

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on September 12, 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.

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, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - Sorry, Mayor could not make it this evening. He asked me to fill in for him. I was thinking about this this morning as I was thinking about what we were gonna talk about, how the last two and a half years have really just been extremely challenging for the country, but obviously, in this situation we're talking about the city of Hammond in general. Starting, obviously, with Covid and the different waves of that. Then what happened after Covid. Now we're dealing with inflation and supply cost issues and labor shortages, and it's affecting us in a lot of different ways. So, I'm gonna touch a little bit on that today but if anybody's reading the newspaper, I'm assuming a lot of you are, every community in this area is dealing with this. Every day you read an article about a project that came in too high, it's either gonna be delayed or cancelled or value engineered or something like that. So what we're experiencing right now is going on across the country and, you know, I think we've done a pretty good job of trying to work our way through this. So, with that, let me talk a little bit about the voluntary retirement program or what a lot of people refer to as the buyout, which is up for 3rd and final reading today. I know Mayor has spoken about this at Council so I won't talk too extensively about it, other than, obviously, there's a win-win situation in a lot of these, which is an employee that has spent a lot of years working for the city of Hammond that's done a lot of good things, gets a little bonus as they're retiring. What that does on behalf of the city is this person usually has the max amount of vacation days and sick pay and so there's a value to that of having that employee move on and then hiring somebody who's kind of starting over at the beginning of those sick and vacation and whatnot. And there's also the fact that when somebody takes the buyout or if they accept this voluntary retirement program offer, there's gonna be opportunities for other employees to now move up and that's always, I think, an important thing for employees to know there's opportunities for them in the future. So, from the conversations I've had with several of you, it sounds like everybody is being supportive of this. But I just wanted to say that it's very good for the city of Hammond, for those reasons that I gave, and I hope that you feel the same way and it passes tonight. Megan Flores, our City Controller, has now finished meeting with every department head for the 2023 budget. That is a lengthy, extensive process, as I'm sure you can imagine. Some of those meetings could be 15 minutes and some of those

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon cont. - meetings could be 4 hours, or 2 days. So, she's finally at the point where she feels she can bring the budget in front of the Council at the first meeting in October and if all goes well, and all the questions are answered and, obviously, the Council feels comfortable, potentially the budget could pass at the second meeting in October. So she will be providing the budgets to you as soon as humanly possible and, obviously, there's gonna be time for question and answers and, like I said, Megan will be the expert on being able to answer most of that as she's met with every single department head in the City. We're excited to kind of get to the end of the process and move forward. Positive not, you know, a long timer ago I remember coming here and speaking to the Council about how we were changing our health insurance from the rented Cigna network that we had to United Healthcare. At the time that we came in front of you, we were projecting that there was gonna be a savings of about \$500 thousand. I'm happy to report to you that as of today, based on the estimate, now we have one quarter left for this year, but based on where we're at today, it looks like we are going to save \$1 million from the change we made with our health insurance network. So, kudos to the Council for supporting it. I believe I've heard nothing but positive information from the employees that their health insurance is actually better than it was prior to this and they have access to more things like apps and technology's a little easier to use when it come to their health insurance. So, it's a very positive thing and, obviously, a good thing with everything we're going through with budget issues right now. I also wanted to mention that, kudos to the Fire Department and to Megan Flores and her team, because we are able to replace Fire Engine #7, which I think a lot of you are aware, there was a crash on 80/94 a while ago. Nobody got hurt, fortunately, on the Police side or the Fire Department side. In fact, there were some very courageous Fire Department people and Police Officers ... or Firemen and Police Officers in how they handled the situation and how they protected the people that were on 80/94 that were in the crash situation and how they immediately jumped into action to help with medical issues that were going on with the people that were involved with the crash. But it could have been a long time trying to replace an engine of this size and, as I understand it, we're able to use state revolving fund, which is always good, and we got a great deal on it and a very low interest rate. So, it's good for us 'cause, obviously, we need that engine to make sure that everybody has proper access to the Fire Department. I want to congratulate Calumet College. They had the ribbon cutting for their dorm this past week. It's, I believe there's 64 apartments in there, and all but four beds are already being used. This is a good sign for the city. As I said at the ribbon cutting, all we can do as a city is try and lay the groundwork to make it that businesses and not for profits and schools and residents are in the best position to be successful. If we have a college that's expanding and not only expanding, not only expanding, but already showing success with the expansion, it shows that it's working, what we're doing. Thank you to Councilman Kalwinski who spoke on behalf of the city and gave some very good words, kind words. I know Calumet College is excited that we had city people that participated in the ribbon cutting. And they're not done, they've got some more expanding to do. When it comes to the things that they're trying to do with sports, and who knows, maybe there'll be another dorm in the future, we'll see. Lastly, after I leave here, I'm going to attend a fundraiser for Tradewinds. It's a bowling event at Stardust. I'm excited to be there on behalf of the city of Hammond and make sure I show off by 106 score that I'll probably end up with. But, I'm gonna be leaving right after this. That's the only reason I'm telling you that. But if anybody has any questions, I'll be happy to answer them.

Councilman Kalwinski - Regarding the buyouts, where is that coming out of the budget? What line item might that be coming out of?

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - I will have Megan come up and answer that question. But I should mention, obviously, we've talked to a lot of different employees or employees have talked to us that they may take it if it passes. But, obviously, right now it's all "who knows for sure", right? Because you can pass this ordinance and less people take it that thought they were going to or more people do.

Councilman Kalwinski - On that fire truck accident, is there insurance, a claim that we're gonna get some money back on?

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - There was no insurance. Because we are self insured, we are the insurers for that vehicle. That's one of the challenges when you are self insured, obviously.

Megan Flores, Controller - Yes, Councilman. So that will be coming from the Personal Services budget throughout the General Fund and depending upon where the employees are coming from, if there are Street Department workers that are going to be retiring as well and taking advantage of it then part of it might come from their funds budget, so the MVH fund or Parks Department the same way.

Councilman Kalwinski - Also, just real quick, I thought I had budget meetings this coming Saturday with you, but are we going to wait until the budget's printed?

Megan Flores, Controller - Yes, there's some changes that we're gonna be implementing that were discussed this morning. I know Mayor's gonna be reaching out to everybody that wasn't able to attend the lunch today to go into further detail. So we will be pushing it back by one meeting. So, we'll give you guys a date as soon as one's available.

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - I should have mentioned this earlier, but through this buyout program, it happens to be going on at the same time that the Controller's Office is switching software. So, hopefully, we're gonna become a lot more technological and we're gonna create efficiencies using this new software that we have and I think, from what I've heard from several employees that say they're going to take this buyout, there's gonna be opportunities for department heads to possibly change positions around a little bit, maybe combine two positions, use the new software to help with making sure we're still efficient with all of our operations in all the departments. So, it's kind of a good time that we're having this potential ordinance pass.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes of August 22, 2022 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from August 17, 2022 through September 07, 2022. Claim #5188 through claim #5565, in the amount of \$11,592,596.17.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

22-31 An Ordinance Vacating a Portion of a N-S Alley East of Calumet Avenue Lying within 4500 Block and within Petitioner’s Property in Block 10, in Towle and Avery’s Addition To the City of Hammond IN, in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

22-32 An Ordinance Vacating a 25.0 Foot Portion of the 4500 Block of Cedar Avenue Lying within Petitioner’s Property in Block 11, in Towle and Avery’s Addition to the City of Hammond in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

No One Spoke.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Rakos- I would like to announce the HUGS Cultural Committee is sponsoring the Hispanic Independence Parade on September 25th, at 12pm., starts at Morton, goes to Purdue Northwest. And following the parade, there’ll be a Hispanic Heritage Month Festival at Purdue Northwest on the 169th Street side. Thank you.

Councilman Rakos- HC3 will have their general meeting on October 6th at 5pm. We will provide refreshments, and Chief of Staff Phil Tallion will be there speaking. That’s at 6pm at the Hansen Community Center, that’s at Martha and Alabama at 5pm.

Councilman Rakos-On October 8th HC3 Fall Cleanup will be held and a meeting at the Hansen Community Center from 9 am to noon. We will put out memos to the schools we usually get a really good turnout from the students at Morton and Scott. But that will be on October 8th. Saturday, at 9 am. Thank you.

Councilman Tyler- The Hammond Fire Department will once again celebrate Fire Prevention Week with an open house on Saturday, October 1st from 10am to 2pm at the Hammond Fire Station #8. Which is located at 6350 Parrish Avenue. It’s open to the public and all ages are welcomed. Thank you.

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Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Torres - Brought out 22-31, 22-32, 22-33 and 22-34.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz - Met on Monday, July 18th, we approved \$ 4,000 for Safe Streets and Roads for all Applications Assistance through First Group Engineering. This is for elementary school traffic control. We also approved \$ 14,325 for Chicago Street Right of Way Dedication Exhibits & Assistance through First Group Engineering. We also Approved \$ 18,938.91 for Hohman Ave Phase One. They're going to take down the Awning on the LaSalle Hotel and that is due to the location of the street light. We also approved \$ 37,653.58 for the Chicago Street Phase One Change Order through Grimmer Construction this is our 20% portion through the Congressional Earmark. We also approve \$ 105,832.50 for Hohman Ave Phase One Change Order No.5. This is to replace water and sewer on Sibley through Rieth Riley Construction. The next meeting will be held September 19th. The work study session will be held at 4:30 and the meeting will follow at 5:00 pm. Thank you.

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

- Community Watch at Mt. Zion Pleasantview Plaza; Wed., Oct. 11th ; 1 p.m.
- East Ham'd Pullman Crime Watch; Tues., Oct. 18th ; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
- Wed., Oct. 5th ; Edison Community Watch; Edison School; 6:30pm
- Tues, Oct 11th ;Harrison Park Crime Watch; VFW; 6;30pm
- Thur., Sept. 15th; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepard; 6:00 p.m.
- Fri., Oct 7th ; Irving Community Watch; Irving School; 9:15 a.m.
- South Hohman Neighborhood Watch; Thur., Oct 13th ; Trinity Lutheran Church; 6:30 p.m.
- Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Oct. 13th ; 6:30 p.m.; Whiting Mascot Hall of Fame

ORDINANCE 3rd READING-FINAL PASSAGE

22-31 An Ordinance Vacating a Portion of a N-S Alley East of Calumet Avenue Lying within 4500 Block and within Petitioner's Property in Block 10, in Towle and Avery's Addition To the City of Hammond IN, in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-31)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9563 PASSED

ORDINANCE 3rd READING-FINAL PASSAGE cont.

22-32 An Ordinance Vacating a 25.0 Foot Portion of the 4500 Block of Cedar Avenue Lying within Petitioner's Property in Block 11, in Towle and Avery's Addition to the City of Hammond in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-32)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9564 PASSED

22-33 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: 4545 Calumet Avenue, Hammond, IN, 46320

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-33)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9565 PASSED

22-34 An Ordinance Amending Ordinances 9390, 9207, 8880, 8942, 8091, 9016, 9072, 9207, 9124, and 9305 Creating a Voluntary Retirement Program in 2022 for certain Eligible Employees of the City of Hammond

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved for passage.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage of 22-34)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9562 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

22-35 An Ordinance Vacating a Portion of a 14-Foot Alley South of the 400 Block of Sibley Street lying Between Sibley Street and Fayette Street the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting on September 26, 2022 at 5:15p.m. and a Public Hearing on September 26, 2022

Councilman Torres- This is an alley between Fayette and Sibley Street needed for construction development of that area. It's not in use anymore. I encourage my colleagues to vote for it. Thank you. AYES: ALL

22-36 An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 7192, Otherwise known as 37.006 of the Hammond Municipal Code, Pertaining to Community and Professional Development Accounts.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading.

Councilwoman Venecz- This is simply renaming a line item from Municipal Promotions to Community and Professional Development. This pertains to the Common Council, the Mayor, the Fire Department and the Police Department as recommended by State Board of Accounts. Thank you. AYES: ALL

22-37 An Ordinance Amending 99.65 of the Hammond Municipal Code, Pertaining to Park Traffic Rules

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading.

Councilwoman Venecz- This is to update our parking regulations around parks. Parking will be prohibited along any park or park street from dusk until dawn unless otherwise restricted by police order or resolution or action taken by the Board of Park Commissioners. This is to eliminate people hanging around the park after dark. It also gives the police department clarification for those who are hanging around the park. AYES: ALL

RESOLUTION

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Bastasich- I was here a year ago, and I discussed the dump trucks going down Kennedy Avenue. Now they're going crazy, going back and forth on a 169th. I contacted Cpt. Bunner, I also contacted Sgt. Holbrook. I also have a copy of the ordinances here. We can make all these ordinances here, but if we don't enforce them, what's the purpose? I also have another issue with the old Bargain Finder Building. I approached Scott Rakos. About it, he knows nothing. I got pictures from a year ago and I just took more pictures. If my property looked like that, they would cite me. What an eyesore that is for Hessville Park.

George Stoya - I'm a little disappointed pursuant to the Mayor's request last time around. He asked that I somehow get in touch with Dean Button and notify him about some of my concerns about the project in Munster. I wrote a letter to him and I had it courtesy copied to you guys and you guys didn't even mention it. I gave it to you guys so they can enter it as part of the record. I didn't think you guys would mention it. I'm really disappointed... it's 5 pages. I was in the heat of the moment there. I would like to submit these copies, so it's on the record. I plan to hold some of you guys accountable. Copy attached to minutes.

James Lawson- I'm a lifelong resident of Hammond. I moved here from Chicago in 1966. I have some concerns that I want to bring before you. This is a residential street with kids, and we have people speeding a lot. There are no speed limits, signs it seems like. I have in my alley the original can that the garbage department put their way back when. I was wondering if you ever thought about doing a replacement program. And I understand if I want to get another one, it will cost me \$80.00 to replace it. I didn't tear it up. Conditions of the alley's potholes need to be filled. I would suggest maybe twice a year you run the street sweeper in the alleys. I would like to also talk about tree trimming. If you're coming down 173rd. You can't see the stop sign. I can remember when I was a kid and car 7 would come around and the police officers would chat with us and stuff like that. I've been back in town after being 10 years as a pastor elsewhere in the state, and over the last 2 years, I can tell you that the only time I've seen police cars is when they're knocking on someone's door because there is an issue. I think the police should be a little more visible. Thank you.

Ken Rosek- One thing that stuck out to me last year at the Mayor's Night Out last December in Hessville, were a lot of people showed up. This is a letter written by Emily Stork, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, to Dean Button last August. Overall, the dunes are a surprisingly intact piece of Indiana's national heritage. I would be very happy to provide you with more details about this area if you would like. So there you have it, council members, but you don't have to take my word for this. I would like to invite the entire Common Council to come and look at this Briar East Woods. Come out there and visit and see if they're worthy of being destroyed or saved. I would like to make myself available if anyone one of you would like to go out to these dune woodlands and get a tour. Please contact me. I will come at your convince, and of course, the Mayor is invited. Thank you

Gary Droischoff- You guys get casino money every quarter. I don't know what you got it all spent on... I say this because my neighbors ask me about it, and they know I attend the meetings. So Dave, if you can please meet with me and see what we can do, I would appreciate that. Thank you.

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

AYES: ALL

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	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	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Janet Vencz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	P								
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	P	E	E	E	P	P	E	P	E	P	E	P	E	P								
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P									
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P									
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	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: 6:55 p.m
cb/dw

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk