

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on September 11, 2023 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Scott Rakos presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

Moment of Silence observed in honor of the lives lost on September 11, 2001

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski, Tyler

TOTAL: 7

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - This is my address for September 11, 2023. I just wanted to appreciate Councilwoman's prayer before in regards to 9-11. 2 years ago America changed. We learned to appreciate people we previously had taken for granted. I'm talking about police and firemen, veterans. Many whom perished September 11th climbing the stair wells of the doomed towers to save people they didn't even know. I wanted to take a moment to say thank you to our nation's first responders. In particular to the members of the Hammond Police Department and Hammond Fire Department and I appreciate the Council taking a moment today. I remember how the world changed 22 years ago in Washington, D.C. and in New York City. Mayor's activity log. It's been about a month since I reported to you all. During that time, some of the big meetings I had. I recently met with representatives from Indiana American Water. That's a competitor to our water company, as you all know. It serves a lot of communities in South Lake County, Gary, out in Porter County. I talked to them about cross connections that we could use during emergency situations where if something, god forbid, happened to our filtration plant, something happened to our system where we couldn't get water to our customers, having prearranged meetings with our competitors will help us out. God forbid something like that ever happens. Recently, with the Fire Chief and the President of Hammond Fire Department Local #556, talking about contract negotiations coming up next year. I do want to remind the Council that this is, 2024 is the last year of all of our union contracts with all of our unions, teamsters, engineers, fire and police. If you look at what's going on with labor across the country right now, you know, I think we all got to start getting ready for bigger bills in about year. We're doing budget, as you all know, right now. I know times are tight and we're stretched thin as it is. There's a lot of our employees that think they got a big pay raise coming. So, we need to decide, as a body, how we're gonna address that because it's not that far away. I'm gonna be sitting with all of the unions talking about the next four years. I did catch Covid last week. I was quarantined for five days. I do want to remind everybody it's still out there. Thankfully, it was the second time I had it, it was a lot more mild. I didn't even really have that many symptoms but I was positive. Fire Chief and I both got it at the same time. So, it's in the City and going around. So keep that in mind and conduct yourself accordingly. I met with Superintendent Miller and members of the H.A.S.T. School Board regarding coordination issues in regards to the upcoming

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - referendum. We do have a referendum coming up for the School City of Hammond. I know if you have any questions about that contact the Superintendent or any of your school board members about the campaign. But, the City normally pays for all of the polling places for election day and we decided to pay for, as we usually do, all the polling places on Election day. I know the School City appreciated that. We did cut the ribbon on four new sand volleyball courts at the Hammond Sportsplex. Something we're very proud of. All of our departments worked together to get that done in house. We didn't contract it out. The only thing we to contract for was the, basically, the drivers that brought all the sand in. But once the sand got to the Sportsplex everything else was done by our crews. So, something I'm very proud of. Lake County Bar Association recently had a golf outing at the Lost Marsh Golf Course, which was great. Renee Ortega who is the President of the Bar Association is a Hammond resident, works for the Hammond Legal Aid Clinic and I said, she is the President of the Bar Association. She brought the Golf Association to the Marsh, so I appreciate Renee for doing that and we wanted to show our support for that. So, I know you all recently received a letter for the City Controller Megan in regards to a proposal for dates for the adoption of the 2024 budget. We usually turn in our budget by the end of the month. I anticipate that's the track we're on right now. There's a lot going on right now. We are closing out the State Board of Accounts prior audits. We're also doing a software conversion and our budget, so please have sympathy on Megan. This is the dates she is hoping you all can work with her on. Public meeting on October 10, adoption on Monday, October 23rd. Obviously, if the Council feels different that's your prerogative. We do have to have it adopted by the end of the month though, October 31st. I know that if you want to have separate meetings to discuss the budget, please work with Megan on that. She'll work with you one on one or how she normally conducts herself. I see Councilman Kalwinski's not here. I know he knows about this. I know the At Larges know about this. Federated Metals Site was declared a Superfund by the USEPA. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be listing the former Federated Metals properties on the National Priorities List, which is the Superfund Site List. Some facts about Superfund, Superfund is the name given to the environmental program established to address the abandoned hazardous waste sites. A Superfund is a toxic site and it's land or water designated as a potentially hazard to human health and or the environment. The Superfund Program is a government effort to clean up land deemed to be contaminated by hazardous waste and has been identified by the UPA as a candidate for clean up. We're talking about the area, for those of you that are unaware, Federated Metals is the area, right around the north basin of George lake. The neighbors that live around there know about it. It's really in a niche of our city. So part of our city is covered but Whiting is largely affected by this ruling. As you all know, we designated \$5 million of ARP money to help clean up privately owned real estate in this area that was deemed over the EPA limits. We cleaned seventy five properties-ish. Cleaned them up to environmental standards. So the areas that we're talking about that's left over I is like the basin of George Lake, the water in George Lake, the sediment at the bottom of George Lake, the actual Federated metals property itself. This is a process. It's gonna take seven to ten years, if not longer. Millions of dollars are gonna be spent remediating this entire area. When this is all said and done, this is gonna be a positive, when this is all said and done. It's gonna be a long trip to get there. Hopefully, when this is all said and done, we'll have the north basin of George Lake available for use. Because it's not right now and it hasn't been for a long time and that's really ... the north basin of George Lake is much bigger than the south basin of George Lake. It's not as big as Wolf Lake. But if we could get some use out of that area up there, I think that's a positive for the City. But, it has been designated as a Superfund Site. We do have the Hammond Department of Environmental Management working with the EPA, working with IDEM, and we're monitoring closely. We're even talking about getting separate representation for the City to work between us and the EPA. We're

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - discussing that internally. Gas station ordinance update. As you all know, about a month ago we passed a gas station ordinance that shuts down all gas stations citywide at midnight. We do have one gas station that requested an exemption already. We’re going through the process in the Hammond Board of Public Works and Safety, working on setting up a hearing date for that station. As you all know, the law goes into effect on November 1st and we do have an exemption program where if you can make the case for why you think you should be exempt from that law, we’re gonna give them all consideration. It’s in the 1st District, actually, the one that put in for the exemption and we’re gonna go through the process on that. Just stay in touch with the Board of Public Works and Safety for more information on that. Sorry about the long presentation today. Norfolk Southern update, Governor’s Parkway, no updates on this bridge from previous meetings. But, as a reminder, Governor’s Parkway is going to be the main route for cars, bikes and walkers to head from 173rd or Parrish Avenue east on 171st to Morton High School and Scott Middle School. The pedestrian overpass, we’re in the process of ... and this is the area that’s down by Scott Middle School, we’re in the process of working with Norfolk Southern on the design and the construction of the pedestrian overpass. We’ve been in contact with the Department of Transportation, Secretary Buttigieg, and people that work for Secretary Buttigieg, in regards to how they could help us get this pedestrian overpass built and we think the combination of the Governor’s Parkway Bridge with the pedestrian overpass will help prevent any problems in the future. I realize right now that Norfolk Southern is being very responsive about trains blocking, in fact I believe that had one just last week if I remember correctly, but they’ve been a lot better recently about railroads blocking crossings in Hessville. I do want to point out though that this is a permanent solution. Right now that’s just a temporary solution. So, that’s all I have for this meeting. I don’t know if you all have any questions.

Councilman Tyler is in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of August 28, 2023 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from September 5, 2023 through September 6, 2023. Claim No. 5978 through No. 6372, inclusive. In the amount of \$17,084,795.33.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Kalwinski

Motion carried

8/0/1

CLAIMS APPROVED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Emerson - Based on the Solid Waste Management Board, which meets every other month, September 23rd, that's two weeks from today, there will be a shredding and oil based paints only, at the Hammond Public Works from 9 am to 2 pm and that's 601 Conkey in Hammond. The shredding limit is four bags of ... grocery bags that you can get at Strack and Van Til's or wherever you shop. Four bags of shredding material and oil based paints only. So, thank you.

Council President Rakos - The Mayor did mention it, we'll be having public adoption meetings for the 2024 budget. The public meeting will be Tuesday, October 10, 2023 and adoption meeting will be Monday, October 23, 2023. Also I want to announce the Hispanic Independence Day Parade on September 16th. It starts at noon. Line up is at 11 am. It'll go from Morton High School to 169th to Kennedy south to 173rd and back to Grand. There will also be a festival at the Moose Lodge, 7500 Cline Avenue service Road form 2 pm to 7 pm.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Woerpel - CIB met on September 5th. The items on the agenda that were passed, we had a \$20,120. agreement for professional services to American Structurepoint as part of the State Safety Action Plan for Hammond Safe Streets and Roads. It was a grant in the amount of \$100,600. that the City's share was \$20,120. It basically is for studies of local congestion around the schools and safety. We also had a funding allocation for \$10,000. to Abonmarche, an Engineering design firm for the construction work during the construction at Clark Field and that was for \$10,000. Finally, there was an allocation of \$22,000 to Legacy Sign Group in the amount of \$22,000 and it is a sign that is needed on Hohman Avenue for how to get through there during the road construction. Also, Councilman Emerson did come to the meeting and speak he wanted to find out the status, and correct me if I'm wrong, of the overlays on Mulberry Street, Calumet and Tapper, and Forrest Avenue. Do you want to elaborate at all?

Councilman Emerson -Correct. I don't have the numbers with me, but Tapper from 173rd to 176th, and I've shortened Mulberry. I originally wanted it from Calumet to Columbia, from Calumet to Tapper, that's my adjustment to that.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Announced upcoming meetings:

- Community Watch at Mt. Zion Pleasantview Plaza - Wed; 1 p.m.
- East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Oct. 16; 6 p.m.; Ophelia Steen Center
- Edison Community Watch; Oct. 4; 6:30 p.m.; Edison School
- Harrison Park Crime Watch; Oct. 3; 6 p.m.; VFW on Hohman
- Hessville Crime Watch; Sept. 21; 6 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center
- Irving Community Watch; Oct. 6; 9:30 a.m.; Irving School (Bilingual Program)
- South Hohman Avenue Neighborhood Watch hasn't set a date
- Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Sept. 14; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to reschedule the meeting on October 9, 2023, which falls on Columbus Day, to October 10, 2023 at normal time. AYES: ALL

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Rosek - Wondering if Common Council bases their votes on hard facts and figures when evaluating the merits of a project or on political pressure. The new terrain alignment, which is the bridge the city wants to do, is \$11,670,000. These are 2019 figures. Currently closer to \$15 million. Which would destroy 12.2 acres of trees, many over 100 years old. It destroys all of the 4700 year old dune woodlands. It does not solve the problem of children getting to and from school. A pedestrian bridge was proposed to make up for the oversight. The cost estimates are upward of \$5 million. It will be a daunting climb for many. Expect lawsuits. The railroad will not commit to the construction which means we are back to where we began.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to adjourn. AYES: ALL

2023 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	9	23	13	27	13	27	10	24	8	22	12	26	10	24	14	28	11	25	23	13	27	4		
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	P	P						
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P						
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P						
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	E	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P						
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P						
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	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	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.



Scott Rakos, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:


Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:30
cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk