

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on December 18, 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 Councilman Kalwinski.

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Alexander

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - Hi everybody, it's good to see you all this is my address for the week of December 18th 2023, starting with my activity log, last meeting I informed you all of the personnel change we had at the Hammond Sanitary District in regards to the chief executive officer. Obviously lots of meetings over the last couple weeks, catching everybody up with what's going on there, met with all board members at this point, most employees of the Sanitary District, we've decided for the time being with the holidays and everything, to leave the position open until further notice. We want to remind people that all technical people in the Hammond Sanitary District are still in place, so we are always 100% ready for any heavy rainfall or anything else Mother Nature throws at us, the position of Chief Executive Officer is more of the business person for the district, he's the person that speaks with the customers and works with the council and works with government agencies, that's the position that's open. Right now, the Chief of Staff, Phil Taillon, myself, and Joe Allegretti, the attorney for the Hammond Sanitary District are filling the role that Mr. Wilkas used to fill. So, until the holidays, we are probably going to run with this, hopefully, shortly after the new year begins we'll get the new Chief Executive of the Sanitary District. Met with department heads in the Hammond Police Department, captains and chiefs, in our normal monthly meeting, met with officials from Community Hospital, and Mayor's Office regarding options for Hammond residents with the closure of the Franciscan Hospital in Hammond. I think that they're worried about Munster Community Hospital being overburdened, with residents from Hammond. They don't think there is enough hospital capacity, with the closure of Franciscan in Downtown Hammond, I would have to agree, and they were giving us some ideas on how to help them out with the heavy flow that is going to Community Hospital. Had dinner with Representative Mike Andrade regarding the upcoming legislative session, I know Representative Caroline Jackson was here earlier, I met with Caroline Jackson for lunch, regarding the upcoming legislative session. Held the annual City of Hammond employee Christmas party, I want to thank the council-people that attended the annual event. when I took over as Mayor 20 years ago, all Christmas parties in the City of Hammond were small and all the departments had different events. We put together the City employee Christmas party, and over the years it's gotten bigger and bigger, I'd like to say I'm very happy to report that we had over 700 people, at the Hammond Civic Center for the

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - employee Christmas Party, including their spouses, it's the largest event we've held since I've been Mayor, probably one of the largest we've ever held for the City of Hammond. So thank you to the council-people that helped plan that and attended, thank you to the city employees. It's nice to get together once a year like that. Met with officials from the Hammond Police Department in regards to a planned protest that took place on Sunday, over the weekend at Hammond First Baptist Church. Had breakfast with the CEO of the Indiana Quantum Corridor about the Quantum Corridor's project and the type of impact it could have on the City of Hammond, and particularly Downtown Hammond. Met with the new Mayor of Lawrence, Mayor elect Deb Winfield, for dinner. Mayor's meet with me often to try to get their feet on the ground before they take pl-right before they take office. Lunch with LaPorte County Commissioner regarding projects of a shared interest between LaPorte County and the City of Hammond. Met with Water Department CEO and the number two in regards to a business office reorganization. I would like to also point out to I think it's important for the council to know that the Hammond Water Department put in a bid for the old bank building in Downtown Hammond, the old People's Bank in Downtown Hammond. The Hammond Water Department wants to relocate their business office off of 165th and Columbia, and bring it to Downtown Hammond in this bigger building. I'm not sure if the offer has been accepted, but if it does, Hammond Water Department plans to build a new business in Downtown Hammond. The business office where we'd pay our water bills, so we'll keep you apprized with what's going on with that. I met with the leadership at the First Baptist Church, Pastor Wilkerson, and his upper management in the Mayor's Office in regards to a planned protest for Downtown Hammond. Held a four hour staff retreat at the Hammond Marina for all Department heads, all number two department heads, and all board presidents. Four hours, real good meeting, we do it usually at least once a year, it was a good staff retreat. Attended the 45th Anniversary of a Christmas Story at the Southshore Convention and Visitors Bureau, the entire cast of a Christmas Story was present in Hammond Indiana for the first time in 40 years, including Ralphie. Over 10,000 people RSVPed for the event, at the Southshore Convention and Visitors Bureau, and thousands of people stood in the rain for hours to meet all the actors. It was a very, very positive event for the City of Hammond, I want to thank Mayor Dave, Dave Uran the CEO of the Southshore Convention and Visitors Bureau, for putting on this event, I think it was outstanding, so I want to thank them for all their hard work, and for bringing it to Hammond. I think that was great. Supervised protest along with the Hammond Police Department, and the Hammond First Baptist Church, attended by about 100 protestors, totally peaceful. Had breakfast with Mayor elect Angie Nelson-Doitch, from Michigan City, earlier today. Held a meeting in the Mayor's office with Hessville Political Business and Non-profit leadership regarding planned pedestrian bridge over the train tracks by Scott Middle School. So that's pretty much my last couple weeks, been very busy. It's hard to believe that Christmas is right around the corner because we're still going real hard, City Hall. Third and final reading of tonight, I know you all have the elected official salary ordinance that needs to be passed before December 31st. I think that's the only thing that has to be passed before the end of the year, I know you guys are talking about the Food and Beverage Tax, you have a resolution in support of the concept. I want to point out for the audience, for Hammond residence, this is exploratory. We're gonna see if the general assembly would give Hammond permission to do this, the general assembly could easily say no. The resolution does nothing other than tells the general assembly we're open minded on the concept. If they gave us the ability to pass this tax, we would have to come back to Hammond, hold a public hearing, talk to our residents about what we plan to do with the money. So the Food and beverage Tax, if it's passed, is a 20 year tax 1% on all prepared meals: go to a restaurant, order a drink at a bar, things like that. Go to a fast food restaurant, 1%. I had council lunch today, four council members, a few people from my administration, the entire bill was \$184, it would have added

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - \$1.84 to that meal. And, it doesn't sound like a lot of money, but adding \$1.84 to that meal that I had today, along with all the food and beverage transactions that take place in Horseshoe Casino, along with everything that takes place in restaurants across the City of Hammond, that tax over a 20 year period would generate 50 million dollars. We're doing a study on it right now, working with Munster, to see if Munster is interesting in going along with us on this, but like I said, even though if you all pass, the resolution tonight, if the general assembly says no, nothing happens, and they can easily say no. Even if the general assembly says yes, Hammond, you can look into this, we still have to come back for two meetings and a public hearing, so what you're doing tonight is just starting the ball rolling, it's not even anywhere near close to completion. And quite frankly, a lot of cities are not successful in this endeavor, so they could easily say no, I do want to point that out. But, if you say no tonight, we're dead in the water, so I hope that you guys will consider. We have three, I know we're going to talk about this more later, I'll just save a lot of my comments for that. You all have the Omnibus Ordinance before you, Omnibus Ordinance is a multitude of small fee increases, some of them are only going to raise 26,000 annually, which is the oversize weight load on heavy duty trucks, ambulance user fees, is higher, that's more going to be charged to insurance companies, credit card transaction fees is 50,000 annually, increase mobile food truck license fees, which is 8,000 dollars annually, and I know we're talking about increasing fees for the garbage cans and things of that nature, all built in to that Omnibus bill. We've been talking about a lot of these fee increases for the past year and we all agreed that we are put it off until now, so this is the Omnibus bill we've been talking about if anybody has any questions I'll be here for that as well, and I know Megan forwarded ARPA 3.0, American Rescue Plan Act 3.0, which is basically closing out a lot of the projects we've started, shifting money around, and the Capital Improvement Board fronted the City of Hammond a couple million dollars and the Capital Improvement Board gets paid back as well, under this proposal. We have exact breakdowns on why we're transferring and how much we're transferring. Because some of the projects ran over, some of the projects were never started, some of the projects ran under, and this is just cleaning that up. Unless you have any questions, that's my report for the week. I do want to say Merry Christmas to everybody with Christmas being one week away, it's hard to believe we're working real hard in City Hall. Usually things slow down but it is not slow right now. I don't know if the council has any questions.

Councilman Tyler - Mayor, with the Food and Beverage Tax, can you kinda just talk about what those funds can possibly go to?

Mayor McDermott - Yes sir, I will. I was going to save it, but that's fine, Councilman I appreciate it. We expect, if it's passed, like I said, my \$184 meal today would have been \$1.84 extra. That- we're doing a study with the Town of Munster right now on how much it would exactly generate, it's being estimated to generate anywhere from 2 to 2.5 million dollars a year councilman, for 20 years. If you do quick math, that's 40 million to 50 million over- and we're gonna- the study we are doing is going to iron that out exactly how much it would generate. So if we knew, and this is only if it's passed, it would only be passed for 20 years. That's all the general assembly would give you, is 20 years. So in 20 years, we would have to pay for all the debt for all the projects we wanted to create with that tax. So if we knew it was going to create 50 million dollars every 20 years, which is around what we expect, you can probably do about 30 million dollars worth of projects in the City of Hammond. And still finance it. So 30 million dollars right now is significant, to add \$1.84 to every meal. It also includes, like I said, fast food, so if you go to Wendy's, like I do in the morning, and I get my breakfast sandwich, and it costs me \$7.50, it would cost me an extra what, 7 cents? That's that I'm talking about. It's not

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - a big tax, and for the people who don’t like tax, and there’s plenty of them out there, I acknowledge, the easiest way to avoid this tax is to not go out for dinner. If you don’t go out to dinner, you will not pay this. This is a voluntary tax. So, that’s a little bit, I’m sure we’re going to get into it more Councilman, we can get into detail about the projects that are being talked about, if you don’t mind.

Councilwoman Venecz - I’d like to wish you a Merry Christmas.

Mayor McDermott - Thanks, Councilwoman, you too.”

Mayor McDermott - I appreciate it, thanks to all the council, it’s nice to see you all. I will wait for the questions. Thank you.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes from December 4th 2023, be placed on file please. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve claims dated December 5th 2023, and ending with claims dated December 13th 2023. Claim #8424, through claim #9004, inclusive. In the amount of \$6,128,218.49.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to amend in claim #9005 in the amount of \$1,000 to Haven House from the Hammond Police Department. It is a donation from the Hammond Police Department to Haven House that they received and they want to move it on to Haven House.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried 8/0/1 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED
(as amended)

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Tyler - I just wanted to express condolences from the entire City Council to the Burns Family, on the passing of Mother Dear, or Mary Burns, who was 101 years old. The Burns Family, the more family has been a staple in our community for a very long time and so, although she lived a long and happy and impactful life, I still want to offer condolences to that entire family. As well as to the family of Mr. Byron Burns, his mother, Derri Gibson Burns is a city employee and he passed away as well. Both of those services are this week, so just want to offer our condolences to those families especially during the holiday season. Thank you.

Councilman Woerpel - I just received a communication from Gary and Sylvester, the guy and the dog that come, he wants to wish the entire council a Merry Christmas.

Councilman Kalwinski - Hammond based Fiber X1, a statewide agricultural innovation challenge that will provide it with start up capital to get it's idea off the ground. The start up company which works with corn growers to make cornstover into a feed stock for the chemical and material sectors. Won the 2023 producer led innovation challenge. Dave Skabinski from Polaski Park and others from Fibers X1 had a \$25,000 grant to help commercialize their idea. They already want a manufacturing readiness grant from Conexus Indiana and an innovation voucher from Elevate Ventures for their idea. Just want to commend a long time family in the North Hammond area the Skabinski Family who attended St. Caz, Bishop Noll, IU, still doing great things starting up companies as he has in the past. Good work Dave, and the rest of the group, thank you."

Councilwoman Alexander - Yes, I was trying. Yes, my phone was getting ready to die, so I will jump back in a second, but, the Holiday Treats Giveaway will be releasing the form tonight. Just a note, the giveaway will be this Thursday, at the Hammond Civic Center, from 6-8. Once you register, you will be receiving a gift, so you will get a notification from the website that you are registered, we're just asking that you be here in the parking lot across from the Civic Center to receive the items. You will drive in there someone will get you your number, and then they will proceed you across the street. We're asking that if the form does get shut down, we're just monitoring numbers to make sure that we have enough toys for everyone, so we will also make a note if we open it back up, to go ahead and continue to register. That is my note for the evening, it would- again that'll be this Thursday, December 21st, from 6-8 at the Hammond Civic Center we will release the form to register later tonight.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Woerpel - Capital Improvements Board met. It was last Monday, so the 11th, an item that was passed was a \$29,800 allocation with First Group and for Phase 2 of the environmental study done on Marquette Greenway, Kennedy to Cline, and it was a study required by INDOT.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Upcoming meetings:

Dec. 19; East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; 6pm; Ophelia Steen Center

And from all the community and crime watch groups in the City of Hammond, we'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and everyone please be safe.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Councilwoman Venecz cont. - “or by a schedule approved by the board of Public Works and Safety and the Director of the Department of Public Works.” I so move.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to amend in 23-31A in its entirety.

Mayor McDermott - This is, we discovered this at lunch today. The way the ordinance was written, mentioned if there was going to be a garbage rate increase in the future, which this ordinance doesn’t tackle. But it says if there was going to be a rate increase for garbage fees in the future it would have given the Board of Public Works permission to do that without coming to the council. I didn’t like that because some of the criticism I’ve been hearing from the council is the fear that too much power has been consolidated into the administration, so I didn’t think that it was fair for the Mayor to have to make a decision like that on their own through the Board of Works so we decided to pull that out in light of the concerns we were hearing from the council and if we ever have to do a garbage rate increase that’ll be its own separate ordinance where the public will know exactly what’s going on and will be done through the Board of Public Works. That’s what the councilwoman, that’s the amendment she brought up, so that it would remove the power to raise these fees from the Board of Public Works. As it was written originally. So, thank you for doing that.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried 8/0/1 AMENDMENT ADOPTED

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9619 PASSED (as amended)

23-32 Creating a New Fund (Fund #2483) for the Rural and Small Department Violent Crime Reduction Program Funds awarded to City of Hammond Police Department

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried 8/0/1 ORDINANCE NO. 9620 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

23-36 An Ordinance Vacating a 15 Foot Portion of Alley Lying between Sherman Street to the South and Summer Street to the North and West Parcel Line of Lot 42 to the East Line of Lot 12, and the Southeasterly 20 Feet of Lot 42 in the 2nd Block of Steel Car Works Addition in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd Reading by title, and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting set for Monday, January 8, 2024 at 5:15 p.m., and a Public Hearing for January 8, 2024.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alexander

Motion carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

23R-08 A Resolution Adopting a Supplemental Community Investment Plan (Version 3) for the City of Hammond for the Use of Funds Provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (Arpa)

Councilwoman Venecz, supported Councilman Tyler, moved for adoption.

Councilwoman Venecz - This outlines the version 3 of the American Rescue Plan Act and what our intentions are with the remaining money that is there. And it outlines this particular resolution outlines the projects and the effects of each of the six districts in the City of Hammond.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION R08 ADOPTED

23R-09 A Resolution in Support of Legislation Proposing a One Percent Municipal Food and Beverage Tax in the City of Hammond

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption.

Councilman Woerpel - I'd like to be added as a sponsor to this.

Councilman Emerson - I would like to be added as a sponsor of this.. Resolution.”

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Council President Rakos - Okay so we have Councilmen Spitale, Woerpel, and Emerson added as sponsors of 23R-09.”

Mayor McDermott - We’ve had multiple meetings with state representatives and state senators from Indiana about this bill, I’m very optimistic that we have a shot in the general assembly. The food and beverage tax has been available for Lake County for 20 years? 10? I mean almost as long as I have been Mayor. If not that entire time and for a number of reasons the county council and the county commissioners have been unable and unwilling to move this forward. So a lot of times when you talk to the legislatures down state, they tell us ‘we’re not going to help you until you use the tools we’ve given to you.’ They’re talking about this. They’re talking about things, they used to say it about the income tax before the county moved on that issue, but because the state views the county as probably unlikely to pass this tax, they’ve given the option to municipality. Merrillville, the Town of Merrillville during the last legislative session with the first Indiana- Northwest Indiana community to get this power, they’re going through the process as we speak. To pass the tax in Merrillville and they plan to fund a huge expansion to the Dean and Barber White Center so that they can expand the volleyball. Which is exactly what they want to do to compete with Hammond. Quite frankly, volleyball is where we make a lot of our money in the Sportsplex, and the fact that they want to invest in volleyball shows us that if we don’t respond appropriately, we’re gonna lose all we’ve gained with the Sportsplex. So that’s definitely one of the projects we’re talking about, we’re also talking about the Downtown Hammond train station. It’s about an 8 million dollar project, it won’t be paid for by the Federal government, it won’t be paid for by the Nick D expansion because it’s all gonna be done by then. But we do have a pad picked out, it’s been designed and engineered, we just need the money. This project would fit nicely into that as well, so we’re talking about Sportsplex, between the 3rd and the 5th district, two projects there. And the South Shore expansion in the 2nd for Downtown Hammond and there’s some talk about looking at the Pavilion in the 1st district and trying to see if it’s possible to make it more of a venue that could play through the entire summer, sort of like White River Park in Indianapolis has a roof on it, basically. Not enclosed, but if a rainstorm happened, you would be still be able to put the show on, and that’s something we’re looking at, but we haven’t really dove into that one yet, because I think it’s going to require partnerships that we don’t have at this point. But this is I think it’s a great opportunity to develop Hammond, you can’t really find 30 million dollars worth of projects we could do and like I said, my \$184 meal today would have cost \$1.84 extra. I think it’s a good deal, personally, I hope that the council considers this resolution again as I said earlier, passing the resolution does nothing for the tax at all. It just starts the ball rolling, if the general assembly gives us permission to move forward on this, we have to come back to you, go through first and second reading, go through third and final, go through public hearing, we’ll have to do all that if we decide to move forward on this issue. So this does nothing at all, if the general assembly doesn’t act, nothing happens, it’s just a resolution. Thank you for hearing me out.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION R09 ADOPTED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz - I request that the entire council be added as sponsors of this resolution. If everyone is in agreement. I certainly would like to be added as a sponsor, I think that the weight of the entire council will have more of an impact when this resolution goes to Indianapolis. So I would like to be added as a sponsor.

Council President Rakos - Anybody else wish to be added as a sponsor? Anybody else wish to be added as a sponsor? Alright, Councilwoman Venecz will be added as a sponsor.

Councilman Woerpel - Mr. President? I requested I be added as a sponsor.

Council President Rakos - Well yes, you're already on there.

Councilman Woerpel - Okay, thank you.

23R-10 Resolution to Reappoint Melissa Farrell to the Gaming Advisory Committee of the City of Hammond

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption.

Councilman Kalwinski - Most of the council members know Mrs. Farrell from all her activity with Polaski Park Neighborhood, association and all the gardens in that neighborhood that she tends to, to make the area more pleasant for residents that live there. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION R10 ADOPTED

23R-11 A Resolution Confirming the Reappointment of Carrie Hutton-Latsoudis as a Commissioner of the Hammond Human Relations Commission of the City of Hammond, Indiana

Councilman Emerson, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption.

Councilman Emerson - Carrie Hutton-Latsoudis has served on the Human Relations commission and her commission has expired, but Sharon Daniels tells me she has been to all meetings and everybody has been proud of what she's done, so I move for that.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION R11 ADOPTED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

RESOLUTIONS cont.

23R-12 Resolution to Appoint Suzette M. Kubacki to the Hammond Redevelopment Commission

Councilman Emerson, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption.

Councilman Kalwinski - Ms. Kubacki is a long time volunteer in the 1st district with the Hammond Mohawks with St. Casimir School, is a co chairman for the Memorial Day Parade, is a ?? In the district for the past 33 years, and is a real estate broker and will bring her talents and skills, and I think they'll appreciate what she brings to the table.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION R12 ADOPTED

23R-13 Resolution to Appoint Susan Stevens to the Hammond Economic Development Commission

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved for adoption.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION R13 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz - I just wanted to wish Jake Jacobs a happy birthday. Clerk Golec a happy birthday, and happy anniversary to my husband who's at home. Thank you."

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to reappoint Leslie Miller to the Mayor's Gaming Advisory Commission."

ROLL CALL VOTE (reappointment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to reappoint Greg Myricks to the Redevelopment Commission

ROLL CALL VOTE (reappointment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

Councilman Torres - Being my last meeting on this Hammond council, again I would like to thank everybody I worked with, especially my colleagues, it has been a good 8 years, we had some agreements, some disagreements, but we were able to work it out, the Clerk's office were always great when anything I requested, the Mayor, the Department Heads, the staff, so I appreciate it and I will keep this short, I want to wish my successor, he's in the audience a lot of success in the coming years, and if you don't mind, Mr. Alfonso Salines, can you come up here a second? I got a little Christmas Present for you. I would like to officially like to welcome you to the council, may you represent the district with honor and dignity and the best of ... and the residents, they are the best. And we have the best and Council Gavel they still look like that. Also, you have a council shirt, and you can have the bag....

Councilman Woerpel - I know you're dying so, where would the year be without one final story from me? I just wanted to say that the Mayor spoke about the character or the cast of a Christmas Story being here, and Tom Novak was here earlier, and he had the pleasure for the first time since that movie's been out in 40 years of taking the cast around and showing them the sights, mainly in the 6th district. Where Jean Shepherd lived, where some of the other characters lived, where some of the scenes were allegedly happened, and I know it's accurate because he did it based on the stories I told him.

Council President Rakos - Could have invited us.

Councilman Woerpel - Well I was still sleeping when he did it, but it all had to be accurate if it came from me. That's all. Oh, by the way Councilman Torres, it has been a pleasure working with you, I gotta admit, when I first got on the council, I came halfway through that first year, I won't say I was scared, I was nervous or whatever and everybody on this council made me feel welcome and you know we welcome you to this council.

Councilwoman Venecz - Councilman Torres, it's been an absolute pleasure, you are a true gentleman and I am really going to miss working with you, it's been a pleasure, thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski - I want to comment on Councilman Torres' classiness, and his gentlemaness, his kindness in always putting his residents first no matter what. It's been a pleasure. Good luck. We'll see you down the road.

Councilman Spitale - (couldn't hear him)

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Emerson - Pete, you've sat next to me for all this time and I'm gonna miss you. You're a great guy. You served the city as a police officer, and as a Council member, and I wish you well.

Councilman Tyler - Just to echo everybody's sentiments. Councilman Torres we appreciate you for all your service. You've been committed to this Country, to this city, for your entire life. So, thank you for everything you've done. For teaching me so much in my first term. I know you'll still be around to help us when we need it. So, like Councilman Kalwinski said, we'll see you down the line.

Council President Rakos - Councilman Torres, we first met, what, thirty years ago when you were on the Police Department. I was a dispatcher. He was always a gentleman, even then. Despite the fact that he was a police officer. Then when we came on the Council together, we had a police officer and a fire fighter on the Council and it immediately upgraded, and that's mostly because of you. Thank you. I'll miss you.

Councilwoman Alexander - I also want to give my farewell to Councilman Torres and thank him for all the work that he's done in the last term for myself and just being the sweet man that he is. Just watching what he did with our Councilman Elect shows who he is as a person and how he is defined in his character. So, thank you for that. I wish you farewell but I know we'll continue to see you.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

T.J. Gaertig - Thank you Pete for serving. You're a really good guy. I appreciate it. I know the talk of the town is the "Let us Prey" Documentary. But, I wanted to bring people's attention to another documentary that's featuring Hammond that's coming up. It's called walkable USA. It's on PBS. It's documenting our transition for the Downtown Hammond to be more walkable. I really love that, and they made a documentary about it. So, you can watch it on Lakeshore Media PBS on the t.v. or online on December 28th at 8 p.m. and December 31st at 11 a.m. I want to congratulate Hammond, again, for that achievement. I love a lot of the projects that Hammond is doing and I would love to work with the City to bring them to fruition. I just want to send out a plea. I would like the City to work with us more. Mayor's Night out we brought up the INDOT presentation that I laid out slides for you. In the bottom right hand corner it shows the price for the Grand Avenue overpass. Which is something INDOT considered. It cost \$8,480,000. The Mayor and City Engineer Dean Button repeatedly said that was never considered and that INDOT never looked into it. We pulled up the presentation at Mayor's Night Out and said we have it right here. They asked if we were making stuff up. I don't like that, because the Mayor said he ran on this issue and he's blatantly misrepresenting the facts and Dean Button is on the design team for this project. His face was in the same power point these slides were in and he said that we never looked into a Grand Avenue overpass. I want to work with the City but it's hard to when the City keeps misleading people on this issue.

Ken Rosek - The Hessville Dune Dusters just achieved one thousand members. Our numbers are consistently growing as word gets out about the environmentally policies of this administration. In the woods everything seems dormant and lifeless this time of year. You only need to look a little closer to see gods creatures already at work preparing for next season. The woods offer a dramatically different experience during the spring, and summer, and fall when they are covered with plants and filled with wildlife. It looks like nature has battened

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Ken Rosek cont. - down the hatches. You can tell the expressways are a lot louder without all the leaves on the trees now. Red Tail hawks are replenishing their nests of last year. Bald eagles have been spotted just hanging out in our woods. Owls and other animals are easier to see without the foliage. It's been over centuries since these species have lived in our area. They were shot as predators and poisoned by DDT over the years. One hundred years later they are returning to our neighborhood and our woods. So now is the time to destroy their habitat and drive them out again? We can't claim ignorance this time. Does that sound like a good idea? The pedestrian bridge is nothing but a desperate remedy to a failed design. In closing, I'd like to say a few about Councilman Pete Torres. There are few people I have met throughout my life that have made positive impressions in a very profound way. You sir, are one of them. Councilman, I have come to know you as a man of extreme integrity and class. Your service to this Country, this town as a cop, and your neighborhood has been outstanding. You were the only Council member that would give us the time of day and listen to our concerns. For that I am deeply grateful. It gave us hope and optimism that someone cared. I'm a better man for knowing you, sir. I mean that with the deepest sincerity. I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

Ernie Dillon - I stand before you to congratulate you and thank you for all that you've done throughout the year and further back for the American Legion Hammond Victory Post #168 and would like to award a presentation to those that did not get their certificates from our Legion earlier in the year on April 15th. That would be Mayor McDermott, and I have an award for him and basically it honors and appreciates what they've done over time to help the American Legion Post #168. I mentioned to the Mayor, he had something to do, so I will take his to his office at some other point. Clerk Robert Golec, you helped and supported all year. In my opinion, you very rarely get recognized but I'm here to honor and recognize you for what you've done for the American Legion. I'll present these to the president when I'm finished. Councilman Tyler, 3rd District Councilman, we have your certificate of appreciation and also the Oath and the Creed of the American Legion. This is from the Department of Indiana. And William Emerson, we have your certificate also and I know you had other plans that day so I want to make those presentations. I guess to follow up and in conclusion, I want to recognize former Hammond City Councilman Dave Hamm. Good seeing you Dave. For Councilman Torres, for your contributions and all you've done, Councilman Torres, you are a person who does put people first. I've seen you through the years, I've know you since forever, I think. Fifth grade at Lafayette grade school. I'll leave the rest to your imagination. I want to encourage you to keep doing what you're doing. If there's anything we can do let us know. In conclusion, I want to give an "'at a boy'", two "'at a boys'" for Councilman Emerson and Councilman Spitale, and of course I thank everybody for everything they've done throughout the years, because they stepped up and honored me personally at a time when I was honored by the City of Hammond in getting an "'at a boy award'", and there's nothing greater than being honored by a group of your peers. They know you best. I want to honor these two fellas who really stepped up and did some things and I sincerely appreciate it. I want to wish everyone a blessed holiday season and thank you for all that you've done.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Tyler, 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	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	P	E
Dan Spitale	E	P	P	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	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	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	P	P
Barry Tyler	E	P	P	E	P	P	E	E	P	E	E	E	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	E	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	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	P	P
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	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: 7:30
cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk