

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on August 24, 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.

Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott- I don't have anything prepared unless Council has questions about anything. I can tell you that today I met with the U.S. Marshall for the Northern District for Indiana. Him and I toured the Hammond City Jail, which has been recently renovated with like thirty more cells. I'm going off the top of my head so hopefully we'll be able to store federal prisoners, which is sort of a lucrative business, we could probably make another quarter to half a million dollars because of the renovations we've done. But the U.S. Marshall was real happy with that. I know we're wrapping up the \$500 dollar rebate program through the Hammond Sanitary District, at this point almost 1300 checks have gone out. I think there was right around 1700 total claims, which is, I think, runs around \$750,000 right there. I don't know if the Council has any questions, but we can go through the rest of the meeting, I'm here. I know that recently the Hammond Council passed a Tax Anticipation Warrant for \$12 million dollars, which we appreciate. I want to report to the Council that as of this point we haven't hit one penny of that Tax Anticipation Warrant. We haven't used one penny. And after speaking with the City Controller we're hoping that we can get through 2020 without actually tapping a single penny of that Tax Anticipation Warrant, which is nice. The Casino Boats are doing a little bit better. I mean not really that great, it's down at least 50%. They are open right now. They are generating money. We did get a pretty good tax draw, so people are paying their property tax bills. So at this point, assuming things continue the way they are and we don't have any shutdowns, I think we will get through the rest of this year without having to tap any of that Tax Anticipation Warrant, which is nice that it's there just in case of an emergency. I thought that was an interesting thing to point out to the Council.

Councilman Torres- Mayor, does that carry over?

Mayor McDermott- Good question, but no, we can pull from it, but we have to... Tax Anticipation Warrants are very short termed in nature, so we wouldn't pull from it and keep it. It's like a home equity loan, you know, you tap it if you need it and if you don't, it's there right. Which is nice, so if we came up short, we couldn't make payroll for some reason, like not getting the property tax draw or something like that, we have it there in case of an emergency.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of August 17, 2020 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from August 5, 2020 through August 19, 2020. Claim #3724 through #3898, inclusive.

ROLL CALL

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

NAYS: Kalwinski

Motion carried 8/1/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

Councilwoman Venecz- I think this is probably the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting out of the last 4 that Councilman Kalwinski has voted no on the claims, and I'm just curious. Generally, if there's a no vote on the claims it's explained why they are, perhaps there was a particular claim that he was in disagreement with. I'm just curious to why he's voting no.

Councilman Kalwinski- When I review the claims, the engineering, that City-Wide, seems to be exorbitant to me, so I vote no because of that.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Tyler- I wanted to announce that the Food Bank of NWI will once again be hosting a mobile food pantry. It was scheduled to take place at Local 1010 tomorrow, but that location is moved, so it will be taking place at the Sportsplex at 11 am tomorrow, Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. So once again, the Food Bank of NWI is hosting another mobile food pantry in the City of Hammond at the Hammond SportsSplex on Tuesday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 11 am. I also wanted to announce that the Mayor is offering the Hammond Household Flood Protection Program, the Sanitary District will contribute up to 50% of the cost to install the appropriate flood protection device with the maximum contribution of a \$1,000.00 dollars per household. I don't believe there is an application deadline for that. For more info they should reach out to Caitlyn Sherman at 219-853-6413, ext 515. Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and the Hammond Parks and Recreation are once again hosting the Autumn Colors Craft Show on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10 am until 4 pm. If you're interested in being a vendor or crafter, you can reserve your spot for \$45 dollars before August 31<sup>st</sup>. For more information contact Selena at 853-7705. And lastly, The Hammond Parks Department and the Hammond Public Library are partnering for an outdoor movie at Dowling Park that will begin at 7 pm at the park. We'll open at 7 pm, the movie will start at 7:30 pm, and it is a Tim Burton film called Miss Peregrine's Home for the Peculiar Children. Concessions will be available. Any questions about that, call 219-853-7705 or 219 -931-5100, ext 330.

*Prepared by  
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Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilwoman Alexander- Yes, I just wanna go back to the vote, that's 8 in favor, 1 opposed. Thank you.

