

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on March 28, 2022 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

Council Coordinator Assistant Darrell White facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Alexander, Tyler

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Corporation Counsel Kevin Smith - Obviously, you got third string here tonight. Phil is on vacation and the Mayor had a conflict. But he wanted me to make sure that you all knew that either myself or Phil or he will always be here to give a report. So I went over several things this morning to make sure that my report was as thorough as possible. So I'll go through those items and hope to be very quick. The Mayor met with the utilities, namely the Hammond Water Works and Sanitary District regarding the budgetary impacts of their pilot payments and whether or not they could meet their obligations based upon the increased costs they are facing. For example, I learned today that the cost chemicals has quadrupled at the Water Works and similarly at the Sanitary District. So between increased costs of goods, increased cost of labor, bids that are going out are increased as well, 7% inflation, the war in Ukraine, etc., all impacting costs at our utilities. The assumptions that regarding the pilot payments were built into the budget, however the changes in the world are starting to wreak havoc on those budgets and I know that Megan and her staff is monitoring the situation but the Mayor at least wanted me to let you know that is potentially impacting the pilot payments that were budgeted for both Hammond Water Works and the Sanitary District. Some good news to report, both Hohman Avenue reconstruct, from Sibley to Russell, and the Kennedy Avenue Downtown project, construction will be starting next week on both projects. As you know, ARP funds are being sued for both of the projects, \$5 million each. Fire Station #2 update, plans are at 90% and that project will go to bid this spring and we look forward to a new Fire Station up in, serving the norther part of our city, specifically Robertsdale and North Hammond. Just approved through the Board of Works is to go to bid for phase 2 of the Robertsdale Lead Remediation Project. That will include thirty properties. The bid is set for April and that work will be completed in 2022. It will take us to approximately forty seven properties remediated. I know that the seventeen property owners, some of those were doubles, so it probably wasn't seventeen letters, it was probably like fourteen letters. Because some people own two properties. Those letters went out along with the recorded certificates on those properties. That was real exciting to see those go out and to have that actually recorded on those properties and that the City was able to give that relief to those residents in a much quicker manner than what would have happened through the State

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Corporation Counsel Smith cont. - or the Federal Government. We had a very lively Mayor's Night Out in the 1st District, so I want to thank everybody that went to that. I thought that was an interesting discussion. I want to thank Lost Marsh and the Port Authority and all the folks up there that put that on. There was a very exciting meeting with Councilman Tyler at City Hall with Economic Development and Redevelopment and the result of that is there is gonna be a RFP for the Redevelopment of, well, we can just look out the window here, from here to Eaton, those buildings that are left are gonna be demolished soon. And then also from Highland Street parking lot to the bar, which I think is Good Time Charlie's, those are all city owned. Ann is here and Africa and their department have been working very hard on getting that FRP so we're looking forward to developers for commercial development right here on Calumet Avenue, which is really exciting. It also may change a little bit of parking along Highland and along Lyons here that will open up some additional parking. Maybe some angle parking and things like that, some parallel parking up on Highland. I know our City Planner, Mr. Poland, is working with Mr. Button, our City Engineer on those plans. So that's exciting and we look forward to hopefully some development that will provide commercial, right here on Calumet Avenue across from the new high school and right next to City hall. The Mayor wanted me to mention that the call out right now for folks with a CDL is huge. There are jobs available for hire with the city if you have a CDL. The pay is over \$20 an hour or approximately \$20 an hour. You get, of course, fourteen holidays, health, dental, vision and pension benefits and many overtime opportunities. So anyone that is either listening on Facebook, or is hearing this when it is recorded, or even just in the room now, if you know anyone with a CDL, please have them contact Sharon Daniels of Personnel so she could get their resume in and their application because there are jobs available and good jobs with good benefits. The ATG tax abatement is before you tonight and the Mayor wanted me to mention that the administration is fully supportive of it and it looks forward to Eric Gastevich And his team building a phenomenal project in Downtown Hammond and bringing people back to live Downtown and to make that a vibrant place that we all believe it should be and that it will be after some time and some significant investment. And so we believe that the tax abatement that is being requested by Mr. Gastevich and his team is appropriate and the administration fully supports it and would request the Council to support it tonight. The Mayor met with both Police and Fire Departments to figure out how to get I guess, these are important points for the Mayor. One, to make sure that we maintain it and increase a diverse workforce. Two, to have the best candidates apply so that we are competitive throughout the other municipalities in Lake County, including the County. So we are working on ways to do that, including increasing probationary Fire and Police pay and also removing the one year requirement for residency which is before you tonight among other things. So, there are the Police, I believe have estimated somewhere between fifteen and thirty police officers could retire in the next two to three years and so you can look at that two ways, glass half full or glass half empty. Glass half empty, we're losing some very veteran police officers. Glass half full, it allows folks that are in the middle area to move up and it allows some young men and women to become police officers in our great city. So, again, I would encourage any young person that you may know to apply to become a firefighter or a police officer in the City of Hammond. The Disabilities Breakfast was well attended and well organized and a thank you goes out to the Disabilities Commission for their continued fine, hard work and commitment to those members of our community with disabilities. Highlighting the work that is being done in the community has always been important to the City and I think the City has been at the forefront of that issue for some time. The Mayor was excited to announce that Toby Keith will be playing for Festival of the Lakes on Wednesday night. VIP Experience passes are available right now on festivalofthelakes.com and he also wanted the Council and the

