

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on July 27, 2020 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

Council Coordinator Carmen I. Balboa facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Moment of Silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to accept the minutes of July 13, 2020 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from July 8, 2020 through July 22 , 2020. Claim #3249 through #3462, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 8/1/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Torres- I got a letter, followed by some phone calls, the letter is from Nancy Kinsella. She's in the audience now. But also some phone calls from residents of the 4600 block of Pine Avenue and that surrounding area. I don't know how vast the problem is but she states, and the residents in that area state, that there's a rat infestation in that area and it's been going on since March. She's been trying to make contact with some City Officials and the County Health Department and for the most part been ignored, neglected. So, I just found out about it last Friday and I went and visited the neighborhood with Nancy and yeah, these guys are bold and they're right in the open. So that means there's definitely a problem in that area and I would like to bring that to the attention of the city so that those residents there can get some help. I will follow this up under New and Unfinished Business. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

• COMMUNICATIONS cont

Councilman Kalwinski- I contacted Sanitary District today to get an update regarding the flood and the claims as you all might remember there were 1700 claims made for assistance and as of today, half of those have received their checks and the other half they anticipate will be done by the end of August. Uh, yeah, the Sanitary District is open until 7pm Monday through Thursday to give people an opportunity to go to the office and make their claims during longer hours to not inconvenience people who are working during the day. So half the claims have been paid out and the other half they're hoping to get done by the end of August. Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- I just want to give a weekly update regarding the COVID numbers. From last week to this week, we jumped up, in our city, 103 cases. Where in 46320, we have an additional 17 cases. 46327, we have an additional 16 cases. In 46324, we have an additional 26 cases. In 46323, we have an additional 44 new cases. And if we look at the Whiting Robertsdale area, break down, because I don't know how they break it down other than the zip codes. There's an additional 17 cases so for the first four zip codes, that's an additional 103 cases for this week. I just want to continue to make our citizens aware that our numbers are going up. And from last week to this week, we went up 103, and the previous week we went up 104. So, I think if they're mindful where we can continue to try to figure out how to mediate our spread in our city, and keeping them informed, as we're watching the numbers for us. There are some testing places that are going on at Hammond Morton from July 28 to August 1st, you go to 6915 Grand Avenue Morton High School from 9am to 6pm there will be testing going on.

Councilman Emerson- Councilwoman Alexander, can you give me 46324 again?

Councilwoman Alexander- Yes, 46324 we have an additional 26 cases with a grand total of 365.

Councilman Emerson- Thank you.

Councilwoman Alexander- So, if we did look at our total City numbers from last week till this week we were at 1017 total cases, but I look at our weekly numbers, so this week our total grand total numbers is 1120 cases and then I just broke it down based off of the count for the week. You don't have to look at, always, at that previous number we're looking at what is that current effect that we have now.

Councilwoman Venecz- Councilwoman Alexander, the numbers that you're citing, what was the effective date of the count?

Councilwoman Alexander- That was, I just got that count right before the meeting came on. So that is the current count as of right now.

Councilwoman Venecz- But when you gave the grand total, that started back in March, April?

Councilwoman Alexander- Yes, that started back when they started doing the data.

Councilwoman Venecz - Okay, thank you very much.

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilwoman Alexander- That's why I like to give a weekly total instead of just that grand total so people can actually really see.

Councilman Tyler- I would like to first start by acknowledging the life of former U.S. Representative John Lewis, who passed away about 10 days ago on July 17th. He was a true hero and activist for people of all different colors, creeds, across our Country. So I just wanna acknowledge his contributions and hope that we as a society, as a country, can live up to the vision that he had for our society. I also want to restate, I feel like we talk about this every meeting, but it just underscores the importance of it in terms of families within Hammond completing the 2020 U.S. Census. As of right now, Hammond is at a 60.6 % completion rate. So we would love to see that number, hopefully, get somewhere in the eighties, maybe even nineties by the deadline in October. So, I know that our local census representatives are doing a ton of outreach and we as a city are trying to figure out ways that we can support them in that work too. But it's pretty easy, if you go to 2020census.gov, you can complete the form in about 10 to 15 minutes. It doesn't take long at all. I also wanted to share that the Hammond Port Authority will be having there regularly scheduled meeting tomorrow beginning at 4pm with an executive session, followed by construction meeting at 4:15, and then at 4:30pm the regular meeting, and that will, of course, take place at the Hammond Marina. And then on Thursday, July 30th at 4:30pm the Hammond Human Relations Commission will be meeting. That meeting will take place via Zoom and I'll share the information for the Zoom link on my Facebook page later on, but you can also find it on the gohammond website. I also want to announce that WHAM is coming back again. Of course, given Covid, I know there was some conversation around if we were even gonna have this or not, but it is taking place. It's the 9th annual WHAM, which is the midnight ride throughout the city. It will begin at 9pm. Registration is open now. I believe it closes, I'm not sure when it closes, but if you would like to sign up for that you can visit the gohammond website. The last thing I want to share that after the flooding that happened in the City that we were just referring to, I entered into a partnership with Home Depot and the local Plumbers Union to provide water heaters to the residents of the 3rd District who had lost there's due to flooding. We were successful in installing two of those last week. So I still have one more. So if you are a resident within the 3rd District that lost their water heater due to flooding damage with that May flood, please reach out to me either through Facebook, email, phone call, so that we can get you set up with one of these heaters. We had a very low submission rate for those and were able to, like I said, give out two, but we still have one more left. If we don't get someone else from the 3rd District then we're gonna go ahead and open it up to the entire city. Probably over the next 7 to 10 days depending on if I hear from anyone else in the 3rd District. So I just wanted to put that out there for everybody that's watching or will watch and to have that reflected in the minutes as well. Thank you.

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, Councilman Tyler mentioned the WHAM bike ride, and you said this is the 9th annual. Councilman Spitale and I have been on the corner of 173rd and Lyman for all of those years passing out water. We will be there again this year. We will be wearing our gloves. We will be wearing our masks. And anyone who is looking to take that long ride after midnight, we will be there to greet you with some cold water. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Venecz- Due to the ongoing restrictions, the Community and Crime Watch groups have not met, with the exception of the Hessville Crime Watch met last week and understandably it was poorly attended and so tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. Capt. Alcox and I, Capt. Alcox heads up the Community Affairs Division, we will be on WJOB Radio at 9 a.m. We're reaching out to the Community to see how we as a community and Crime Watch members can better serve the community. We're more than likely going to do a Zoom meeting. I don't know that we're going to do individual Zoom meetings for each of the groups but we certainly want to continue the outreach to the community and continue to address the concerns of the residents. Now that some of the restrictions have been lifted, we've seen an increase in activity and we'd certainly like to communicate that to our residents. So, please gather your thoughts, give us a call tomorrow morning at 9am on WJOB and we'd be more than happy to honor your suggestion. Because community is not just about me, it's about us.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

20-11 An Ordinance establishing Inspections Conflict of Interest Rules and Reporting Procedure

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Torres, moved for final passage.

Councilman Rakos - It's very simple. It basically says it all in the first paragraph here. It's a way to ensure that anybody from the Inspection Dept., Building Commissioner, Code Enforcement, Inspector or other employee of the city, anytime issuing a permit or overseeing the issuance of a permit through a subordinate, this will come into play so there can be no discrepancy, no way that they could take advantage or cause harm in any way, or cause any kind of conflict of interest when it comes to that and that's what the ordinance does.

Councilman Emerson - Yeah, I just wanted to, I think it bears repeating, that it was pursuant to the Indiana Code 36-1-27-4. The Indiana Legislature has mandated the Common Council of the city of Hammond to adopt this ordinance. I just wanted to make sure that was also said. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9469 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

20R-15 Authorizing the Hammond Police Department to apply for the FY2020 Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program

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

Councilman Spitale - The money from this grant is from the U.S. Dept. Of Justice. The police department will be using this for overtime. The city of Hammond must apply to be awarded this grant for \$147,269. This grant does not require matching funds on the part of the municipality.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION R15 ADOPTED

20R-16 Authorizing the Hammond Police Department to apply for a 2020 NIPSCO Public Safety Education and Training Action Grant

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

Councilman Spitale - NIPSCO offers public safety education grant money to local law enforcement agencies. The amount of this grant is for \$5 thousand for police department for training programs. Also, too, as the other resolution, the city of Hammond must apply to be awarded this grant of \$5 thousand. This grant does not require matching funds on the part of the municipality.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION R16 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski - I want to extend my condolences to the Pat Moore family, his wife, children and extended relatives. Pat was a good city employee and he was an even better friend and I enjoyed all my interactions with him as we went through planning and developing the park in my district. He was interesting to go and plan with. He would walk the park several times by himself, then with me, and always had sort of a vision for the parks that he then brought to the community. It was usually spot on. So prior to getting the TIF dollars to renovate the park we actually had a lot of interaction. (Unclear) but mostly (unclear) but I miss his contributions to the city of Hammond and to the parks.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Torres - As I mentioned before in Communications, there is a widespread problem of a rat infestation in the 4600 block of Pine Avenue extending East all the way to Hickory Avenue, unknown what the majority of the area is. But these rats are bold and brazen enough to come out in daylight evening hours. That means they are hungry and thirsty enough that they don't care about predators, which are, of course, cats, hawks, whatever predators they got. But, not only are they annoying and scary but they also carry viruses, bacteria, fleas and who knows what other else diseases that they can cause. Now, I did a little research on rats and when you see one that comes out in the open, especially in daylight, it's because there are thousands in the area. So, the local citizens have taken some sanitary measures like hiding pet food, water, and so forth. But they do need the help of the city to help them with this problem and I know we have Nancy Kinsella that is going to speak on this during Public Expression but she had tried to bring this to attention, this has been happening since March, and she has tried to bring attention to the city, County Health Department and whoever might listen, and nobody has been able to help them. I found out about this Friday and I went to the neighborhood and walked it with her and talked to several people and indeed you got rats coming up to people's porches and it's like they don't fear anything. So, if this is not taken care of now, they will spread, they will multiply and who knows how far this problem will extend to. I sent a letter to the Mayor, I haven't heard a response yet. But I also called the County Health Department, they haven't answered back yet. But I will continue to follow up and work with the local residents and follow up on this because there are restaurants in the area, there's churches, of course, and we have urban schools in the area. We don't want it to expand any further than it. If we could help contain it, I would like to help. The way I can use my funds as a City Councilman are limited to Parks, and sidewalks, and all of that. But if I need to put up some of our district money into it by hiring exterminators or whatever is necessary, I'm willing to do that. But the residents in that area, and throughout the neighborhood do need our help. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Councilman Emerson - I too would like to acknowledge the passing of Pat Moore as Parks Director. You know, I always worked well with him. He was, towards the end of his retirement, he was 4th District Supervisor. I just would argue every year about the flooding of the little skating pond at Edison Park. He would say, the winter's are too warm and you know, I don't see a lot of people using it (unclear) the skating pond no longer exists. However, may he rest in peace and the best to his family at this time.

Council President Woerpel - I think we all echo those sentiments, Councilman Emerson.

Councilman Spitale - More also too, back in the day when you yourself was sitting here, if it wasn't for Mr. Moore knowing how to take care of a baseball field for us, we'd of been under a flood every time it rained. He was a big help in keeping things together for 300 something kids we had in our league back then and I appreciated everything he did. They're a great family and he was a great guy.

Council President Woerpel - You know, just to echo your sentiments, the thought crossed my mind that you and I laughed at that when he first met me he came to you and said is this guy for real? That's the one memory I have of the three of us.

Councilman Spitale - He wanted to know if you were the real deal or what was about you before you dove into the political ring.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Council President Woerpel - Yeah, he'll be missed.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Nancy Kinsella - I've had a three unit at 4610 Pine since 1989 and we've never had a rat issue. This community is one or two blocks east of Calumet Avenue and there are all those restaurants on Calumet Avenue so we've always kept up with our alleys and dumpsters for that reason. The middle of March a tenant who works midnights called and said he saw rats in the street. I called Animal Control and they no longer do that, call the County Health Dept. I did, my report was taken. A month goes by nothing happens. I called the Health Dept. again but because of Covid they had limited personnel. I called Environmental and left a message. In May I called the Health Dept. again and spoke to the supervisor, and left another voice mail for Environmental. Now in June it exploded and got really, really bad. I put out a letter asking the neighbors to all call the Health Dept. and maybe that would help. Nothing happens. In July I called and asked Environmental if they would bait and trap? He said no they wouldn't. He recommended we speak to DNR. DNR made some recommendations and everybody complied. We need Hammond to appropriate some funds so that we can get a professional exterminator.

Nevil Ganimi - Bought a home and needs water connected. Needs a buffalo box for water which has to be in the alley. This is going to affect everybody in Hammond. If you have any problem with your buffalo box now the Water Department requests that it has to be moved to the alley. That makes everybody have to pay \$4 to \$5 thousand, every owner. The Water Dept. is hard to deal with.

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

AYES: ALL



Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:40 p.m.
cb/dw

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*