitely have my support and the check is in the mail, it should be this week, from the 2nd District, to let you know that we support you.

Councilman Higgs - Councilman Torres, I echo your sentiments in regards to the Hammond Public Library. I was very instrumental in doing what was necessary to maintain and keep our Hammond Public Library. Not only was I instrumental in it, I am a very supportive of it and I make donations on a regular basis to the Hammond Public Library.

Councilman Emerson - In looking at this I think it should have been under Communications so I apologize but I think it's important. The energy assistance program is taking applications at the North Township Trustees Office this Thursday, April 14 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. only. There is a sliding scale, depending on your income limit of your family. I don't want to take time to go through all of that but it's important to bring any identification that you have, proof of income, disconnection notices and all that. This is for November of 2015 through May of 2016. So you can call, to save time here, 219-794-1829 or dial 211.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to Norfolk and Southern Railroad requesting repairs done to the road at the railroad tracks in the 6800 block of Kennedy. AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT:

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Iris Russe - Asked the council for their position on the new processing center or “prison” to be built by the Gary Airport not too far from where we live and her church is located. They were stopped in Hobart. They were stopped in Gary last November but now they are back. There will be a prayer vigil and Gary Zoning Board meeting tomorrow. It is not a good thing for this area.

Alvin Cheeks - Meetings should always be in the light of day and the public should be notified. Two of my co-commissioners attend the meetings and say the Hammond Human Relations Commission has no authority over the Police Department but they participate. No other commissioner is invited to those meetings. That committee has not gone before the state to be an organization so it’s a city body. It’s not a private committee it’s a public body.

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

AYES: ALL

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Michael Opinker, President  
Hammond Common Council  
ATTEST:

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:30 pm  
cb

Minutes accepted at the Common Council Meeting of April 25, 2016.