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Corporation Council Smith cont. - public to know that the City is very close with four of the five nights being done. We can't quite announce them yet but we're getting close on those announcements and it's gonna be another great and fabulous Festival of the Lakes. We always seem every year to say this is our best one and then every year it's another best one. So, I know that Aileen and Jill and others are working very hard, the whole Committee is working hard to make sure to bring you the best festival and bring the Region the best festival so they get to come to Hammond and see what we have here at Wolf Lake. Lastly, I did want to mention, and I saw Ruth Mores here tonight. The City has met with Mike Nolan and NICTD regarding the South Hammond parking lot and the concerns that we have regarding the size of that lot and the impact that will have in the 4th District and in that neighborhood. So I wanted the Council to know that it is an important issue for the administration and it knows that it's an important issue to that neighborhood and to South Hammond. Dean Button and the City Engineering Department is working with a consultant that will continue to press that issue with both NICTD and beyond and we believe that Mr. Nolan and his crew came to City Hall, I think, with open minds and are looking for a solution that is both consistent with their application to the Federal Government and yet can take into consideration the concerns of the residents in that part of the city. That's all I have, Mr. President. Thank you for your time and thank you to the Council for their time. I'll entertain any questions if there are any.

Councilwoman Venecz - With regard to the parking lot in South Hammond for the train project, there have not been any ... I know that there are meetings with the administration and NICTD and all that but I've gotten some calls and I'm sure Councilman Emerson has too with regard to updating the neighborhood on what's going on. Because obviously everyone knows that the neighborhood is opposed to the size of the parking lot that they're proposing. So I guess my suggestion would be to update the neighborhood. Have a meeting with the neighborhood so the residents can come out and ask questions and voice their opinion and concerns.

Corporation Council Smith - I think that's a great idea, Councilwoman Venecz, and I will take it back to the Mayor and to NICTD. I know that Mr. Button would be there as well as Mr. Poland and other people from the administration would be happy to report at least what we know. I can tell you that the mantra that we keep hearing from NICTD is well this is what the application was approved, and as much as we understand that we're still pushing back and we're not just gonna take that as the only answer. So we want to work with them but we also don't want to ... we want them to understand that this is a serious issue, because it is to the neighborhood.

Councilwoman Venecz - Absolutely, thank you.

Councilman Emerson - At the meeting with NICTD I felt that all along traffic has been a consideration for me and if you go to 173rd and Calumet or if you go to even Hohman Avenue at rush hour in the morning and in the evening it's an issue right now and having a 600 car parking lot, if that's the final number they agree on, I don't see how that ... I brought that up early on like four years ago, I think, and they said, "oh, we studied the traffic and it's not going to be a problem". I think it is a problem right now at 173rd and Calumet with Walgreen's and Duncan Donuts and but I would support a community meeting if NICTD wants to do that I'll try to be there certainly because I know it's an issue. Ninety per cent of the people that call me don't want the station there. They're okay with the train but they don't want the station. But, be that as it may ... I did have a question, Mr.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Emerson cont. - President, early on you talked about Water Works and Sanitation and it's impact on the budget. Could you elaborate on that?

Corporation Council Smith - Sure, I believe there was a pilot payment, so payment in leu of taxes, payment that was in the budget. Megan, that's accurate, right? Yes, okay. And so that's a payment that they make annually since they don't pay taxes. It's based upon the amount of property that they own and last year, I believe, we had a consultant do an analysis, maybe it was two years ago, to give the real, hopefully, as close to a good number that they should be paying because they don't pay taxes, right, because they are a utility. So we tried to work that number into the budget and the point I was trying to make, Councilman Emerson, was that because of some other, at least at the time, unknown increases in other things that the Sanitary District, that's impacting their ability to potentially make that full number which, of course, would impact the City Budget. So it's not like the alarm is being sounded fully yet. It's more of a heads up. We're only in March and they're already saying, Hey, we can't believe how much this is costing us." Not the pilot payment but the chemicals, fuel, you know, on and on. So those were unforeseen circumstances, I think nobody expected inflation to be what it is. Nobody expected a war in Ukraine to affect gas the way it is or to even there to be a war in Ukraine. So that was the point I was trying to make.

Councilman Kalwinski - So what is the number in leu of taxes right now?

Corporation Council Smith - Couldn't tell ya. I don't have the budget with me. I'm sorry, I just don't have that at my fingertips.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of March 14, 2022 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

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from March 9, 2022 through March 23, 2022. Claim #1654 through claim #2018 in the amount of \$ 25,296,214.03

ROLL CALL VOTE (approve claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

22R-04 A Declaratory Resolution Determining that a certain area of the City of Hammond, Indiana be Designated as the ATG/Rimbach Economic Revitalization Area in which deductions from assessed valuation may be requested by an Applicant to the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

No One Spoke.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Kalwinski- Just one announcement, Pulaski Park Neighborhood Association meeting will take place tomorrow at 6:30 at the Mohawks located at 141st and Calumet Avenue. Thank you.

Councilwoman Venecz -I would like to announce that Animal License will be due March, 31st, and that will be in the Clerk's Office. And also Rental Registration is coming up, and that is due April 15th.

Councilman Torres- Last week, March 21st, I wrote a letter to several Department Heads and the Mayor on streets that I need to be done in my district. Including Stateline from Carroll to North Willow Court, Gostlin, Columbia Avenue, Calumet Avenue, Hoffman Street, Calumet Avenue to Hohman Avenue, 150th Street, Columbia Avenue to Calumet Avenue, Michigan Street, Columbia Avenue to Hohman Avenue, Summer Street, Indianapolis Boulevard to Columbia Ave, Hudson Street to Hohman Avenue to Sheffied Avenue. And also safety guards on overpass on Hohman Avenue. I directed these letters. I just wanted it to be placed on record that I requested them at that date.

Council President Woerpel- So noted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz - We met on March 21st, 2022. We approved \$25,000 for Hammond Consultant Support Related to NITCD Westlake Project. This is with regard to South Hammond parking upon the Gateway location. We approved \$25,875.00 for Engineering Services to perform the Paser Rating Inspection by Nies Eng. Come to find out that is Pavement Service and Rating System. It's required by INDOT. And again, that's \$25,875.00. We also approved \$1 million for the 2022 Overlay program and the streets have been evaluated and there is a list available. We also approved \$59,750 for drainage improvements at 52 169th Street. This is a federal highway project in cooperation with NIRPC and it is an 80|20 split. We also approved \$17,462.24, this is for the Michigan/Indianapolis Retaining Wall Design. We also approved \$53,350. This is for the right of way acquisition at Michigan Street and Indianapolis Blvd. That was an agreement that was made when Lear, was that the name? Came in there to alleviate some of the traffic. And also with regard to Councilman Torres and the communication that he sent to the Capital Improvement Board. I just wanted to thank him for coming before the board. I think that he got answers, u. Um, immediate answers for some of the projects that he is looking to accomplish. Some of them are not too promising. Uh, and unless we get some huge funding somewhere along the line. But I thank you, Councilman Torres, for at least being willing to come before the board and find out what's going on with some of the projects that you are interested in accomplishing.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

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

Wed., April 20th; Community Watch at Mt. Zion Pleasant View Plaza; 1:00p.m.

Wed., April 6th; Edison Community Watch; Edison School; Cancelled

Tues, April 5th ;Harrison Park Crime Watch; VFW; 6:30p.m.

Thur., April 21st ; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepard; 6:00 p.m.

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

South Hohman Neighborhood Watch; Thur., April 21st ; Trinity Lutheran Church; 6:30 p.m.

Thur., April 14th ; Whiting Robertsdale; Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.

As usual, if you see anything suspicious, please call 911. Because community is not just about me, it's about us.

Councilman Rakos- One quick note on the Crime Watch. Hessville Crime Watch will be combined with the South Hohman one at Trinity because Sgt. Scott is in charge of both of them.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Rakos - Brought out 22-12 and 22-13.

Councilwoman Alexander- I just wanted to update the residents regarding the scholarship for our seniors this year. The scholarship needs to be postmarked and received by March 31st, which is this Thursday. So for those seniors that have not filled out the application, we are really encouraging you to do so. On April 11th, we will be selecting the 15 winners of the one thousand dollar scholarship and on May 9th. We are encouraging those students that do get selected to be in attendance on May 9th for their awards and to take a picture. Thank you.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Torres - Brought out 22-10.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING FINAL PASSAGE

22-10 An Ordinance Reclassifying Certain Lands in the City of Hammond for Zoning Purposes and Amending Ordinance No. 8514 (An Ordinance Establishing a Zoning Plan for the City of Hammond including the Regulations and Maps to Administer the Zoning Plan in Order to Provide for Orderly Growth and Development Within the City, all in Accordance with the Comprehensive/Land Use Plan, as Amended) for Property commonly known as: 831-849 Hoffman St.

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-10)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9544 PASSED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

22-12 An Ordinance to Add Certain Sections to Ch. 34 of the Hammond City Code
Related to Enumerating Powers of the Board of Public Works & Safety

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for final passage.

Councilman Rakos- This ordinance will streamline the powers of the Board of Public Works and with the City Council especially the “Whereas” that it is most important is the need to respond request for signage around the city in a timely manner and to unburden the City Council with the need for passing ordinances on each sign or other traffic control and regulation request, and that it is therefore appropriate to clearly delineate one central body to manage, oversee and regulate movement of traffic and pedestrians upon the streets and ways of the city, while still providing information and notice to the City Council and Mayor.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-12)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

8/1/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9545 PASSED

22-13 An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 8620, otherwise known as the
Residency Requirement for Hammond Employees, Pertaining to the
Elimination of the Aforesaid Requirement for Hammond Police & Fire

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for final passage.