Council President Woerpel- I thought I said 8 in favor and 1 opposed. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community and Crime Watch Committee- Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, a couple of weeks ago, or I believe the last council meeting, I announced that there was going to be a virtual Crime Watch Meeting on August 27<sup>th</sup>. That meeting has been postponed and I will advise at a later date. Coming up on Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> is the Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch that will be at Calumet College at 6:30 pm and that is on a first come, first serve basis to provide for social distancing. Also the South Hohman Ave. Crime Watch will have their meeting coming up on September 24<sup>th</sup>, which is a Thursday, beginning at 6:30 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church on the corner of 173<sup>rd</sup> and Hohman. As Crime Watches become available I will certainly let everyone know.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING- FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

20-12 An Ordinance Amending Ord. 7685, 8200, 8564, 8630, 8645, 8718, 8754, 8755, 8854, 20-12 8930, 9017, 9061, 9194, 9252, 9359, 9375, 9462 also known as Section 36.005 (B) and (C) of the Hammond Municipal Code, as it Pertains to Expenditures of Gaming Revenue

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee for September 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

Councilman Kalwinski- It's my belief that we don't need a redistribution ordinance of gaming funds, instead, I propose the Hammond City Council or the administration hire an outside source to review the general budget and all budgets and propose cuts to balance the budgets. Being a responsible elected official is not for the faint of heart. We're in a crisis and we need to be responsible, knowledgeable, dedicated, careful, diligent and thorough. What's the word for someone who doesn't wanna make the tough decisions. Whatever it is, that's the name of this ordinance, and I don't wanna be known by that name. We didn't make enough tough decisions in the past to deal with the 1, 2, 3 tax caps, and other budget issues. Instead funding entertainment and sports venues and other nice, feel good, but not essential amenities. We tweaked a few things, used some casino money and kicked the can down the road. Now, between the full effect of tax caps and the COVID crisis we're at the dead end of that road. Voting for this ordinance is unconscionable and irresponsible. The original Empress Casino opened in Hammond on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1996, over 24 years ago. At that time, there was opposition, especially from the North end of the city, which would be most affected. To try to pacify opposition, residents were told that the gaming dollars would provide Hammond with the very best streets, roads, sidewalks, lighting, water, and sewer systems, and so the ordinance was established by the Hammond City Council of the approximately \$35,000,000 dollars of revenue from gaming. 10% would go to each district, which would be about \$3½ million, the shared 10% fund for the larger projects would receive \$3½ million, and the Mayor would receive 30% toward 10½ million. Here we are 24 years later there are still broken sidewalks, crumbled or non existent

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Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Kalwinski cont.- curbs, (unclear) weeds, potholes, and basements flooding after a storm. For at least the last 10 years District casino dollars were used to balance the budget. From one to two thirds of those funds were used to balance the General Fund. How is this ordinance allows fourteen reductions to the gaming dollars before any funds are distributed for infrastructure or district projects and the last item of reduction labeled (N) like Nancy, general fund transfer in an amount appropriate to properly fund the city budget. The original ordinance stipulated never to use the gaming dollars for the general budget. I'm asking the Council to consider tabling this ordinance for now to really have us all scour seriously to...

Council President Woerpel- Okay, the motion has been made to table, that ends discussion.

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to Table 20-12.

ROLL CALL VOTE (Table)

AYES: Kalwinski, Tyler, Emerson,

NAYS: Alexander, Spitalo, Venecz, Torres, Rakos, Woerpel

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

3/6/0

MOTION FAILED

Councilman Torres- Is that an in person committee meeting or by Zoom?

Council President Woerpel- Everybody has the opportunity to come to our meetings as it is, Councilman, I cant force them to come. I mean if that's what you're suggesting we can... our Council as a Whole can meet safely.

Councilman Torres- Okay, so committee meetings are in person.

Councilman Kalwinski- With this ordinance being of such significance, with so many dollars involved, I request that a Public Hearing be scheduled so that the public can come or Zoom, to get their input about losing dollars in the Districts for infrastructure. Thank you. So that's a motion for a public hearing I guess.

Council President Woerpel- I'm going to have to defer to our attorney, Attorney Berger do we need a public hearing?

Council Attorney Berger- Public hearing is not necessary, but it's permissible.

Councilman Kalwinski- Although it's not necessary, it is permissible, and it is a way of being transparent and getting the public involved regarding an ordinance of this stature. So I'm requesting that a public hearing be scheduled.

Councilwoman Venecz- When does the Councilman propose to have this public hearing?

Councilman Kalwinski- Well, it would be nice for them to have it somewhere when COVID wasn't keeping people away from City Hall, so two weeks seems too quick, I think we ought to give this some time for the

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Kalwinski- public to become aware and for things to be safer so more people can come to respond at a public hearing in person. I know that they can right now, but I know a lot of people are not floating around like they usually do, so we're trying to be fully transparent. I'm requesting a public hearing down the road. Maybe in a month we look at this and have a public hearing, and see if things are better, and we can get a good turn out. Because this is an important issue and I think people wanna be heard.

Councilman President Woerpel- Councilman Kalwinski, are you making a motion for a public hearing?

Councilman Kalwinski- I am.

Council President Woerpel- Is there a Second?

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for a Public Hearing on 20-12.

Councilwoman Venecz- If the Councilman wants a Public Hearing then I would like to suggest that we have a public hearing on September 14, 2020?

Council President Woerpel- The Motion has already been made for the public hearing, is there any further discussion?

Councilwoman Venecz- One of the features of this ordinance is that there will be public involvement in decisions being made with regard to projects. The committee that will meet to make decisions on what projects that will move forward on, the public is going to be involved in those. They are going to be able to come and voice their opinion and let uh, the Capital Improvements Board know what projects they would like to see done. So I don't necessarily know that...

Councilman Kalwinski- Point of Order. We're doing a motion on the vote, we're not filibustering at this point this is just a motion he's already gone through the steps, now we're voting.

Councilwoman Venecz- He called for a discussion, and my discussion is relative to the Motion.

Council President Woerpel- I will remind the both of you to address the Chair. The motion has been made and seconded to have a public hearing on, I guess Councilwoman Venecz is asking that the public hearing be on September 14, if I understand correctly?

Councilman Kalwinski- I think we're voting on one thing at a time here, so I think what we're voting on now is a public hearing. If you wanna have another motion for a date for the public hearing that come up as a separate motion. Thank you.

Council President Woerpel- That would be an amendment to the motion Councilman. I guess Councilwoman Venecz has made the amendment to the motion for the public hearing to be on September 14.

Councilwoman Venecz- That is correct. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Kalwinski- That is a separate motion. Vote twice here. Can we ask Attorney Berger on the correct protocol call here?

Council President Woerpel- Atty. Berger, the motion has been made for an unspecified public hearing, Councilwoman Venecz is amending the motion to have the public hearing on September 14<sup>th</sup>. Councilman Kalwinski has a question for you?

Attorney Berger- There could be a separate motion, but I think amendment is the proper procedure.

Councilman Kalwinski- I would like to propose that the public hearing be on September 28, two weeks later.

Council President Woerpel- We already got Councilwoman Venecz’s motion we can’t have two motions, so I guess we have to vote on Councilwoman Venecz amendment.

Councilman Kalwinski- And therefore is the dilemma, Mr. Chairman, people who want to vote for the public hearing, that’s one matter, people who want to vote for a date is another (unclear) asking for two votes.

Councilman Rakos- We’re talking about an amendment to the amendment now, why would we assign a public hearing for an ordinance and not give an date? That doesn’t make any sense. That’s why Councilwoman Venecz tried to establish a date, ther should have been a date with the original motion which is an amendment to our ordinance on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. I don’t understand why would we vote on having a hearing after we’re gonna vote? We’ve actually done that before though, after we’re gonna vote on the ordinance, why would we do that? That makes no sense at all.

Councilman Kalwinski- Mr. Rakos, said it himself, we’ve done it before, however... the Chair can move forward.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to amend the motion to schedule the public hearing for 20-12 on September 14, 2020.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: Torres

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 8/1/0 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (public hearing as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading & CAW)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

8/1/0

MOTION CARRIED

Mayor McDermott- What time is this Public Hearing?

Council President Woerpel- It will be item No. 5.

Mayor McDermott - Got it. Thank you.

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Alexander- I just want to give a COVID update. From August 12 to August 24, 46320, we had 24 new cases. 46327, we have 26 new cases. 46324, we have 43 new cases. 46323, we have 15 new cases. And for 46394 we have 27 new cases. I would like to remind the public that you can get COVID testing at Morton High School from August 25 to August 29, from 9 am to 6 pm. Please wear your mask, if you're not wearing your mask you're actually helping spread the virus. Thank you.

Councilman Spitale- What is the number for 46324 again?

Councilwoman Alexander- 43 new cases. I just want to remind everyone to continue to mask up, continue to wash your hands, and continue to sanitize. And remember, while you're not wearing your mask, you're actually infecting those that are wearing a mask. So I just want to remind the public so we can do what's right and hurry up and try to get out of this pandemic.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Mayor McDermott- I'm here to answer any questions about that ordinance, if you have it? I didn't wanna get up during the disagreement with the Council, so I just stood back while you guys worked out the details on the public hearing. I'm here to answer any questions. I've talked to just about everybody on the Council in regards to this ordinance, and I agree with Councilman Woerpel, it's probably the way we should have been doing business from the get go. Because what we do now is give 10% to be spent by the District Councilman, untethered. If they want to do it all on park projects, or lighting projects, or just to top coat their streets, they can do it because they have untethered access to that 10%. This system that we're talking about with the capital improvement board will be a seven member board chaired by the City Engineer, three members appointed by the Council, and three appointed by the Mayor, and that seven member board will decide where 62% of the gaming money is spent. And using this scenario, I always bring up the 3<sup>rd</sup> District, I said to Councilman Tyler

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- when I spoke to him, if Tapper needed to get done, and it was a \$7 million dollar project from end to end, and Councilman Tyler needed to get Tapper done, it would take him 4 or 5 years under the current proposal to get Tapper done, under the way we do business currently. Under the way we're talking about doing business, Tapper can get done in one season, two seasons max. And that's what we're talking about, concentrating money where it needs so that we do what's good for the City, not what's good for the Council person. No offense to the local Council people and the Mayor included, but we have great lighting projects across the City, and we have great looking parks, we need to start spending money underneath the asphalt, and that's what this proposal does. And I understand why District Councilmen would be threatened by this. Councilman Kalwinski, I understand why he'd be threatened by this, because it takes away the unfettered access he has to the 1<sup>st</sup> District money and it puts it through a seven member panel that decides what's best for the City, based on grades assigned by the City Engineer, the need of the City, the number of people affected.

Councilman Woerpel- Mayor, just to clarify, the way it is currently the public has no say so in projects.

Mayor McDermott- Absolutely none. Right now this year we get \$1.5 million dollars to the District Council person, and they can do whatever they want. Even if the City Engineer says, "You know, I think in the 5<sup>th</sup> District you should work on the service road south of 80/94". And Councilman Woerpel has the right to say, "No, even though the city engineer think's it's important, I'm gonna do this project instead". That's the way we've done it since 1996. In 1996, when each District Council person was getting over \$3 million dollars. It was a lot more feasible than it is nowadays when we get \$1.5 million. Let me remind you, during this term that we're all sitting in, Chicago is gonna open up two more casinos and Gary's gonna open up one. Which means the dollars we have this year aren't going up, they're not, so we need to figure out how to concentrate that money on projects that are most pertinent to the city. And that's what this proposal talks about, it also modifies the... what was formally referred to as the Mayors Gaming Advisory Board, this is an advisory board that's chaired by the Mayor's Chief of Staff, who is Phil Taillon right now, five appointees from the community appointed by the Mayor, five members of the community appointed by the Council, and those eleven members would spend 4% of the gaming revenue. That's about \$700,000 dollars, and they would give it to not for profits across the City. Schools, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, things like that. Councilman Kalwinski, about 3 meetings ago brought up the need for a rainy day fund, and we do have one, but we took that ... Councilman Tyler also brought up the need for a rainy day fund, we built that into this Ordinance. It says we're gonna have 4% of our gaming revenue put into a rainy day fund and it will not be touched. It's just gonna go off to the side. Something we could have done a long time ago and we didn't. We're talking about doing that in this Ordinance. There still will be gaming money going to the local District Councilman. There still will be some gaming money going to the Mayor. But most of the money is going to the Capital Improvement Board, that seven member Board that will decide where and what projects are being spent on. I understand why District Councilman would be threatened by it, quite frankly, keep in mind, the Mayor, I get 30% right now of the gaming revenue, and I'm going down to 15%. So I'm giving up some of the money I get as Mayor. We're talking about giving it to a seven member Board and letting them do what they think is the best interest of the City.

Council President Woerpel- In the Scenario I'm describing, we're all aware, I know the City Engineer is, I have an ongoing problem with Schneider Street, and I have a resident that calls me three days a week, and this resident now will be able to go in front of that Board. And it's not like they're going to be meeting in private, it's not going to be like I tell him, "Well, you know what, I want to trim some trees in my District this year so

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Council President Woerpel- sorry I can't fix your street". He's gonna be able to direct his complaints directly to the board, correct?

Mayor McDermott- Yes, sir, we set up the meetings. There will be two a month opposite the City Council meeting. They will be right here in the Council Chamber. They'll be on gohammond live like the city council meetings are. The minutes will be recorded by the Hammond City Clerk. There will be public expression in those meetings. Dean will be sitting in your chair. Dean, the City Engineer, whoever the City engineer is will be sitting in that chair, chairing the meetings, seven member board. This is gonna be a busy board. They're gonna have a lot of projects that are competing for limited gaming revenue, just like the District Council people face. This proposal is a good proposal. Quite frankly, I wish we'd done this 24 years ago and we'd be a lot different City right now had we done it. And Hammond, Indiana is the only City in Indiana, safely, in the United States of America, where District Council people have 10% of the gaming money. That's it, Hammond. Council is not supposed to spend money. It's supposed to appropriate money to be spent by the Executive Branch, But this is a deal that the City of Hammond entered into in 1996, and we've been following it since then. It's not working anymore. We need to change it and that's what this proposal is calling for.

Councilman Kalwinski- I have a request or comment. To get a clear perspective of how this ordinance might play out, is it possible to plug in 2020 numbers into the proposed budget to see the outlay of money and where it goes and how that might look?

Mayor McDermott- Absolutely, Councilman Mark.

Councilman Kalwinski- That's a way to get a look at things to see where the money will fall and how much of that goes to the general budget.

Mayor McDermott- I absolutely agree, Councilman Mark. We have those numbers ourselves, in the ordinance we didn't build those numbers because (a) 2020 numbers were projected in 2019, and in 2019 when we projected 2020 gaming numbers we had no idea we would be in a pandemic. But I agree with Councilman Mark, that using 2020 numbers in this ordinance, for like a worksheet is smart. Would that be satisfactory, Councilman Mark?

Councilman Kalwinski- I think we're thinking the same thing. Each point in the ordinance how much money in 2020 goes out to it. It will give us a sense of what's left for the districts for infrastructure (unclear).

Mayor McDermott- We have those numbers Mark. I didn't mean to talk over you Councilman. I apologize. We have those numbers Councilman Mark, they're not in the budget. They're not in the ordinance because those numbers change year to year, but we could easily do that Councilman Mark, and we will get that information to you right away.

Councilman Kalwinski- Appreciate it.

Mayor McDermott- No, Problem. And by the way, I understand why Councilman Mark is reluctant. I get this is a big deal, Councilman Mark and I have both been on the Hammond... Councilman Mark has been on the

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Mayor McDermott- Hammond City Council, at the end of this term, for 20 years, and at the end of this term I'll be Mayor for 20 years. This is something we've been operating by for our entire careers in public office. I understand why Councilman Mark has a lot of questions, I don't blame him a bit, but Councilman Mark I will get that to you right away.

Councilman Kalwinski- Thank you, Sir.

Mayor McDermott- As well as to the rest of the Council.

Council President Woerpel- My final comment, because Public Expression is actually closed, you're allowed to speak anytime you want, we will just adjourn after this. But my final comment is when you're standing in flooded basements and it's a \$2.5 million fix and we don't get enough money to fix it, that's why I support this ordinance.

Mayor McDermott- I agree, and at the end of this ordinance, assuming, hoping that it passes, we'll have a Capital Improvements Board, where the Council has 3 members sitting on it out of seven, that's how boards work, the council knows it as well as do, but I want the public to know that's how boards work in government. The Mayor has 3 appointments, the Council has 2. The Mayor has 4 appointments, the council has 3. This Board will be just like that. We'll also have a board for the Non-profit Gaming Advisory Committee, that the At-Large Council people take place in, that will be created. The rainy day fund will be created as well. And District Councilman and the Mayor will still get a portion of the gaming revenue, at the end of this, if this ordinance passes.

Councilman Kalwinski- Regarding the distribution of the appointments, the Council is holding on to about \$21million if you look at how the Ordinance was written in 96, and the mayor is holding about \$10 million. So it seems like the lions share of the money is the Council's yet the mayor is going have the deciding vote on projects because he's the Mayor. I'm conflicted about that.

Mayor McDermott- In response to Councilman Kalwinski's concern, the residents of Hammond elected Tom McDermott as the Mayor of the City. I'm the Mayor for the next 3 and a half years, and if the residents don't think I'm doing a good job, I'll be replaced. But one of the problems that this ordinance created 24 years ago, is it creates a Mayor, myself, and 6 other mini mayors for their District. So for instance, we were talking about this today at lunch. If we wanted to do a bike trail from the 5<sup>th</sup> District all the way to Downtown Hammond, you have to go through three council districts to get to Downtown Hammond. So theoretically, Councilman Woerpel can say, "Yes, I want to participate in that", and then the 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman, I'm not saying Barry wouldn't participate, I'm using that as an example, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman can say, "No, that's not important to me", and the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Councilman can say, "Yes, that's important to me". So you have a bike trail thought the 5<sup>th</sup> that is brand new, we would go across the bike trail in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District and it would be old and pot-hole ridden, and we would get to the 2<sup>nd</sup> District where it would be good again, makes no sense. We need to start thinking as a city and not as six little individual countries, and that's part of the problem with the original gaming ordinance, in my opinion.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Council President Woerpel- Just to reiterate on that, another issue that was brought up are the shared streets, like 167<sup>th</sup>, that Councilman Tyler and I have talked about where previously I couldn't get no where with it. It would totally be prioritized by the Board, in a public setting they would make their decisions. Like you said, we'd have 3, you'd have 3 and then the City Engineer, and...

Mayor McDermott- One more point, right now in the original gaming ordinance, if you're an At-Large Council person, Councilwoman Katrina, Councilwoman Venecz and Councilman Spitale, in the original ordinance that was written up, you don't matter when it comes to gaming revenue and that's not right either. For At-Large's were like 2<sup>nd</sup> class Councilmen for the last 24 years. And quite frankly, I think the original intent of an At-Large Councilman was basically like a mayor, you represent the whole city. But in Hammond you get treated like a 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens. Like no, the districts get the action, we get the money, screw you At-Large Councilmen. This is not right how we do business. The At-Large councilmen should be treated with a little more respect. This board gives them the ability to sit on a Board that's gonna spend \$15-16 million a year and you will have an input if you're an At-Large councilmen. You don't have that right now and you know as well as I do, I'm not telling you anything you don't know. I think a lot of the public would be shocked Councilwoman Venecz has been on the Hammond City Council a long time and hasn't had a pennies worth of input into how a single dollar has been spent in the City of Hammond, with gaming revenue. Right Councilwoman Venecz?

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, sir.

Councilman Tyler- I'm a fan of the ordinance and that's initially why I sponsored it. The reason that I did want to maybe slow this down is because one of the things that I brought up after receiving this last week was the need to create a rubric so that we understand how the decisions are being prioritized by this group, whether that be something that the Engineering Department is being held to or just the way the entire group is able to review the different projects that are brought to them either by us City Council people or by residents. I just wanna make sure we have something in place to make sure the money is spent equitably and if we all understand the way that these projects will be prioritized so that we don't find ourselves in a questionable situation in the future. So I would just want that rubric, hopefully, to be created before we actually (unclear) Committee but then maybe ratified once the Improvement Board is created (unclear) I know the Engineering Department has ideas already about how to prioritize these projects, so maybe that's something we can start working on.

Council President Woerpel- If I understand, Councilman Tyler, it was how soon would we create this board after it was ratified, do we wait til 2021 or would we do it immediately?

Mayor McDermott- If this is passed by the Council, I would have the Capital Improvements Board meeting immediately in 2020. You can't spend any money, because there's none there, but they can start getting ready for 2021 and I think we're all hoping and assuming that 2021 is going to be a normal year where we're actually doing capital projects again, and our revenue sources are coming in. I hope that's the case, we all hope that's the case, but if it's not then the Capital Improvement Board is gonna be doing what we're doing now, spinning their wheels.

Council President Woerpel- Does that answer your question Councilman Tyler?

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Councilman Tyler- In a sense, I mean, I understand, 'cause the Mayor and I had this conversation about when they would start to meet. But before they start making decisions then I would like for this rubric to set. And I would think that we as a Council as a Whole, would want input on that rubric, not just the three of us that will be sitting on the capital improvements board . I think that was my ultimate rationale for wanting to create that rubric now before the board is set. So that we all have input about how those projects are being prioritized, since we do have a say in how the money is spent it actually it somewhat would continue with the creation of this capital improvement board.

Council President Woerpel- That would be a non-standing committee that we could all decide upon, you know . We just got it in committee, so I mean we could... that is something we all can discuss too in the committee hearing on who would be the appointee on that committee.

Councilman Torres- This sounds like it could work. I'm a councilman that feels that in the past the 2<sup>nd</sup> District has been highly neglected for a lot of projects, and if this is done fairly, where projects are done where you distribute it throughout the City, then I can see it work. But, until recently, because the 2<sup>nd</sup> district is building up slowly and there's more projects on the way, so if it's done fairly, and I suspect it will with the appointees everybody is gonna appoint, then I could support something like this. Because I believe we're lacking in the city a bit in infrastructure and we have to catch up on a lot of the main streets. We need to catch up on, so in addition, the figures that you're gonna give, Mayor, the figures your gonna give to Councilman Kalwinski, are we all gonna get them?

Mayor McDermott- Yes, sir.

Councilman Torres- Thank you.

Council President Woerpel- Just to reiterate on what Councilman Torres said, that was one of the reasons why I was in such support of this, is I saw Sherman Street the day after it flooded. Had I had my way, my gaming money would have went for lights, and I sat there thinking why am I putting lights on a street, just because someone doesn't live in my District, they have to suffer, and I had to witness what I had to witness on Sherman Street that day. And this board is a good start towards it.

Mayor McDermott- Yes, sir, and Councilman Torres, all the District Councilman, I'm the Mayor of the whole city, it's important to me to make sure that all of the corners are touched. I think I've done a good job in every district, some better than others. And I agree, Councilman, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District we need more work in that district than other districts, and I think the City Engineer recognizes that also and that's not your fault. I think that we had a lag some years back in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District. I think we all know what I'm talking about, but I agree with you sir, and you know, we're a City, this is one City, so my appointees, the people I would appoint, I imagine the Council will appoint three council members, I'm going to appoint three people that are like leaders in the City, and diversity is important, I want this board to be looking like the City of Hammond looks. So I think diversity is important, expertise is important, obviously the City Engineer, chairing it, that's going to help a lot. By the way, Councilman Tyler brought up a excellent point about grading and stuff like that, criteria to use to select products, I agree with that, and this ordinance, there's a lot of thought put in to this ordinance, it's not the bible though, there's changes that could be made, but I want you to know every line of this ordinance was gone over

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- by myself personally, by attorneys, a lot of thought has been put into this. If Councilman Tyler's uncomfortable with the criteria we used to select projects, I would just ask for him to work with the administration so what we can come up with language that's acceptable to the Council and the Mayor, 'cause I would hate to see it pass the Council and then I can't sign it because there's something that we didn't anticipate. That's all I ask, Councilman Tyler.

Councilman Emerson- I agree with Councilman Tyler, I think the rubric and the design of the committee is really important. I think it's a good start, what's in the ordinance, but I think the fine tuning of that, which I imagine the Chairman, the Chief Engineer, will have a great say so in that. But I think the whole Committee should and I agree with him that the whole Council should have some input to what that is. I really don't know what that is at this point, but I think the attempt to be fair will be greatly appreciated by everyone.

Mayor McDermott- Going off what Councilman Emerson just spoke about, Councilman Dave made a joke to me about a month ago about this and that joke, I think, it was a joke, but I think it was very real, first off Councilman Dave does not want to be on the board, which I find interesting, and I can understand why, it's tough and difficult choices have to be made you think \$16 million is a lot of money until you see how much need is in the City. And there is a lot more need than money we have coming in. But Councilman Dave said I'm gonna go to every one of one of those meeting and I'm gonna walk in there and say I need Schneider Avenue redone and I'm gonna be pounding on the lectern saying finish Schneider Avenue and then leaving. I think that's part of the role of a Council person that's not on the board, going in there letting the board know what needs need to be done in their districts and then leaving it up to your fellow council people and the administration to work through details. I think the Council people, and the Mayor, and the administration, should come to that meeting just like we go to Board of Public Works. This is an important board we're talking about here. It meets every other week just like the Council does. It's consists of leaders of our government, and it spends millions of dollars every year and the public has a chance to present their argument to it as well, and the minutes are going to be maintained by the City Clerk. It's gonna be just like a Council meeting every other week.

Council President Woerpel- I don't want to imply that Councilman Tyler, this is by no means, I'm using this as an example, but anybody saw what I saw on Sherman Street, and what you witnessed, for me to say that's not my district, I'd be heartless. I represent the 5<sup>th</sup> District, but I've been a life long resident of Hammond. And you can ask City Engineer, Dean Button, the next day I told him forget what I was gonna do, if we ever get gaming money back again you need to tell me what's most important to be done in my District. Once price tags started getting attached to that two blocks might take three years the way we're doing it now.

Councilman Emerson- It does take three years, as we talked about Van Buren.

Councilman President Woerpel- Yes.

Councilwoman Alexander- I'm totally in agreement, and I totally understand where Councilman Barry is coming from . That this is allotting for us to do more things in the City. As you guys have continuously said, it's taking you, some projects, so if you have one term and that project is gonna take you to another term, it's never

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.-

Councilwoman Alexander cont. - gonna get done cause now a new person that comes in, their agenda is totally different. I think all of us on this Council want to see what's best for our City, especially for the areas that are forgotten. We have plenty of areas that are forgotten in our City. Because either that councilman doesn't go over there, or they're friends with this person and I really think that it's taking away from what's really going on now and changing that, reinventing the wheel, changing the format to say, you know what, we have areas in our City that direly need some help, and if it's gonna take (unclear) dollars to improve it, it's not gonna happen with one Council person. So I'm in agreeance with it, not so much having to sit on something or sit on another board, just totally in agreeance with being able to make our City better in other areas that have been forgotten.

Councilwoman Venecz- As I said earlier in the evening this is an opportunity for our residents to come before the board and express their concerns about... it's always going to be about a street in their neighborhood, let's face it. But when it rains and areas of Hessville flood, those people have a legitimate complaint and concern. They should be able to come before this board and the Engineer will be able to explain to them. As I'm looking at the comments here on the screen on Facebook, one woman said her street always floods, not as bad as the other ones. Well, undoubtably, the streets surrounding her neighborhood have not been done, so hers is still affected when we get the rains. Councilman Woerpel, you mentioned Sherman Street, to witness what you saw that night is heart breaking, and we as City Officials and residents of the City of Hammond have an opportunity to address those concerns and listen to the stories of the residents who come before this board. I think that, for an At-Large Council Person, I get calls from all over the City, don't get me wrong, but when it comes to infrastructure in a particular District, I have no control. I have no input as to the projects that are done in a particular District and I get calls from residents saying they can't get in touch with their councilperson. The councilperson doesn't return the calls probably because they know what the question is that is going to be asked. So we've talked about transparency, I think this a good opportunity for the residents to see what's going on as far as the projects in the City. It's a good opportunity for the City, particularly our Engineer because he knows all of the cost of everything, to say, "Okay, you want one street done. That cost a million dollars. But this street over here is flooding, that cost another million dollars." How would we prioritize that? It's going to be by need not by want, and I think that is extremely important. So for those reasons, that's why I'm in favor of this. Thank you.

Council President Woerpel- My final word on this is, I heard you say we all worry about our Districts, well it kinda sucks when you got a problem in your District, but the cause of it is in another District.

Mayor McDermott- One last thing, we keep talking about the Capital Improvement Board, and that's understandable because that's gonna be where the majority of the action takes place. But something I want to point out that we've been doing since I walked into City Hall, is what we call the Mayor's Gaming Advisory Committee. The not for profits across the City of Hammond have become reliant, so to speak, but it's a good program. We help out Hammond High School Basketball Team, we help out the YMCA, we help out the Boys and Girls Club, Church programs, neighborhood groups. If Tom McDermott walked out of City Hall and some other mayor took over and didn't support that committee, it's gone, it's not a City Ordinance, it goes away with me. So this proposal in our ordinance creates this under city ordinance, so it's not the Mayors Gaming Advisory Committee anymore, it's the Gaming Advisory Committee, and under this years numbers, Councilman Mark, going back to the point you made earlier, 4% was right around \$650,000-\$700,000, right in that ball park. So

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- that's why 4% was chosen. That's why 4% was also chosen for the Rainy Day Fund. Councilman Barry expressed interest in that, so did Councilman Mark, and we agreed, we think it's a good thing. City Controller has been talking about that for a number of years. We figured 4% going into there, \$700 grand a year, over time it builds up to be quite a bit, so...

Council President Woerpel- So, that was 5 appointments on that board for Council?

Mayor McDermott- Yes, sir. It's chaired by the Mayor's Chief of Staff, five appointed by the Mayor, five appointed by the Council.

Council President Woerpel- One board will have five and the other board will have three. That's perfect that's eight, so everybody...

Mayor McDermott- It doesn't have to be a Council member either. The Gaming Advisory Committee, I'm going to put civilians on that board.

Council President Woerpel- Yeah, we've had civilians.

Mayor McDermott- Yeah, I'll have civilians on that one, but I'll have, on the Capital Improvement Board, it's gonna be Department Leaders, like I imagine the City Controller, like she needs another committee. I imagine either her or someone in her office will be on to talk about the finances. Right, of course, the City Engineer is on there. So we got a lot to talk about. I want to point out that this is a proposal, and I appreciate it, and I know everybody's concern. That's why we're asking so many questions. So I'll be at the council hearing. I'll also be at the Council's third and final reading to answer any questions.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

ATTEST:

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Dave Woerpel, President  
Hammond Common Council

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Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:05 p.m.  
dw