

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 8, 2016

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on February 8, 2016 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Michael Opinker presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Invocation by Councilman Higgs.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to accept the minutes of January 25, 2016 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Kalwinski, moved to approve the claims from January 20, 2016 through February 3, 2016. Claim #601 through claim #932, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (approval)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor McDermott - I just wanted to come up here and just update. I know the council and I talked the other day about ... at first we were supposed to have a resolution before you today regarding the resolution and the proposal to move City Hall and we talked about this the other day, I just wanted to talk about this in front of the cameras and in front of the public so to remind you that we do not have a resolution pending before you today. What we're calling the Range Resolution, the Range Resolution is a broad based resolution that, if it was approved by you all, that would authorize me to hire a architect and a construction manager and basically start

spending money on digging down to an accurate number on what it would cost to move into the eight story

MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL cont.

FEBRUARY 8, 2016

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - building in Downtown Hammond. If you pass the Range Resolution we'll start spending money on basically an architect and on a construction manager. I will bring a second resolution back to the council, if the first one is passed, and will not spend any money on capital improvements to the building until the second resolution is approved. The second resolution will be an accurate number. We can't give you the dead accurate number you need right now because the only way for us to do that is to hire people and spend money and I didn't want to do that without the green light from the council first. So we decided to approach it in a two step process. I know you all are aware of this because we talked about it the other day. I just wanted to put it on the record that on the 22nd of February you'll get the Range Resolution from us, if that resolution is approved we'll start spending money on an architect and a construction manager. If it's not approved, we'll have to start deciding what to do with current City Hall. I'm available for any questions you may have. I apologize about missing the caucus.

Councilman Higgs - Mayor, I had requested a feasibility study, is that study prepared already?

Mayor McDermott - A feasibility study? I'm not sure what you're talking about.

Councilman Higgs - A study, a analysis of what the cost would be.

Mayor McDermott - That's what we're doing on the 22nd, Councilman. It's not as accurate as it needs to be for us to make the decision we have to make. That's why it's called the Range Resolution, it'll have the study attached to it but it's not gonna be as accurate as I'm sure you guys would want it before we make that type of decision. The only way to get that number, Councilman, would be to hire somebody that has a lot more experience than I do about digging down to that final number. That's why what we're turning in for you on the 22nd, Councilman, is a range. It'll be between this number and this number and it's just an educated guess. That's where we are right now, Councilman Higgs.

Councilman Markovich - Are we gonna do a study on this building? Is that being done?

Mayor McDermott - No, because we're sort of in a limbo spot, Councilman, that we done, you know, the same kind of study on the current building but it's a range and it's not as detailed as it needs to be.

Councilman Markovich - When you say current building, this building?

Mayor McDermott - 5925 Calumet.

Councilman Markovich - So there is a study for that being done, for the cost of repair?

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir.

Councilman Markovich - Because we were led to believe about five weeks ago that there was already a report and a study done.

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Mayor McDermott - There was.

Councilman Markovich - Councilman Opinker made the comment that he was gonna request that.

Mayor McDermott - There was a study done, Councilman Markovich. It wasn't as detailed as it needed to be. It was really like rounded off numbers and very general. It wasn't as detailed. If we're gonna come to the council and say we need to move on this, this is how much it's going to cost, I want to have confidence in the numbers I'm presenting to you. This study was done. It was done over six months ago and the more we dig on it, for instance when you see the Engineer Dean, we dig on it and I don't think we're as satisfied as we should be. We feel like maybe it was sort of rounded off. You know, like, "How much did those windows cost? Eh, let's just put \$300 thousand." That kind of stuff. It's very round numbers and it's not as accurate as it needs to be. So we have it, it's just not as accurate as it needs to be. But, in regards to current City Hall, we have issues with the Flower Garden, everybody knows that. We've had issues with the Flower Garden since before I was Mayor. We have issues with the utilities for sure. We have issues with the foundation of the building, it's being eaten away by an underground river. We have issues with the East wall which is falling towards the Flower Garden. When we say falling, it's inches not feet. It's not like literally going to fall tomorrow. But it's a problem, a foundational problem that needs to be fixed. And if we stay in this building that's a decision that council, I will respect it and I will come back to you with detailed numbers on what it's gonna cost to stay here. But it would be, to stay, at least \$4 million. I'm talking, if we're gonna spend that type of money, this building would be our building for the next 30 years probably. We'd have to fix it for the next three decades. But, Councilman Markovich, just like the Range Resolution, the study that was done is a little general and it's not as detailed as it needs to be. But the only way to get to that point is to spend money. So, it's sort of like the chicken and the egg. I could hire a construction manager and spend money on that construction manager and start doing all this homework and then I'm spending money that really could be a waste of money at the end of the day if I don't get the green light from the council. That's why we decided to approach it the way we are. Any other questions? And I want to thank the council, we had all nine of you show up for the tour. I thought it was a real good tour. I learned a lot about a lot of the floors, it looks like a lot of the floors are ready to go and a few of the floors are definitely not. I think it was a good tour and I want to thank everybody for showing up and if you don't have any more questions, I just wanted to update you on why you don't have that resolution pending today.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 16-04

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Announced upcoming meetings:

Hessville C.W.; Thur., Feb. 18; 7 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center

S. Hammond C.W.; Hammond Housing Authority; Thur., Feb. 18

Whiting-Robertsdale C.W.; Thur., Feb. 11; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

We have over eleven crime watch groups in the city of Hammond. All of them are comprised of volunteers who spend their time, in a lot of cases their money, to put the meetings together to get information out to our

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Community & Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz cont. - residents so we could all take safety measures in our neighborhood. Please attend the Community and Crime Watch meetings. Know what's going on in your neighborhoods. Know how to prevent crimes from occurring in your neighborhoods. You know, you'd be surprised the people that you learn and the things that you find out.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

16-04 An Ordinance Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of the City of Hammond, Indiana, Economic Development Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2016 (Hammond Urban Academy, Inc. Project) for the purpose of Refunding the city's Outstanding Economic Development Revenue Bonds, Series 2010a (Hammond Urban Academy, Inc. Project), and approving and authorizing other actions in respect thereto

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

Councilwoman Venecz - The bottom line on this is that we are looking to refinance some bonds. The bottom line is we will be saving approximately \$180 thousand a year that can be used for the students. If anyone has any questions. Dr. Sean Egan is here who is Principal of the Hammond Academy of Science and Technology if you have anything to add.

Councilman Higgs - Just for clarification, the school can't use the funding for the students, it's a revenue bond. You can't do that. Just for clarification so all minds and hearts are clear. Because that was stated by Councilwoman Venecz but you can't use it for the students.

Councilwoman Venecz - Thank you for that clarity.

Mayor McDermott - The city of Hammond is a guarantor on the H.A.S.T. bonds. Every year the city of Hammond has to make up a shortfall between the revenue and the expenses of H.A.S.T. and it usually comes in around \$700 thousand a year. So any savings with this bond is gonna save us and the gaming revenue which is pledged to the shortfall of H.A.S.T. School. So this is saving, look around the table, this is saving all of you guys, it's saving me, because at the end of the day we're the ones making up for the shortfall. So, beside the semantics that Councilman Higgs is talking about, the fact is it's a savings and it's gonna save up millions over the life of the loan. So, it's a good deal. Take advantage of the low interest rates while they are there.

Councilman Higgs - Mayor, when you said a savings in terms of the casino funding, would that be additional money that would be allowed into each district?

Mayor McDermott - Yes, sir. \$170 thousand divided by ten is \$17 thousand more for the 3rd District. Which is about what we're talking about. So you have an extra \$20 grand, about, just based off of this alone.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Rakos, Opinker

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9332 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

None

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to have a Notice of Intent to Consider for 16-05 on February 22, 2016.

AYES: ALL

Councilman Higgs - On January 27th I sent a letter to the Planning & Development to Phil Taillon, Executive Director and Owana Miller. I'm requesting that I get a status on the redevelopment of Woodmar Shopping Center. I so move.

Councilman Markovich - Second.

Councilman Markovich - I would suggest that we take a copy and have the Clerk send a copy of the letter dated January 27th since it's already typed up and ready to go.

Council President Opinker - So moved. All those in favor? Opposed?

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: FEBRUARY 9, 2016

Councilman Higgs - Just for clarity I want to thank Atty. Kantar in regards to the property at 6404 Rev. Burns Dr. I can't wait til it's torn down. The neighbors are ecstatic and just will be extremely glad to see it finally coming down. So I'll be glad when this process is completed because it just makes the whole neighborhood look dirty. Thank you so much for your efforts.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Anne Herbert - Came before the council to let them know she just finished a two week deployment to Flint, Michigan concerning the water crisis there. They are in desperate need of our prayers and support. Anyone who wants to make donations can go to the website, www.helpforflint.com and there you can find the guidelines for water donations and water filter donations.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Paul Buck - Read where a Town Manager was prosecuted for stealing signs. We had a council member doing the same. If we're gonna prosecute one then why not the other? If we're going to raid someone's home for illegal gambling then we have a councilman running illegal gambling right here at the basketball tournament. Any time the house makes money it's considered gambling. The council should have this investigated.

Alvin Cheeks - Thanked EA Sports for live streaming in Hammond. Thanked the Oprah Winfrey Foundation that will be doing a documentary on the city of Hammond. Regarding gambling, there are many places in the city

of Hammond that still have gambling under the Johnson Act. Gambling is not considered illegal until you gamble over \$1 thousand in the state of Indiana. It's a clear statute. There's plenty of raffles going on that are not illegal.

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to adjourn.

AYES: ALL

Michael Opinker, President
Hammond Common Council
ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:25 pm
cb