

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on August 23, 2021 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT: Tyler

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - I had a couple topics to cover. Sorry I missed last month. I sent Phil in my place. I had a family vacation, actually. I got away to Michigan with my wife and my family. I'm back, on the job, I wanted to talk about a few issues. I know that right now you have first and second reading for a possible, and I want to say, possible, loan from HUD, something called a Section 108 Loan that would help us do something that we're talking about. Department head for community affairs, Owana Miller, wanted to get this process moving in case we needed it. So, I'm gonna talk a little bit about what we're working on and explain the rationale behind it. Then, if things come together and we could reach some type of agreement, Section 108 Loan may need to be used. It's a loan that gets repaid in CDBG money from the federal government. We used it on the original Sportsplex. We still have some capacity left there. So, the idea is, you know, right now, first off, Councilman Tyler, Councilman Kalwinski and myself have been talking about this proposal. I met with Councilman Tyler and Councilman Kalwinski last week about a couple different projects worked into the same project, a few different projects. One of them would be finishing Martin Luther King Park, it's not finished yet. There was one phase left. It includes a lot of renovations in and around Tapper. That would be finished under this proposal. Another proposal we were talking about was Pulaski Park pool. As everybody knows, our original Park bond that we floated years ago, Pulaski Park pool was part of that proposal. There was a difference of opinion. That project didn't get completed and instead we completed projects in Irving Park, Edison Park, Hessville Park, which park am I missing, MLK Park. We used the proceeds from the bond, at that time, to do the projects. In limbo was the Pulaski Park pool. I'm trying to be accurate and I'm not trying not to point elbows or anything. I think it's fair to say that we've always talked about that project, we just didn't have a plan forward. Councilman Kalwinski if you disagree with me please indicate. We're talking about finishing this proposal, and it would be under this Park plan. We're going through, working with Councilman Mark right now on this proposal. So that's second part. The third part is a good problem to have, is the Sportsplex. The Hammond Sportsplex is extremely busy. It's making money and when we look at it like a business, which is what I like to do. It's like three businesses in one, well really four businesses if you count the bar and the concession stand which makes a lot of money. You have basketball, you have volleyball, you have soccer, and then you have, you know, like, the

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

Mayor McDermott cont - concessions. The bar upstairs and the concession stands downstairs. When I tell you they make lots of money, we're talking hundreds of thousands of dollars is the type of miscellaneous revenue the Sportsplex is creating and which is great, and when it's busy. This is actually the time of year that it's not very busy but eleven out of the twelve months it's extremely busy. But, when you look at where we're making out money, besides concessions, you look at volleyball and basketball are literally printing money. The demand exceeds the space we have by a long shot. So we're forced ... and then you look at soccer which is really, really, far behind as far as how much money it makes. I mean, I don't want to quote numbers off the top of my head but it's not even close. Basketball and volleyball are just extremely successful. It's not that soccer is not extremely successful, it's just not as much money in soccer as there is in the other two sports. So being a capitalists and an opportunistic Mayor and trying to do what's right for the city, we started talking about, is it worth having soccer, it's that much further down to where if we moved volleyball out of the basketball side and moved it into the soccer side and like gutted soccer, and just said, "Okay, we'll let you play indoor soccer at other facilities. We're going to convert the soccer side of the Sportsplex into a volleyball court." We started talking amongst ourselves and the administration. I talked to Councilman Torres. I talked to people I respect in the community and felt that that would be looked at as insensitive to our population. Even though soccer is not making tons of money like basketball and volleyball are, if we did something like that it may not be perceived well by a significant part of our population. So it's worth it, basically. It's not making money like volleyball and basketball but it's worth it because it's important to the community. It is used. My kids used it. My kids don't anymore. So it leaves us with a weird choice on the other side. We have literally half the capacity for two lucrative sports. So we started talking about, we do have room for expansion. We've always left room for expansion. If we did one section just dedicated to volleyball is it worth it. How much would it cost? How much could we expect? And the good thing an expansion like that wouldn't involve an expansion of workers at all. We have the workers to cover a new expansion like that. If we did something like that, I keep using words like if and possible because this is not in cement at all. It's being talked about. If we did something like that, how much extra money would we make? We literally would be able to run simultaneous sports at the same time. We could run all three sports at the same time. So the idea was combining a few different projects into one big project and then financing it without debt. And I have a way to do it. It involves Section 108. It's not just Section 108. It involves a lot of different sources and I wasn't really prepared to come to the Council and talk about this but with the Section 108 Loan on the agenda we had no choice but full disclosure, which is what I am doing right now. I would hope that we wouldn't have this conversation because it's not done. But we're talking about it. I don't know if you have any questions on that. I have a couple other things that I want to talk about but I didn't know if you wanted to talk about this. I mean we are not even close to the finish line on it and I just want to point that out.

Councilman Torres - Have you thought about exercise room, workout room, as part of this expansion?

Mayor McDermott - Councilman Torres, keep in mind that you and I talked about this before, the Sportsplex, I could tell you one thing for sure, is the YMCA is going to be right next door to it. And that even impacts this plan because of the pool that Councilman Kalwinski is seeking for Pulaski Park. The YMCA pool is going to be like a resort pool. Like it's gonna be bigger than a resort pool. So, I don't think we are going to be able to compete well with a \$45 million facility right next door if we had a gym in the new Sportsplex because why would you go to the Sportsplex when you have a brand new Y with all the latest equipment right next door. That even impacted what we were talking about with Pulaski Pool because if we build a pool, you know, I don't even want to get into the situation where we're trying to compete with the new YMCA. Because I don't think that we can compete with it.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Torres - Another question, about the soccer, you know I'm surprised to hear that it's not competing with the other volleyball. Out of the three you mentioned I thought volleyball would be the least making money and you say it's making money comparable to basketball. Is there a problem with soccer people or (unclear) interest or what?

Mayor McDermott - Councilman Torres, I think it's just about the season. The soccer season is this time of year. They're playing soccer outdoors, they're not in the Sportsplex. Keep in mind, a lot of the money that basketball and volleyball drive is through concessions as well. You know and through traveling teams and stuff like that. We have that kind of stuff but it's outside of the Sportsplex. So the only time we really get soccer money is during the winter when they're locked up. A big part of the season, they hit the road.

Councilman Torres - I thought you were talking about the whole year summer months then.

Mayor McDermott - I'm talking, if you looked at it just at the Sportsplex, how much do we get from each sport, soccer is the lowest. But, for reasons I indicated earlier, it's good business for us to have soccer in the Sportsplex, as is. It's beautiful. It wasn't about whether or not it was gorgeous, whether or not it's succeeding, it's not making as much money as the other side. It's not even close. That's why we even looked at that issue. I appreciate your points though.

Councilman Emerson - I would just add that soccer is played outdoors, I agree with you. It's played at Irving, at Edison, in the 4th. When it gets cold, they play out there until it's like 32 degrees. But it's free.

Mayor McDermott - But, then when it gets too cold they come to the Sportsplex and they start counting for the numbers I'm giving you all. We don't get the numbers when they're playing at Edison Park. Right? They're not buying Gatorade from us at Edison Park, they're buying it from the local, you know, White Hen. This is still very much in limbo, you know, I really didn't want to talk about this tonight. I understand why you want to talk about it though, which is why I'm talking about it now. I'm still working details out but the whole goal of this is to do it without debt. Section 108, I guess you can count that as debt, but realistically it's paid for by the federal government. It doesn't affect our budget, the gaming budget, nothing like Capital Improvement, it doesn't affect anything if we get that. Anyway, if you don't mind I am going on to two other issues before I pass back if that's alright, Mr. President.

Council President Woerpel - It's fine. No more questions on that issue?

Councilman Tyler - I have a question, actually two quick questions, Mayor. I know in our last meeting we talked about this, you discussed how much more revenue you would anticipate this bringing in. I don't know if you're ready to (unclear) but if you have a ball park, could you share that? Then my other question is, given that we will be using CDBG or HUD dollars, are there any guidelines or regulations we have to abide by (unclear) to make sure that families with a low income background will be able to utilize (unclear) and take advantage of the programs there.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - There are numbers, I can't give them to you off the top of my head. I know Kim, the Sportsplex Director was at Caucus and she was giving you numbers. You probably have better numbers than I do off the top of my head. I'm not trying to skirt it but I would have to guess and it's a big number though, Barry. Secondly, as far as a 108 Loan, yes we would have certain parameters, you know, as far as low to moderate income. Personnel and I don't think that's much of a problem with the Sportsplex because we do service a lot of low to moderate income families and we do community oriented events, which is also another prerequisite. But, yeah, there would be stipulations with that money for sure, Councilman Barry.

Mayor McDermott - Okay, I'm gonna move forward, Council President to 20-15A, bond refinancing, which is going up for first and second reading. This is a bond that we floated six years ago. As everybody knows, the interest rates are at historic lows right now. This bond in particular, we're paying around 6% annual interest rate, whereas Megan has done a lot of research on bonds that we could use to refinance (unclear) and we could get a rate that literally half of what we're currently paying. If we did refinance it as we're proposing in this, so our interest rates drop from 6 to close to 3 percent. Our annual payment will drop to about \$3 million, which will save us a couple million dollars a year. And we will save \$2.7 million over the life of the bond. We are gonna extend, under this proposal, we're gonna extend this bond out five more years at low interest rates. Full disclosure. But over the life of the bond we'll save \$2.7 million a year. Right now this bond is being paid for by the Water Department. So this doesn't even affect your budget but it is an opportunity to take advantage of historically low interest rates. I think, safely saying, looking around this room, nobody in this room was alive when interest rates were as low as they are right now. I have a feeling we may never get an opportunity like this again. So, Megan's done a good job at looking at our debt instruments and trying to save us money and I appreciate her bringing this forward. Obviously, this is up for 1st and 2nd reading. I just wanted to put this on your radar. I'll be talking about it the next time I give you a report as well. Last, but not least, I know there's been some concerns, across the street with the demolition of Hammond High School. I sent you all a letter from H.D.E.M. I was called this morning by Councilman Barry, I appreciate him asking me to look into this. So we got to work, I got to work. But I was very happy when I talked to H.D.E.M., the Hammond Department of Environmental Management, and they were full aware of the situation. They had been monitoring the situation. They sent me a letter that I forwarded to the Council at Large and I also forwarded it to Councilman Barry as well as the Council President. I should have just given it to all nine of you but I was just trying to do it to the people this really affected. I apologize if I offended anybody by not giving them the letter. You can get it from Councilman Dave. But, Skillman met with Hammond Department of Environmental Management prior to the demolition starting and they are full aware that we have total access to their job site by just sitting at our desk. Where literally on the 3rd floor you get a great view of this and if you go up to the roof you could see the entire demolition project. I mean we could sit there and watch it. Skillman has no idea whether we are watching or not. I would like to point that out. H.D.E.M. officials have regularly inspected the demolition process without Skillman even being made aware that we are watching them work. This is what we have found so far from our direct observations. Demolition started on June 21st, 2021 of the old Hammond High school. In the early days of this process H.D.E.M. noticed dust being created when dump trucks were being loaded with demolition debris. Because we were concerned that this dust may carry possible contaminants and could possibly get into our neighborhoods. H.D.E.M. and the City of Hammond decided to notify I.D.E.M., the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, of our findings the dust situation over the summer. The next day two I.D.E.M.

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MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - inspectors advised Skillman to water down the demolition debris before any loading operation takes place. Skillman 100% complied with I.D.E.M.'s request. In fact, Skillman went even further, and this is coming from H.D.E.M., and they're pretty tough on people that are violating laws. H.D.E.M. said Skillman went even further than they were requested to by I.D.E.M. They were using a fan powered water cannon to hold down the dust on the site and it's very effective. Keep in mind the prevailing winds this time of year are generally from west to east, maybe a little bit from the south to the north. But any debris that gonna leave the old Hammond High site is gonna go towards Calumet Avenue, nine times out of ten this time of year. H.D.E.M. has noticed a dust like substance leaving the demolition site and upon further investigation, they found that it's not dust, it's in fact spray from the water cannons that leaves the site. I've given each Council person a copy of the memo that was given to me today by H.D.E.M. And I said earlier that we were monitoring the situation since day one. Councilman Barry, I appreciate you for bringing this to my attention but I was very happy when I found out how involved in this process that H.D.E.M. has been from the beginning. And that's my report, I don't know if you all have any questions of me.

Councilman Kalwinski - You said that currently the bonds are paid by the Water Department, after this ordinance, if we pass it, it will still be paid by the Water Department.

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir. I'll repeat. The Water Department currently pays for that bond. After this, the Water Department will still pay for that bond. (Unclear) It's coming over? I'm sorry, we will be paying this. That's part of the process.

Councilman Kalwinski - It will be coming out of the General.

Controller Megan Flores - It's being paid out of the General Fund currently, but it's backed by the Illinois Water Contract. So essentially, it's on our books but it's the money that the Water Department collects and gives to us that pays the issuance off.

Councilman Kalwinski - That will continue then?

Mayor McDermott - Yes.

Councilman Kalwinski - So Water Department pays it, it's on our books, but Water Department pays it.

Controller Megan Flores - Essentially.

Mayor McDermott - Water revenue that comes to us pays for it. Backed by Gaming so that if anything went wrong. When this was floated at first this was when our contracts with Illinois communities were relatively new.

Councilman Emerson - Yeah, I addressed this in Caucus and Megan answered. The Gaming, I don't know what Councilman Kalwinski is referring to, but the Gaming is mentioned in the ordinance and it is always mentioned as a backup as I understand it.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- Pretty much. Unfortunately when we float bonds, and it's assuming worst case scenario, that the creditors could grab gaming if we couldn't pay it out of, in this case, Water revenue. Gaming's almost always a backup. Sometimes they make you put money aside but lately we haven't had that issue.

Council President Woerpel - Are there any further questions for the Mayor? On any topic.

Councilman Tyler - Mayor, just going back to that Hammond High issue. I guess my question is, I know that H.D.E.M. has been monitoring the situation but (unclear) some of the concerns are that some of the materials that might be blowing away and might be in the ground, might be in the ground water, could be hazardous to residents and so I (unclear) talk about was us possibly doing our own independent study of some random samples. Testing those samples and seeing what chemical makeup or what material can be found. Is that still a possibility because I think that would put a lot of the residents fears to lay. It would subside any doubts or concerns that they have with the process so far.

Mayor McDermott - I brought this up to H.D.E.M. and they thought it was sort of ridiculously (unclear), being honest with you, Councilman. They felt that they've been monitoring this situation from day one, I'm not saying it's no but part of our job is to communicate to the public that when we're doing things the right way, like, you know, but if the Council and the Councilman Barry feels that we should go out there and test and it makes people feel better, I have no doubt that we could do that and we've done it before. It's just I was very happy when I heard how closely involved in this demolition project that H.D.E.M. has been. If we need to go further to make people feel right. I'd like to consider myself pretty much in touch with the community and I heard about this the first time this morning and this isn't the first demolition project that's happened under my watch. It won't be the last demolition project that happens under my watch. But this is unique, as far as the concerns that are being expressed. H.D.E.M. is giving the impression, and usually when I get complaints about H.D.E.M. it's that they're too tough. In this case H.D.E.M. has been telling me, Mayor, they've done it by the book. In fact, they're doing it above and beyond the book with the spray system that they put together. So if it really is an issue and I'm getting an overwhelming response from the community, I guess that if that makes people feel better, Councilman Barry, I'm just trying to be honest. I mean if we're really insisting to do this I'll send my people out there and we'll do it. But, they feel, and these are experts, I'm not, but they feel it's not necessary. So, I'm just being as honest as possible, Councilman Barry.

Councilman Tyler - I can understand that. I think from my perspective, you know, the building is over 100 years old. So I think, nobody could really know what was in there. I mean, maybe the demo company does do some (unclear) testing but at the same time I would just rather be safe than sorry. If it takes a little bit of effort from us to (unclear) the task. It puts (unclear) and really show the public that we care about their well being. We're doing our due diligence to ... and I understand from H.D.E.M.'s perspective, like you said, they've been watching this, they've been monitoring this. But I think it's another step of actually going out there and testing this to make sure that everything is on the up and up. It's just showing the residents that they do not have anything to worry about for the rest of the process. So, if we could do that, I don't know if how ... I guess I got to make a motion to maybe move forward (unclear) what the rest of the Council thinks (unclear). I feel like we're sort of shadowboxing. I heard about this this morning for the first time. You know, I just feel like we're

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - sort of shadowboxing, you know, and Scott Miller, the Superintendent of the Schools, has a great relationship with the administration, I've heard nothing from them. I've heard that they did independent testing, it came out clean. H.D.E.M. says everything has gone by the book. In fact, if anything, it's above and beyond the call. Now if we're gonna take the next step and start testing everything, I guess we could, it's no problem, we have employees that can do this. It's just they're telling me it's totally unnecessary. If the Council feels differently ... I'm not an expert at this, I'm just telling what I've been told. Usually when people complain about H.D.E.M. it's because they're too tough, for the record. I've heard it a thousand times and then this case I'm being told that H.D.E.M.'s not tough enough. If that's gonna make people feel better first off, I haven't had any complaints by anybody from the public, other than the Councilman who represents thousands of people. So when the Councilman calls me, it's serious. But that was the first I heard about it, this morning. I heard nothing from schools. I've heard nothing but everything's clean, everything's by the book, that's all I've heard. So, if we're gonna go testing, I'd like to get a better scope of what we're looking for. Are we just testing for anything or what's in the system that's causing harm. I'm asking questions because I don't know the answer to it. So, if we're gonna test we got to know what we're looking for. You know, when the swans were dying and it was on the front page of the paper and the local radio station was saying that Wolf Lake was contaminated, I knew what I was looking for. In this case, I heard from Councilman Barry and I really don't know what we are testing for so I think we got to dig down a little deeper if we're gonna do this, personally. Not trying to be disrespectful at all.

Councilman Tyler - (unclear) from a report that was shared with me last week, there were trace elements of asbestos and barium (unclear) and some of the samples, I'm not sure if they were the ground water samples or any of the soil samples. So, we know that asbestos was definitely present in that building so we just wanted to make sure that everything was removed from it before they actually started demolition. So, I think those two at least would be two starting points (unclear).

Mayor McDermott - I've demolished old schools since I've been Mayor, the old Reilly School in Schleicher and we've done a whole process just during the abatement, (unclear) we were removing the asbestos. We didn't just go in there and swing a sledge hammer and knock down walls. We abated it. Took all the asbestos out and then we demolished it. I would be shocked, absolutely stunned if the School City didn't do something similar. I think it would be illegal, actually. So that's all I'm saying, Councilman Barry, is we're gonna do this let's dig down a little deeper. I haven't seen the report you're talking about. I don't want to send an army of H.D.E.M. inspectors out there tomorrow inspecting and we don't know what we're looking for. That's all I'm saying. And I'd love to see that report. I'd love to see that report if you could get that to me too, Councilman. I'd like to ask the Superintendent of Schools about it because he hasn't said anything to me about this. And I'm across the street.

Councilman Tyler - Just for the record, I'm not saying that the School City of Hammond, or the demolition company, or (unclear) whoever didn't do what they were supposed to do. I just want to make sure so that our residents are not at risk.

Mayor McDermott - Thank you, Councilman.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilwoman Alexander - I totally agree with Councilman Tyler. The same thing. We getting calls, so just to cure the residents of how they're feeling. If we could just look a little bit further.

Mayor McDermott - For what?

Councilwoman Alexander - For whatever we need to look for. We could give you some more information. We'll, you know, go forward with that.

Mayor McDermott - I did that.

Councilwoman Alexander - Just to make sure everybody is safe and there is nothing ...

Mayor McDermott - Believe me, I work here too. I work right across the street. If we were breathing bad air, I got my windows open right now. So I'm interested if there is something wrong. Trust me, Councilwoman.

Councilwoman Alexander - I understand. But, I'm just saying if we can just show them that we are actually, that we do care. That's the biggest thing with the residents, is showing that we actually do care what is going on.

Mayor McDermott - We do care. But I don't want to shadowbox either. There's a lot of people that live in Hammond, 81 thousand. And there's some people that think that Donald Trump won the last presidential election, you know. I can't solve all the problems in our city if people, you know, if there is something going on at Hammond High School right now I want to know about it. I heard about it this morning for the first time. This report you're talking about, I haven't seen it. Having heard anything from the administration. So, if I'm gonna send an army of my inspectors out there tomorrow I want to know what I'm looking for and if it's a rational basis for it being like that, Councilwoman, that's all I'm saying, okay. When we had a problem in Robertsdale it was widely publicized and it was scaring the crap out of people and if this is a similar situation, we'll react similarly. I promise. If you can give me the details I'd appreciate it.

Councilman Kalwinski - Mayor, do you have any new information on the process for the remediation in Robertsdale.

Mayor McDermott - Thank you. We have a situation in Robertsdale with lead. Here we are talking about environmental issues. This decades long problem in Robertsdale, literally, probably, since the 1920's, 30's, 40's, and 50's, where former Hammond Lead would belch out smoke into the air. The smoke was filled with lead and the prevailing northerly, westerly, winds would take that cloud, and it was heavy because it was lead, and it would rain lead in Robertsdale and mostly Whiting, for decades. So we didn't have the capacity to go out and test for lead in the ground like we do now and when the EPA, obviously, with the situation in East Chicago and the horrible situation that they were dealing with involving lead, the EPA got aggressive and starting testing wide areas of Northwest Indiana and found that in that neighborhood we had lead levels that were elevated. Not anywhere near what East Chicago was, but elevated to the point where the federal government felt that we needed to take action. What this means is, if the federal government takes action on a property like this it's

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - superfund. We would literally, to fix this problem the way that the feds wanted us to fix it we would have to declare a superfund site in that section of Robertsdale. I didn't really feel like that was good for business, so declaring a superfund site, you could own a house in that neighborhood and suddenly you own a house in a superfund site and you watch the value of your house drop thousands of dollars. So we start monetizing, it's literally hundreds, like a hundred and fifty properties in that ballpark that we're talking about with elevated lead levels where we would actually come in and try to fix their problem for them. So we started looking at, can the city of Hammond, instead of filing superfund, can we take this responsibility upon ourselves and do what the E.P.A. did to numerous properties in Whiting in that section of our city already and sort of circumvent the superfund process. Where we clean out your front yard if you're one of the houses. We get H.D.E.M. out there to shoot your yard when it's done and then we certify, H.D.E.M. certifies, that your yard is clean and it helps you swell your house then, right. People say, "Didn't you have lead in your yard?" You say, "Yeah, H.D.E.M. certified it's clean. They changed everything out." They're like, "Okay, I'll buy your house now." It's literally millions of dollars, like, when I say that, four millionish, in that ballpark. If we take this process unto ourselves or we could wait ten years, declare superfund and have a superfund site in the Robertsdale section of Hammond. So, we're doing this in phases, Councilman Mark. We sent out a letter to fourteen houses in your district, fourteen property owners, and ask them if they wanted to voluntarily participate in this project. If they do we want them to go through and help them. We have a firm out of Indianapolis that does this type of stuff and we've been working with H.D.E.M., U.S.E.P.A., and we're hoping that this is successful, Councilman Mark.

Councilman Kalwinski - And if they don't want to participate?

Mayor McDermott - They don't have to. It's up to them. I would do it if the city of Hammond was offering to clean you problem up for you. If you don't want government on your property, you have that right to say no. But when somebody wants to buy your property ten years from now you've got a problem, right? So, I'll let you know as it develops. We sent a letter out about a week ago. So, I know a number of property owners that have already contacted us on that. Thank you for bringing that up.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes from August 9, 2021 and place on file.

ROLL CALL VOTE (approve minutes)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MINUTES APPROVED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from August 4, 2021 through August 18, 2021. Claim #3926 through #4182, inclusive.

Councilman Kalwinski- I had a question about claim #4001 and 4002. Mental Health America for Redevelopment. I just wondered what that was for? Is that for space or services?

Hammond City Controller- Megan Flores- I would have to see the invoice. Redevelopment has their claims go before their board. They usually do not go before me before coming to you guys. Usually you guys are the last step in that. But I can look at the information on the invoice and let you know.

Councilman Kalwinski- I appreciate that.

Controller Flores- No, problem.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Spitale

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Tyler- I just forwarded a copy of a flyer for a street renaming that will be happening this Friday at 10am to the entire council. I sent it to Liz and she'll send it to the entire Council. Would love anyone who is available to join us in the renaming of the 1000 block and 1100 block of Cleveland after Rev. Parrish, is the 1st black City Council person in the City of Hammond. Once again, it will be this Friday at 10am at the corner of Rev. Burns Drive and Cleveland Street. I also want to say that the Sportsplex is hosting an outdoor movie night on September 3, so bring your own chair. And they will have the concession stands open. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz-The last meeting was August 16 TH. We approved \$44,500 for the design of Alexander Avenue from 167th Street to Martha. The next meeting will be September 7th. Please note that it is a Tuesday, because Monday is the holiday. So Tuesday, September 7th. And the time will be 3:30 pm. For the work study session followed by the regular meeting. So that's Tuesday, September, 7th at 3:30pm, here in the Council Chambers.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz- Upcoming meetings:

- Wed., September 1st Edison Community Watch Edison School; 6:30p.m.
- Thur., September 16th , Hessville Crime Watch will meet at the Jean Shepard at 6:00 p.m.
- Fri., September 3rd Irving Community Watch will meet at Irving School at 9:15 a.m.
- Thur., September 9th , Whiting Robertsdale will meet at Calumet College at 6:30 p.m.
- South Hohman will meet in October.

Councilwoman Venecz- And as usual, if you see anything suspicious call 911. Because community is not just about me it's about us. Thank you.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

21-28 An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana, Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of Revenue Bonds of the City of Hammond, Indiana, to Refund Certain Outstanding Bonds Previously Issued by the City, Together with Expenses in Connection with the Issuance of the Bonds

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Committee Meeting on September 13, 2021 at 5:15p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz- The mayor gave an excellent synopsis of what this is about. It is the refinancing of some bonds from back in 2014. We'll reduce our rate from 6% to 3.25% with a savings of over \$2 million. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Alexander- have the updated COVID numbers and vaccine numbers from last meeting for our COVID numbers. For 46320, we have additional 21 cases; 46327, we have an additional 13 cases; 46323, we have an additional 21 cases; 46324, we have an additional 31 cases; 46394, we have an additional 15 cases;

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilwoman Alexander cont. - from our last meeting this week we are up 101 cases. Last meeting we were at 100 new cases. So we're still seeing that trend going up because the meeting before that was 20 cases. For vaccines we have 170 new vaccinated residents for 46320; for 46327 we have 151; for 46323, we have 268; for 46324, we have 280; for 46394, we have 168. We've seen an increase of 1.5 to 1.6 % of newly vaccinated resident throughout the entire City. For 46394, we are looking just a little under 50% just about 47.8% of residents are vaccinated. Our lowest numbers 46327, at 40.4% still looking for residents to research the vaccine especially now that school is back in session. Um if their children can be vaccinated looking into that as well. But ill continue to give these updates at every meeting so that residents can know where we're climbing. And like I said from July 26, to now we have climbed from 20 cases to 101. So we want to be on the look out for that.

Councilman Tyler- I wanted to just give a update on the back to school give away giving all the donations that we received of items and monetary donations. We were able to purchase well over 800 book bags. I believe the final number was 820. At the event we distributed about 450 to 500. So we still have items left that we have been dropping off at schools. If anybody in the community needs items please let your school know. So we can drop items off at any of the schools. So we have book bags left pencils, crayons, all kinds of things. I also wanted to thank some sponsors for the back to school event of course the Hammond City Council thank all the Council people who made donations and contributions Meijers, Family & Friends of NWI, First Tee of Lake County, American Legion Post, Victory Post 168, Huhtamaki Nipsco/Nisource, Miss Print, Cherise Fordham, Lawrence Taylor, the East Hammond Community Council, (unclear), the Hammond Firefighters Local 566 and of course the Hammond Sportsplex, and the City of Hammond Parks Department. Again I just want to thank everybody for their contributions on making that event a success. I also wanted to share that we are trying to install a new fence along Rev. Burns Drive and Columbia Avenue. We're just waiting on the residents to complete a signed form they have to submit. So, I just wanted to make sure all the residents that live along that strip know that in order for us move forward with that fencing you have to submit that form and it has to be notarized. And then lastly, I'm not sure how to exactly go about this, but given our conversation earlier about the potential hazardous material coming from the demolition of Hammond High School, I would like to go on record, I don't know if I need to make a motion or a formal request for H.D.E.M. to look into this by doing our own independent testing to see what we find, in terms of air samples, ground samples, and ground water samples from the old Hammond High site.

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to send a letter to Ron Novak in H.D.E.M. and ask them to do independent sampling of the old Hammond High demolition site.

Councilman Kalwinski - I believe that what might be in order here as a first step is actually summon a Council meeting with the department head for the H.D.E.M. to organize what it is that we are trying to do. What are we testing for. Before we ask for tests being done. Just an idea.

Councilwoman Venecz - I'm in agreement with Councilman Kalwinski. It's kind of like we're in search of a problem. So I think a meeting with Mr. Novak would be in order before we move forward with that.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Tyler - I don't mind meeting with Mr. Novak but I think the issue at hand is that we don't know. So, from my understanding when you do any environmental testing, you just test random samples to see what elements are present there and so by doing that we will be able to one, get a sample of the (unclear) maybe around Hammond High, not actually on the Hammond High site and see what's present there and what the natural levels of chemicals are and compare that to what we find on the actual Hammond High site or we can take a random sample from anywhere in the city of Hammond and just say, like, this is the normal sample (unclear) that we find within our city and compare that to what we find at the Hammond High site. The report that I have that the demolition company has already done, like I said, there are trace elements of Barium and Asbestos that were found. So I know that those are two things that we are definitely looking for. But when you do sample testing like this, you normally know what's already out there and you test to see what other chemicals are (unclear). So I'm still (unclear) but I think we're kind of thinking about this the wrong way. Instead of us... we're not looking for problems, we want to make sure that what's in the ground is (unclear) amount of trace. I mean there are (unclear) kind of major elements that could be doing residents harm.

Councilwoman Venecz - Councilman Tyler, you said that you have communication from someone about barium and asbestos?

Councilman Tyler - Yes.

Councilwoman Venecz - And who is that from?

Councilman Tyler - So, on Friday I was able to meet with individuals from the School City of Hammond, the School City of Hammond School Board, Skillman Corporation, and I can't think of the name of the company that's doing the demolition, they were there too. They provided us a copy of their report of their findings and so we do have that and that's ... I'll make a copy of that. I just have a hard copy so I'll scan it in and send it to the entire Council. But it does show trace elements, barium and asbestos. But I can't recall if that was in ... like there's standing water on that site, so they tested the standing water, they tested some of the ground being tested (unclear) and I believe what they found was that the standing water on the site was contaminated with, like I said, trace elements, what they're calling trace elements of barium and asbestos. So, I just want to, once again, go on record saying that like, I'm not saying that there record is false. But as a city we have a responsibility to make sure that it's not false and I think this is what I'm asking for.

Councilwoman Venecz - And Mr. Novak is aware of this report you have?

Councilman Tyler - I'm not sure, to be honest. It sounded like no. I was told it was shared but like I said that's (unclear). So what I did is scanned in (unclear) submitted by the (unclear) to the Mayor's Office, to everyone on the City Council, and to Mr. Novak. But I could do that tonight.

Councilman Kalwinski- I believe that is a good first step. I don't think we will act on this until Mr. Novak reviews and weighs in on whether trace elements of this or that or other things are to be concerned about. Or whether they're trace elements that are below any kind of level of concerns. I think we need to go to the expert

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Kalwinski cont. - before we just ask for him to do a test. I think he needs to see the study. I think he needs to let us know what that study means. And give us his professional opinion on if we need to go further on that. I think that's a courtesy you have to extend to the man who's the head of the department.

Councilwoman Alexander- I think that it will be appropriate, even with the letter, to send, stating something we might want to have done. Even if he decides X, Y, and Z. But to send the letter as a Council saying we support a study. I don't see anything wrong with that, with giving the report. They had a meeting over there and that report was provided to those that attended that meeting. So since... maybe he wasn't invited, I have no clue, but to say, hey, these things were found in this letter, this is what is going on, we are taking our responsibility as Council saying here is a letter from us saying if you can, after you read this report, can we do an individual study?

Councilman Tyler- I actually... so from my perspective that the report we already have is somewhat irrelevant. Because I think we as a City, should do our own independent testing, no matter what they found, and given what we find. Mr. Novak can come back and say we should be worried about this. Or no, we shouldn't be worried about this. Once again, I'm not trying to discredit the report or the study that was omitted to us, but what I am saying is as a City we don't always take somebody else judgment or somebodies else findings for word. We do our own investigation and that's all I'm asking. It would be the same thing as code enforcement going in and studying an apartment for rent or something like that. Like we go in, we just don't take the landlord's word that this place is on the up and up. We do our own study to make sure that's our responsibility to our residents (unclear) I say we do our own study and then let Mr. Novak reports out on what he finds to say if our residents should be concerned or not based off on what we get back from our own .

ROLL CALL VOTE (letter to H.D.E.M.)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski, Woerpel

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

7/2/0

MOTION CARRIED

LETTER SENT: AUGUST 24, 2021

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, I'd like to compliment Councilman Tyler and thank him for taking the lead on the school supply giveaway. That was sponsored by the Hammond City Council and in collaboration with other organizations. It was a monumental task. A lot of kids and families left there happy and excited to be starting school. So I just want to thank Councilman Tyler and all the other Council members who showed up to pass out the items to our residents. So, thank you very much.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Carlotta Blake King- I would like to thank Councilman Barry and the Council to move forward with the testing.

Ken Bastasich- I lived in my house for 30 years, I grew up in Hessville. I brought up in a crime watch meeting earlier this summer about dump trucks going up and down Kennedy Avenue. Who know's what's coming out of there. We have ordinances, local delivery there, tearing up the roads. And my other issue is on the walking path at Dowling Park, it says no motorized vehicles allowed. I have called the police on this issue.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (adjourn meeting)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MEETING ADJOURNED

2021 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

| | May | June | | July | | Aug | | Sept | | Oct | Nov | | Dec | | |
|-------------------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|------|----|-----|-----|---|-----|----|----|
| | 24 | 14 | 28 | 12 | 26 | 9 | 23 | 13 | 27 | | 25 | 8 | 22 | 13 | 27 |
| Katrina Alexander | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Dan Spitale | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Janet Venecz | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Mark Kalwinski | E | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Pete Torres | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Barry Tyler | E | P | E | P | P | P | E | | | | | | | | |
| Bill Emerson | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Scott Rakos | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Dave Woerpel | P | P | P | P | P | P | P | | | | | | | | |
| Initials | RJG | RJG | RJG | RJG | RJG | RJG | RJG | | | | | | | | |

E=ELECTRONIC

P=PHYSICALLY PRESENT

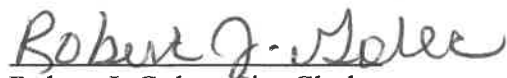
A=ABSENT

If the member qualifies for an exemption from the "Consecutive - 50" requirements, draw a circle around the E for that meeting/ member.



Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:


Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 7:10
cb/dw

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*