Councilman Rakos- In the past police and fire had to maintain residency for the first year. And as it states in the ordinance, this is due to the competitive salaries and benefits of police and fire departments in nearby communities. The City of Hammond must make changes in order to maintain a strong and diverse police and fire workforce. And they want to eliminate the one year residency for sworn, Hammond Police, and Fire.

Councilman Kalwinski- I can appreciate the fire and police chief's frustration with getting numbers up there for hires in the City of Hammond. I just would prefer that they don't take the residency and that maybe this is an opportunity to really look at Hammond and aggressively try again to go after Hammond residents who might be interested. We have 70,000 residents. People who need jobs. I know the pandemic scared people away from work and they're slowing coming back. But I'm willing to have the departments go after employees from the City of Hammond and concentrate on that. And if they're not going to do that, this residency is going to be discarded. I would think that maybe we should look at why is Hammond not an appealing place to move to but also perhaps we should look at Academy Bound and the training for new EMTs that want to work in the City of Hammond, and maybe those programs should be discontinued if there's no incentive to live here and in order... If living in Hammond doesn't help people get a free education, we really have to look at what else is there to incent them to be a part of Hammond versus getting rid of residency. Thank you.

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilwoman Alexander-I would just hope that as we're deciding on this, that as police and fire are doing their evaluations going through all of their processes, and they're always looking at our Hammond Residents first in accordance with other residents from other areas to get the exact number that they're looking for. I'm pretty sure both chiefs are doing a good job with that. That they are vetting our Hammond residents as well as trying to get those others to participate or to get hired, but we do know that in this pandemic it has been extremely hard. Um, between people retiring, things like that, and they're trying to get a certain number and I know we can go back and we can look at bringing this back once again, at a proper time after. You know, we go ahead and make our decision today.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-13)

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

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

8/1/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9546 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE

22-14 An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana upon recommendation of the Hammond Economic Development Commission designating a certain area within the City as an Economic Development Target Area Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting on April 11, 2022 at 5:15p.m.

Councilwoman Venecz- Yes, this is in regard to the ATG/Rimbach project and it's part two of the tax abatement process.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd reading; CAW)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

22R-06 A Resolution of the Hammond City Council confirming Resolution No. 22R-04 that Designated and Established a certain area of the City of Hammond, Indiana as an Economic Revitalization Area to which Deductions of Assessed Value may be requested by an Applicant to the Common Council of the City of Hammond Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

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

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz- This is again in regards to the ATG/Rimbach project, and this is the Confirmatory resolution.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Torres

Motion carried

8/0/1

RESOLUTION NO. R06 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No one spoke.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ruth Mores- I do have some comments about the train from the perspective of South Hammond and talking with Dean and Kevin. I found out that they have made some ideas and improvements. I wrote an email to Mike Nolan and I never got a response. So this is a synopsis of what I wrote to him. And again, because Dean and Kevin have been working on this, and being the voice of the neighborhood. I was not getting anything at all about this. I am asking for a neighborhood meeting about the parking spaces for the train expansion.

George Stoya- I hate to be the bearer of bad news. I was alarmed a few minutes ago when Kevin was discussing and mentioning this pilot program and the shortfalls of the Sanitation District and Water Department. But what I'm worried about is when we withdrew from the IRUC, I remember back in 2013 the Mayor telling us if we win this litigation with Chicago Heights, the City of Hammond will be fine. The residents would be assured of a lower water rate. I'm worried this shortfall will fall on the citizens of Hammond. I'm worried you guys here will approve whatever the Water Department wants you to approve. And quite frankly, I'm leery.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to adjourn.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adjourn)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MEETING ADJOURNED

2022 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec			
	10	24	14	28	14	28	14	28	11	25	9	23	13	27	11	25	8	22	12	26	10	24	14	28	12	26
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	E																				
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	P	P	P																				
Janet Veneez	P	P	P	P	P	P																				
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P																				
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P																				
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	P	E	E																				
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P																				
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P																				
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P																				
Initials	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: 6:55 pm

cb/dw

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk