

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on November 13, 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.  
Invocation by Councilwoman Alexander.

**ROLL CALL**

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos  
ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None  
ABSENT: None  
TOTAL: 9

**MAYOR'S ADDRESS**

Mayor McDermott - Hi, everybody. Good to see you. I just got back. I was out of town celebrating my anniversary with my wife. So I want to start off saying Happy Anniversary to her. She's probably watching right now. I got two parts to my report this time. The first is the activity log over the past two weeks and then I'll close out with the gas station ordinance update. It's been a busy time with the gas station ordinance. So, I'll update you all where we stand after the recent hearings of the Board of Public Works. But, first I'll start off with the last two weeks. We had the Volunteer Award Breakfast. Citizen of the year this year was Oscar Maddox. Congratulations, Oscar Maddox for citizen of the year. The Frank Van Til achievement award went to Don Bachman. Volunteers Award Breakfast, a lot of people worked really hard to put that on. I know a lot of Council people showed up. I want to thank everybody for being there. We also had the Hammond Police Department Officer Promotion Ceremony where we promoted over a dozen new officers to new ranks, and I want to congratulate and thank everybody that showed up. That was a really nice ... it's probably the biggest one I've seen in the twenty years I've been Mayor. So congratulations to all of our new officers. We also held Halloween over the last two weeks as you all know. I'm glad to report that Halloween is still strong in the City of Hammond. Where I live on Knickerbocker Parkway, we had 700 Trick or Treaters this year. Which is one of the biggest I've seen ever. It's like an extra tax for people on the block. Get egged or buy a lot of candy. But it was great. It was really cold. I thought it was gonna be a down year and it was not down at all. But it was safe and that was great. We had a lot of Chicago T.V. interviews in regards to the new gas station ordinance. I think I did three or four Chicago interviews. November 1<sup>st</sup> seems like all of them were waiting breathlessly for us to get sued and they waited all day long and nothing happened and here we are, still nothing happened, thankfully. A law suit never materialized at this point. Instead what we've observed is compliance with the gas station ordinance across the City. Three gas stations did accidentally stay open on November 1<sup>st</sup>. They were given warnings, and it was completely accident, they forgot which day it was, quite frankly. None of the three that were given warnings re-offended. I will update when I'm done with the last two weeks. So, I'm sorry I opened

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

## MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - that door and then closed it again. But I will get back to the gas station ordinance in a few. I attended, along with my Economic Development team and my lobbyists, the Legislative Reception at the South Shore Convention and Visitor's Bureau, in regards to a lobby and proposal that they want Hammond to consider. I'm not sure it's gonna come to the Council's attention, I'll be honest with you. But if it does, I'll update you. I'm not sure that's gonna go forward anywhere. But we'll talk more in the future if it does. A meeting with the administration regarding proposal made by Calumet College of St. Joseph regarding land adjacent to their campus. They have a proposal for the land to the south of their campus, they wanted the city's help with. I've talked to my Economic Development team and asked them to speak with the Councilman, Councilman Mark, and members of the neighborhood over there to gauge their interest and/or their objections to the proposed use of the land from Cal College. So, we're following that up. We help our annual Veteran's Day Parade in the Woodmar area, Hessville area. Grand Marshall for this year's parade was the Assistant Chief of Police, Jeff Long. I know you all know Jeff as the longtime Assistant Chief of Police in the Hammond Police Department, but Jeff Long was also enlisted in the Army National Guard. He was an E4. I want to thank Jeff for his service. Congratulations to Assistant Chief Long for this year's Grand Marshall. I also wanted to point out that a former Hammond City Councilman and a former County Councilman, long time friend to many in this room, Ernie Dillon, received a key to the City on that day as well. Ernie is an Air Force Veteran and he was given a key to the city for his decades of service to Hammond. So, congratulations to Ernie Dillon and to Jeff Long. Two recipients of awards at this years Veteran's Parade. Appeared on WJOB with Superintendent Scott Miller in support of the Operating Referendum for the School City of Hammond. I was hoping to help in that proposal because I think that strong schools equals strong community. However, the public didn't see it the same way. We lost 75 to 25 and the voters have spoken. So, Superintendent Miller has incredibly tough decisions to make. So, when services are cut, teachers are getting laid off, I mean, this is what the voters asked for. I tried to do everything I could. You know, obviously, we're not in charge of the schools but Superintendent Miller, I think, is doing a good job and I wish him well. I met with upper brass of the Hammond Police Department; my quarterly meetings with Councilwoman Venecz regarding her initiatives; appeared with South Shore Convention and Visitor's Bureau, David Uran and the Times promotional video for A Christmas Story; attended Councilman Woerpel's victory celebration. Congratulations to Councilman Woerpel on your re-election. Congratulations to Councilman Tyler on your victory as well. Gas Station ordinance update, at this point eighteen gas stations have requested exemptions. We have thirty seven in the city, eighteen of them have requested exemptions. Seven in the first, three in the second, one in the third, four in the fifth, and three in the sixth. At this point, we have eight approved to stay open all night. I can go through those if you guys have any questions in particular. We have thirty seven in the city, eighteen of them have requested exemptions. Seven in the first, three in the second, one in the third, four in the fifth, and three in the sixth. At this point, we have eight approved to stay open all night. I can go through those if you guys have any questions in particular. Under advisement, there's one under advisement right now, 6845 Indy Blvd. One modified, we let them open an hour earlier because of unique circumstances to that particular station. Two were withdrawn, which means they have to close at midnight. One was denied. Three of them are awaiting decisions. So, they'll be coming out soon. If you're awaiting a decision, you're currently closing at midnight. I want to point out, every station that's part of this process has agrees already to join FUSUS, which gives our Hammond Police Department Officers incredible access to camera views that they've never had before. So, I think this is working well. Like I said, litigation has not resulted, which is good news and it seems like everybody's complying. The ones that make

*Prepared by  
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Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - sense to stay open are staying open, and the ones that make sense not to stay open all night, are not. I think it’s working well. So, that’s my report. I’m not sure if you have any questions for me.

Council President Rakos - Mayor, how many did you say in the 6<sup>th</sup> District that requested to be open?

Mayor McDermott - I can tell you, in the 6<sup>th</sup> District, three have requested exemptions. And just looking real quick, if I can find a couple in your district there, Councilman, I know we have them on 169<sup>th</sup>, yeah, Citgo on 169<sup>th</sup>, 3350 169<sup>th</sup>, that’s the one on the corner of Grand and 169<sup>th</sup>, that’s gonna stay open all night. They haven’t received their findings yet but I know the way it’s heading on that one. The one that’s further to the east there on 169<sup>th</sup>, is not gonna stay open all night. It’s under the same management, it was a deal that was struck. Congratulations on getting over your elections, and Councilman Torres, thank you for your service to the City of Hammond. We appreciate it. Thank you all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of October 23, 2023 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from October 24, 2023 through November 8, 2023. Claim #7617 through claim #8300, inclusive. For a total of \$6,668,502.93.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Kalwinski - I got a notice that the next USEPA meeting regarding the Federated Metal Site/Superfund Site, will be on Wednesday this week at 6 p.m. at Whiting High School. The meeting should last, approximately, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Councilman Tyler - This Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, we’ll once again be hosting our annual turkey giveaway in partnership and sponsorship with the Ophelia Steen Center, the Ministerial Alliance of Greater Hammond, Clerk Golec, and several Council people, Councilwoman Alexander, Councilwoman Venecz, Mr. President, yourself,

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COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Tyler cont. - and Councilman Spitale, to my knowledge have all given to support that initiative. So, thank you, once again, for your support. The event will begin at 10 a.m. at the Ophelia Steen Center and we'll give away 200 turkeys as quickly as they'll go. Secondly, this Friday night at the Dynasty Banquet, Family and Friends of Northwest Indiana, which is a nonprofit which is supporting different organizations throughout Northwest Indiana, is hosting their Special Needs Prom. That event starts at 6 p.m. It will go until midnight. There are still sponsorship opportunities available for that event. I also believe you can still purchase tickets if you would like to attend as well.

Councilwoman Alexander - As Councilman Tyler mentioned about our turkey giveaway, we will also be gearing up for our Annual Holiday Treats giveaway, which is our toy drive for the children. Looking at a date of December 21<sup>st</sup> for them to be able to pick up. But if anyone is willing to donate new toys, this is the season to buy those toys. You can bring them to the Council Office or drop them off at the Civic Center. As in the last few years, even last year, we were able to bless 600 kids. We would love to bless a whole lot more with your help.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Woerpel - Under New Business, a Funding Allocation was approved, Change Order No. 1 2022 CCMG, 179<sup>th</sup> and 177<sup>th</sup> reconstruction, striping and parking blocks to Rieth-Riley Construction in the amount of \$4,142. A second Funding Allocation was approved for Hohman Avenue Phase One Reconstruction Supplemental Construction Engineering, American Structurepoint in the amount of \$149,563. That pertains to the vaulted sidewalks that were found underneath the street.

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

- East Hammond Pullman C.W.; Ophelia Steen Center; Tues., Nov. 21; 6 p.m.
- Edison Community Watch; Edison School; 6:30 p.m.; Dec. 6
- Harrison Park C.W.; VFW on Hohman; 6 p.m.; Dec. 5
- Hessville C.W.; Jean Shepherd Center; 6 p.m.; Thur., Nov. 16
- Irving Community Watch; Irving School; 9:30 a.m.; Fri., Dec. 1 (Bilingual Program)
- Whiting-Robertsade C.W.; Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.; Thurs., Dec. 14

As we approach the season of giving, it is also the season of taking. Attend a crime watch meeting. Learn how to protect yourself when you're out and about shopping for your family. You don't want to ruin your holiday because somebody has caused you to be a victim.

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

None

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

23-27 An Ordinance Vacating a 330-Foot Portion of Clinton Street Lying Between the East Right-of-Way line of Hohman Avenue and the West Right-of-Way line of Vacated Lyman Avenue, which Portion of Clinton Street is Located in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee for November 27, 2023 at 5:15 p.m., with a Public Hearing also on November 27, 2023.

Councilman Torres - The 200 block of Clinton Street is not right now usable for through traffic. It's blocked off by the new train tracks going through there. It is only usable for the court building, they understand they take their deliveries there and other purposes. It is part of their property, I also understand. It is not going to interfere with any construction going on in the Downtown area. I ask for approval of this ordinance for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Councilman Woerpel - It's my understanding that this has been part of the Federal Building property since it's been built. It's just a clean up ordinance on it.

ROLL CALL VOTE (23-27; 1<sup>st</sup> & and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Rosek - Nice to see a lot of you at the Veteran's Parade last weekend. I would like to talk about the transfer of public property that is taking place in Hessville with the help and guidance of the current administration. Local elected officials and politically connected organizations. Nearly half of Hessville's parkland was taken over and is now pretty much off limits to residents by Purdue Northwest. The destruction of the Briar East Woods of which Purdue owns 1/3 of is now on the table. Now the takeover and sale of a cherished public icon in Hessville, the old Hanson Public Library. As the Common Council you are supposed to be a check on the Executive Branch of this government. Our Hanson Public Library in Hessville is being sold by a community organization that is run by elected officials. In terms of moral and ethical grounds this stinks.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

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	10	23	13	27	4	18
Katrina Alexander	E	P	P	P	P	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	P	P	P	P		
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	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	P	P	P	P		
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	E	E	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P		
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	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	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	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	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 p.m.  
cb

Prepared by  
**Robert J. Golec**  
Hammond City Clerk