

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on April 22, 2024 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 was observed.

ROLL CALL

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: Woerpel

TOTAL: 8

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Mayor McDermott - Good to see you all. Sorry I wasn't at the last Council meeting, I had something come up last second, so I had Phil cover me. So, I have a few more activities I wanted to talk about. A couple important ones I wanted to talk about, we did, and then talk about a couple issues facing you. I'll start off with the activity log. Held Mayor's Night Out in the 2nd District. That was before the last Council meeting. I appreciate Councilman Salinas and him hosting that event. It was at Irving Elementary. I thought it was a really good Mayor's Night. I attended a two day summit in Downtown Chicago for FEMA. It was the FEMA Urban Flooding Summit. It was in Downtown Chicago. FEMA members from all over the country came to Chicago. I found myself as the only Elected Official, I think, in the entire audience. I found myself surrounded by a bunch of engineers and asked myself a couple times what I was doing here. So I tried to keep up with what they were talking about. But I think what I walked away from is, you know, obviously, we've heard a lot about global warming. But basically the summery I took from that event is there is a lot of programs out there that help us when we're devastated and if FEMA has any warnings for us, where we are here in Indiana, is prepare for more frequent drenching rain storms. They had the map and it laid out the country on the map, and parts of the country that are gonna get drier, you know, and parts of the country that are gonna get wetter. Indiana had a green stripe over it, and then it had a dark green stripe right over the region going all the way down to Indianapolis, the dark green strip came from Chicago as well. And they supported this with historical flood data that shows the floods are hitting the same exact areas and the same parts of the cities, and they're storms of the century. It was pretty bleak. Honestly, I don't really have a lot of good news. While going to that summit I met a lot of cool FEMA people. They have a lot of great programs. But the fact is, we should prepare for a lot more storms of the century. That was the moral to the story that they told me. And if we were in other parts of the country, they'd say, you're not gonna have any storms at all. But we're in the part of the country where we're supposedly gonna get a lot more storms. So, anyway, met with reps from the Northwest Indiana Pickleball Association. Which, as we all know, I think we only have one pickle ball court in the entire city of Hammond right now and that's in the 4th District, in Indi-Illi. We're about to get a lot more. The Pickleball Association is

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - real interested in our city. They're looking at locations and they want to make a deal. And pickleball is exploding across the region. Obviously, across the country, the largest pickleball association around here, I believe, is in the Mansards apartments, and we have better opportunities than what the Mansards Apartments could offer. So, I'll keep you apprised on that. I think it's a good opportunity for us. I attended the 2024 Purdue Northwest Hall of Fame Dinner where they honored Jeff Strack with a Hall of Fame induction for Strack & VanTil. They honored Judge Kavadias Schneider, as well as myself. So, great night. Appeared on WJOB Radio with Jed to talk about City business over the last couple of weeks. Held a gofundme, that's why I have this amazing haircut right now, for the wife of a Hammond Firefighter, Allison Gleason. She is the daughter in law to our former Street Superintendent, Gary Gleason, the head of Public Works, she is the wife of Craig Gleason, who is a Hammond Firefighter, she is a mother, she is a Hammond girl, and she's been fighting breast cancer. She is on her second bout with it. She is going through radiation and chemotherapy. She's got a special needs child. It's a nightmare scenario. She's a wonderful person from a wonderful family. We raised close to \$25 thousand for her. A lot of people in this room donated, a lot of people watching right now from gohammond donated. 100% of the money we raised went to Allison Gleason and her family, 100%. So, thank you for everybody that gave me this great haircut. Attended meetings with the following Council people over the last couple weeks, Councilman Salinas and I met twice, Councilman Woerpel and I met twice, Councilman Tyler, Councilman Spitale, Councilwoman Venecz, Councilman Woerpel, Councilman Rakos. Thank you for meeting with me over the last few weeks. I met internally with the F.O.P. negotiating team. Finalized our response to their initial offer. The F.O.P. is in possession of our response. They are looking for significant pay raises. I'm willing to talk off the record individually with Councilmen if they have particular questions. I don't want to talk publically about private negotiations, but, obviously, you guys are the financial boss of the City and I want to keep you apprised of what's going on, but they are looking for significant pay raises. Significant, I think that's a good word for it. Interviewed with South Bend Tribune over the Shots Spotter technology we are currently implementing in the city of Hammond. I want to thank the entire City Council for helping support the City in putting that effort forward. The only holdup now is the School City of Hammond, believe it or not. I had a meeting with the School City today to talk about, "why are you holding up officer safety"? It makes no sense to me. Hopefully they are going to work on that issue. If they don't, I will make it a much bigger issue than it is right now. Because, they're literally ... I got through NIPSCO, and we can't get through our own damn School City. It's ridiculous. But, they got big problems over there, a lot bigger than Shot Spotter. I met with the Hammond Firefighters on Shift 3 in the Central Fire Station for my monthly meeting with the Firefighters. I met with NIPSCO's VP of Public Affairs. Promoted Phil Scheringa, who was previously an Engineer to the Chief Inspector of the Hammond Firefighters Inspection Bureau. Phil Scheringa is also a Town Councilman in the Town of Highland. So, good job Phil. Congratulations, he's an Assistant Chief now. Met with Representative Jackson to talk about important legislation coming out of the General Assembly that's gonna affect us. Lead lines. This is our next big bill. I don't know when it's gonna hit, but it's a big, big, big, bill. To give you an idea what we're talking about, if we wanted to convert the entire city of Hammond's housing stock and get rid of the lead lines that we all have in our houses, we all do, it would be around \$275 million. So if you guys get your hands on \$275 million, let's knock that out right away. Until then, I'll let you know what the state thinks we should do about this. But, this is an issue Carolyn brought forward to me, Representative Jackson brought it forward, we had a good meeting. So, I will keep you apprised. Swore in 16 new Hammond Firefighters. I'm sorry about all the stuff today. I met with residents and business leaders of the Hessville community, spoke to

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - them at length about two important projects in Hessville. I want to thank Councilman Rakos for helping consolidate everybody into that meeting. We talked about Governor's Parkway Bridge as well as the Grand Avenue Pedestrian Bridge. I felt like I had good marching orders and I appreciate the meeting, so. Lunch with Nick Loxas, Anne Tyler, Phil Taillon and myself, in regards to seven acres of property owned by the Loxas family at 4300 block of Calumet. We were working with this great Hammond family to see if we can develop this excellent location right off the Indiana Toll Road. I think it was a real good meeting. So, thank you to Mr. Loxas for meeting with us. Completed the first round of interviews for the Hammond Deputy Fire Chief's position. I will have a decision made by the end of May. We don't have to make a decision until then. The following candidates were interviewed by a panel of experts of the workings of the Hammond Fire Department. Battalion Chief Mark Berdine, Assistant Chief Steven Brazinski, Battalion Chief Daniel Diombala, Assistant Chief David Weiss, Assistant Chief Carl Repay, and Battalion Chief Ryan Anguiano. One of those six will be chosen as the next Deputy Chief of the Fire Department. Created a new position in the Mayor's Office. We call it the Office of Constituent services. The person that's gonna run that is Alex Stahura. I'm promoting Christy Ormes to the Office Manager of my office, we're not hiring any new staff. We're gonna use part timers to cover the rest. Action items for the Council tonight, we talked right before we got in here about the Development Agreement that's getting approved, hopefully, by you all tonight in regards to the Hammond YMCA. The largest YMCA in the country, 120 thousand sq. ft. building will be done by December of this year. City of Hammond's incentives are \$10 million. \$5 million we already approved through APRA, we're gonna use the other \$5 million from TIF and give them about \$1 million worth of land. That's the deal. \$70 million deal in total, so it's a good deal for the City. We talked about Mickey's Linens. This is a project where we take a current laundromat that operates launders hospital linens and convert it into the same operation, in the 2nd District. I know it's coming for a Conditional Variance with you all. It's a great project and I want to thank the owner for being here today. Last but not least, we submitted a proposal to you in regards to garbage and recycling fees in the city of Hammond. Last year the city of Hammond experienced a loss, if you look at this as a business, with garbage and recycling, the city of Hammond lost close to \$600 thousand last year. Each year that loss grows about \$300 thousand. So, in 2024 it will be close to \$1 million. Next year it will be \$1.2. It grows like that. We made a proposal to the Hammond Council to consider and it's up for adoption tonight. Something that we recommend. It is increasing by \$5, the monthly charge to Hammond Residents, which will pick us up to \$26 am month. We made sure that that was appropriate with what other cities and towns in the area are charging. To give you an idea, Gary charges \$24.15 currently, Town of Munster charges \$29.36, Griffith charges \$23, Highland charges \$27, Crown Point charges \$23, Whiting charges \$7.50, Merrillville charges \$63 every three months, so we would be right in the sweet spot, and more importantly it's projected, if we pass this, we're not gonna be using Gaming money to pay for the red ink that we create. Last year we had to use Gaming money to bail out the garbage fund, \$600 thousand, this year it'll be closer to \$1 million unless we pass this increase. So, I think that it's appropriate to pass this increase. Obviously, the cost increase that we got from a new contract from Republic, a new contract from Waste Management, we're passing along those costs to our customers. Sorry about a lot of info. So, I'm available for questions.

Councilman Woerpel is present.

Councilman Kalwinski - Regarding the Sanitary District or Garbage or what have you, have we done anything with the Bio-solids, about trying to sell it?

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - Yeah, you know, thank you, Councilman, good question. I was just reading the Sanitary District meeting minutes from a meeting a couple weeks ago and they were talking about how they had to get the bio-solids out to the farmers right away. Sounds like it's not a money maker. It's more like by giving them bio-solids on the cheap, it allows us not to have to dispose of them ourselves, which saves us money. But I don't think we're selling the bio-solids. Okay? But I would ask you to follow that up with the Sanitary District who probably knows way more information about this than I do. But I do ...

Councilman Kalwinski - I was just wondering if it's an opportunity.

Mayor McDermott - What I think is the opportunity is in the District is with the gasses that are emitted and we could literally make electricity with that and we are looking at that, Councilman. Is the gas, and I know you're scientific, the gasses that are coming from our operation could drive turbines and create electricity. There has been discussion and I know the prior CEO had discussions that it was being initiated as well by the current CEO. So, I think that's an opportunity for the District.

Councilman Kalwinski - If I can follow up? Two weeks ago when you weren't here, I mentioned and brought up issues at 300 41st Street and I want to say thank you to the City for validating my concerns in putting a stop order on the gate until we get stuff figured out. So I just want to (unclear).

Mayor McDermott - Thank you. I appreciate that and I, you know, I know last meeting there was some concern about lighting and we followed that up vigorously. If that's happening, Councilman Mark, it'll be stopped and it's certainly not authorized if it's happening. So, thank you. Sorry, I missed the last meeting. I knew there'd be a lot. If I can initiate one. That FEMA lecture, I think Councilman Mark you would have appreciated it. But, it's bleak what they are talking about. They're literally showing flood maps from the last few floods in Chicago, and obviously, we're right next to Chicago. It's literally the same exact flood maps from different storms. Meaning, these storms are hitting certain parts of the city over and over again. Certain neighborhoods, literally like hitting certain neighborhoods and you're having the same problems and it's massive.

Councilman Kalwinski - You may or may not know, but has Sanitary now implemented the new programs?

Mayor McDermott - I'm going off of what I read yesterday also, Councilman Mark, and I know there was a mention on Owana is working on the final details of that as we speak, and Councilman Barry's name was mentioned as well.

Councilman Tyler - I just talked to Milan about that a couple days ago and they are still working out the details. There was some updates to the Federal Guidelines that Owana was looking into and so what I was told was that within the next couple of weeks they should have more information to release and they can begin installing the back flow preventers at that point.

Councilman Kalwinski - But the other program for the \$2,000 per your back flow preventer, is that in place? Because there's two programs going on.

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - One for Federal money for people who qualify economically and the other, believe so on the other one. I’m gonna get a ... next meeting I promise I’ll have a hard answer, okay? I’ll follow this up. I don’t want to say something and it not be true. What I was reading about, you’re right, is the one that is being funded with Federal money. It has to do with poverty guidelines.

Councilman Tyler - Mayor, I was at the event where you got honored into the Purdue Hall of Fame so congratulations on that. It was a great event and it was a great honor.

Mayor McDermott - Thank you. I don’t cry in public very often, so.

Councilman Tyler - My question is about the FEMA meeting, in terms of, you said there were some supports that we might be eligible for. Is that something that ...

Mayor McDermott - I grabbed a bunch of it. But it was like, I’m learning from scratch. I literally walked out with twenty pamphlets of info. They made sure to mention to me that I’m from Indiana. By the way, it was such an excellent lecture I actually talked to them about coming to Hammond and maybe presenting something to you all, if you’re interested I could probably follow that up. He would literally come to a Council meeting. The FEMA Rep, he’s like the Midwest ... and it’s amazing and depressing. Really, when you look at it there’s not much we could do. These storms are coming and they’re gonna hit us and we’ve just got to be prepared so the best thing you could do is prepare your house like we’re talking about and start rethinking your systems. They’re talking about hundreds of millions of dollars we spent on this system and it’s like, I don’t want to say it’s not big enough to accommodate what’s coming, but sometimes it is too small. But it was a good meeting and I’m glad I’m on the radar at FEMA, Because that wasn’t on the radar of FEMA before. They literally invited me to that and I didn’t see any other politicians there. So, I was glad I was there. I’m sorry about the long message today. I try not to spend a long time up here, so thank you all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the minutes of April 8, 2024 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from April 9, 2024 through April 17, 2024. Claim #3307 through claim #3757, inclusive. In the amount of \$4,479,218.50.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

24-07 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for Economic Development Purposes in 2024

No one spoke.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Alexander - Our scholarship is now available and applications will be due on May 3rd for our students that in our Hammond Schools. Those applications will be due May 3rd to Lydia McNeiley at 41 Williams Street. All applications must have original signatures. That's a reminder to those students that will be filling them out. The drawing will take place on May 13, here in the Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. So, I want to encourage all of our Hammond Seniors to fill out that application for our Hammond Scholarship that is \$1,000 where we will be giving out fifteen of those scholarships.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee- Councilman Woerpel - Brought out 24-07 and 24-08.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Emerson - We dealt with the funding allocation for the Marble St. reconstruction, Milestone Contractors North, in the amount of \$348,048.34. However, the Capital Improvement Board will be responsible for \$137 thousand. Next we dealt with the 422 Sibley parking improvements, with NIES Engineering, in the amount of \$14,800. Next we dealt with the Hass Traffic Study funding allocation from NIES Engineering, in the amount of \$7,740.

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

- May 21; East Hammond Pullman Crime Watch; Ophelia Steen Center; 6 p.m.
- Edison Community Watch; Wed., May 1; 6:30 p.m.; Edison School
- Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues., Apr. 30; VFW on Hohman
- Hessville Crime Watch; Thur., May 16; 6 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center
- Irving Community Watch; Fri., May 3; 9:30 a.m.; Irving School Art Room
- Whiting-Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., May 9; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

24-07 An Ordinance to Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for Economic Development Purposes 2024

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

Councilwoman Venecz - We sponsor this ordinance annually to appropriate funds for the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for economic development. Innkeepers Tax Fund is used for marketing purposes also events and advertising for economic development for the city of Hammond.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9631 PASSED

24-08 Ordinance Amending Ordinance Numbers 4686, 4695, 4770, and 9619, otherwise Known as §94.041 Garbage Collection Fees of the City of Hammond Municipal Code

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved for passage.

Councilman Woerpel - As the Mayor explained, we have a shortfall in the Sanitary District because of garbage pickup and we been covering it with Gaming money. This will allow us to cover that shortfall and bring back some of the Gaming money we were spending on that.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9632 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

24-09 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund #2485) for Indiana Department of Homeland Security EMS Training Grant Funds Awarded to the Hammond Fire Department

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

Councilwoman Venecz - This is simply creating a line item for the grant funds awarded to the Hammond Fire Department.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

24-10 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund #2484) for HUD Home Investment Partnership Program - American Rescue Plan Funds Awarded to the City of Hammond

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

Councilwoman Venecz - This is also creating a new fund for American rescue Plan Funds awarded to the city of Hammond for the Home Investment Partnership Program.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

24R-06 A Resolution of the Hammond Common Council Approving the Development Agreement among the City of Hammond, Indiana, the City of Hammond Redevelopment Commission, the City of Hammond Economic Development Commission, and the Crossroads Young Men’s Christian Association, Inc.

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

Councilman Tyler - As the Mayor described earlier, this is a resolution outlining the development agreement between us and the YMCA. The agreement is in total of about \$10 million, with \$5 million coming from ARPA funding that we passed, I think a few years ago. An additional \$5 million coming from TIF and then one million in land value through a forgivable mortgage. This is, as he said also, 120 thousand sq. ft. YMCA. First portion will be opening in December of this year. With the water park an additional part of the building, opening up in 2026.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R06 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

24-11 BZA: Z-24-03: Petition of Mickey’s Linen & Towel Supply, Inc. for a Variance of Use for Modification to the Conditions of Approval for a Variance of Use Granted in Z-92-8 to Extend the Previously Authorized Use for a Purchaser of Property located at 5530 Hohman Avenue, within the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve 24-11.

Councilman Salinas - This is a petition sent to us from the BZA Board for approval. To basically transfer ownership and operation rights from St. Margaret’s Franciscan to Mickey’s Linens and Towel Supply. This is an expansion project for Mickey’s Linens locating out of 5530 Hohman Avenue. The current variance on file dates back to 1992. It was pretty specific with regards to exclusive use of the hospital. This modification in front of us today will allow Mickey’s Linens to operate in that same fashion to various vendors.

ROLL CALL VOTE (approval of BZA)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

BZA 24-11/Z-24-03 APPROVED

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

T.J. Gaertig - Hammond wants to be a walk-able city but there is a hypocrisy, Governor’s Parkway will make Hammond less walk-able. An overpass right where the problem is it will be a better solution for everyone and make Hammond more walk-able. Regarding the flooding, there was major flooding last year. That’s going to keep on happening. Briar East Woods has crucial elements that reduce flooding.

Ken Rosek - The Dune Woodlands are a big sponge. In 2020 we had the worst flooding Hessville has ever seen. The water will come downhill right into the eventual development coming. The FRA wanted a Grand Avenue solution because that is were all the hazards were occurring. None were at Parrish. This will add an additional 30 seconds to every response.

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


AYES: ALL

2024 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	8	22	12	26	11	25	8	22								
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Janet Venecz	E	P	P	P	P	P	A	P								
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P								
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Dave Woerpel	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Initials	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G	R/G								

E=ELECTRONIC
P=PHYSICALLY
PRESENT
A=ABSENT

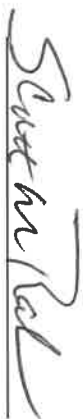
If the member qualifies for an exemption from the "Consecutive - 50" requirements, draw a circle around the E for that meeting/ member.

ATTEST:


Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:45 p.m.
cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk


Scott Rakos, President
Hammond Common Council