

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on February 27, 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, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: Tyler

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - Good evening. The Mayor's out of town so he asked me to fill in for him. Quickly, because this just happened to be yesterday, I just want to congratulate the Tree of Life Church, who bought property at 7105 Hohman Avenue. They had their ribbon cutting yesterday. I was there with Councilwoman Alexander. It was a very nice event. Very passionate folks over there. I just want to say congratulations to Pastor Boone and everybody and thank them for investing in Hammond. Hopefully it becomes a great community gathering place in that part of the city. 219 Day was a success. I don't know how many of you were able to make it, but great turnout. All the feedback was great. One of the things I thought was really interesting was looking at the registrations, a lot of people were from South Lake County. So you got a lot of people that maybe used to live here, used to be in this area, and they always come back for this event. So, thanks for everybody that participated and helped out with that event. It was great. The Clark Fields Parcels will be up for auction in May. As you may recall, there's 37 parcels. So we just to get the word out there now. Obviously, we want to have as many bidders on the parcels as possible to make sure we're getting the most money possible for that piece of land which we think is valuable and think a lot of people are going to be excited to potentially build a home in that area. So, again, it's gonna be May. We don't have the exact day yet but if you talk to folks, especially Councilman Spitale in the real estate world, I know you talk to a lot of people, we'd love to have a great turnout for that auction and hopefully do as well as we can. Dean Button gave an update this morning that Kennedy Avenue is going to ... they're gonna be moving over to the west side of Kennedy and closing down that side of it. Obviously, when the east side was closed down there were quite a few business people that were concerned of how long and when you're going through a process like this there's really no way around inconveniencing some people but I know they're gonna try to do the best they can to make sure there's access to the businesses. But again, they are gonna block off the west side of the property coming up shortly to get that side done and that's good, it means it's on the second half of the project and hopefully will be done sooner than later. On Wednesday, March 1st at 9:00 a.m. United Hospital Services will be having an open house. This is the business that is located in the Westpoint property. I believe the address is 1335 Huehn. You're all welcome to come by

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Taillon cont. - and check out the new facility. I would say that it finalizes the property that was available there for development. However, there's a lot of conversation now about whether the 14 acres that are right off of Columbia, just west of this United Hospital Services property could potentially be redeveloped. Because we're always looking for industrial sites. Then to the south of UHS, is the Crown Property, which I think is better known as Link, the Walmart Distribution Center, and they have about 30 acres that's still able to be developed. It's been sitting there for quite a while, they own it. So we don't have control over it but this is one of the areas in the city where potentially there could be property available for a nice larger tenant in the future. I also on the side note want to mention that we have quite a few positions where we need CDL drivers. I know this isn't just us, I know it's across the country that folks are looking for people with their CDL license. If you know of anybody, if anybody watching or listening knows somebody that's looking for a job that has their CDL, please contact us. We have quite a few jobs open and, you know, I think the City of Hammond is a great place to work for and have great benefits, so please reach out. Lastly, and in this case, probably the most important. I want to talk about our staff changes in Planning & Development. For those of you that aren't aware, Africa Tarver gave her notice. She's gonna be moving away to be by her daughter, as I understand it. She has another job, which we're excited for her. I'll get back to that in just one second. With that change, Anne Anderson has been promoted to Executive Director of Planning & Development. So she'll be taking over for Africa Tarver. Juan Moreno will be promoted to Director of Economic Development. So that leaves Juan's old position available. I think we did post things out. I believe we call it the TIF Coordinator position. But it's a role in Economic Development that's very important. I know Anne and Juan are going to be looking for somebody really good to fill that role. Most importantly, I want to congratulate Africa, for the years that she has given to the city. The many, many, years where she has had a respected reputation throughout Lake County and beyond. She has been a leader. She's been a part of so many projects in the City of Hammond that it would be impossible to create a list. And I know all of you have worked with her and she's been nothing but the most professional person that she could be and I just want to congratulate her on her next adventure. I know she's gonna do great and that Texas is gonna be excited to have her. In a side note to that, Africa was our RDA representative, so in the interim I'm going to be filling in for her again. I served on the RDA Board before, so I'll be doing it again for probably a short period of time until we find a permanent replacement. With that, I'll be happy to take any questions that anybody might have.

Councilman Woerpel - You talk about the Clark property, and I've been getting questions about the Gavit property, is there any updates on that. Is there any updates on that? On what might happen there? Or is it still under that dollar thing?

Chief of Staff Taillon - Yeah, I think, as I understand it, and probably an attorney could answer better, but unfortunately the School City lost that court case and I think it's under appeal. I'm sure Scott Miller could answer that. But, so, what it basically says, and this is a crude version of it, is that when they are going to sell property that they have to offer it to other schools for a dollar first, prior to ... for example, offering it to the City of Hammond, where we could potentially redevelop it. So it's kind of disappointing that the court ruled in that direction. I think the School City is still kind of figuring out what their next steps are. I think they might be appealing but I can't say that 100%. But until, you know, something ... either the court changes their opinion or, you know, they eventually offer it and nobody offers to purchase it, it's kind of not available at the moment.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Councilman Woerpel - I guess the question that would put it in context to me, who with League starting there's always a need for practice fields and if somebody wanted to try to practice over there, would the contact the School City?

Chief of Staff Taillon - I believe so, and I'm pretty sure Superintendent Miller would let us use that unless there is a liability issue that I wouldn't be aware of, I'm sure they would be happy to let us, allow us, to use that. You're right, because there's definitely more demand than there is supply when it comes to that.

Councilman Woerpel - Thank you.

Councilman Kalwinski - You were talking about the west Cline and the wooded area (unclear) avenue when Westpoint was being built there was a cry for keeping that area natural. (Unclear) there seemed to be an agreement about that (unclear) on paper. I guess there was a lot of discussion (unclear).

Chief of Staff Taillon - Good point. We'll definitely look to see if there was anything that was formalized in an agreement and so I'm assuming the concern is from residents in that area maybe wanting to keep it wooded. We could certainly ... you know, there's a lot of conversation to have about this before anything would ever go forward. But your point is taken.

Councilman Kalwinski - (Unclear) there's a lot of wildlife (unclear).

Chief of Staff Taillon - Okay, good point. I mean there's that 30 acres that Crown is sitting on. It's right next to Link. So it's inside. Not the acreage you're speaking about. There's no trees on this acreage that I'm speaking of. This is just flat ground. That property certainly is primed to be developed and I know if either Africa or Anne were up here talking to you, they'd say they get so many inquiries about large tracts of land and that's why we can't bring in some of the companies that we'd like to, because we just don't have the space. So, I think that 30 acres is certainly an ideal piece of property for us to be talking to Crown to potentially redevelop.

Councilman Kalwinski - Thank you.

Councilman Tyler - I first wanted to congratulate Africa, Anne and Juan all on these life changes. I know Economic Development works very hard to bring new businesses to our city and to support others. I want to congratulate all three of them, and like Phil said, a special congratulations to Africa. I know she's ... I worked with her a lot over the passed few years and she's been a joy to work with and has taught me a lot. So it's sad to see her go but excited for her future and of course the future of our city. Phil I do have one question, I know that a couple months ago, once we saw a lot of the posts, in terms of the CDL positions going up, we got a lot of feedback from our community, in terms of the pay being lower than what a lot of other companies were averaging. Even when you work at other states and municipalities they seem top be a bit low. Have we looked into raising that pay scale a bit?

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Taillon - So at Mayor Tom’s direction, he asked us to bring in an outside group to do an analysis on our pay. Not just for Teamsters or folks that are CDL drivers, but also for Police & Fire. It’s one thing for us to make decisions on what somebody should get paid, it’s another thing to maybe have an outside group take a look at it as well. So, at Mayor Tom’s direction, we are gonna, kinda ... we have not identified the group yet but we are close to identifying a group that’s gonna help us make sure that we’re competitive and that, you know, isn’t the reason that we have a number of positions available. So, I would say Mayor agrees, Councilman Tyler, we’re definitely pursuing that. And could I also mention, Mr. President, Wednesday, there is a pot luck, I’m not sure exactly what time, for Africa in the Mayor’s Office. So please, if you’re not working, you can come by and wish her well, I know she’d really appreciate that.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of February 13, 2023 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the claims from February 14, 2023 through February 22, 2023. Claim #965 through #1295, inclusive. In the amount of \$15,595,467.06.

ROLL CALL VOTE (????)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- 23-03 To Appropriate Funds from the Operating Balance for the Hammond Park Department 23-03
Sponsored by Janet Venecz
- 23-04 Creating a New Fund (#2474) and to Appropriate Funds within the Parks Department 23-04
for the Harrison Park Restoration Project Grant
Sponsored by Barry Tyler, Jr.
- 23-05 To Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for the Hammond Park 23-05
Department
Sponsored by Janet Venecz

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC HEARINGS cont.

23-06	<p>Vacating an Approximately 1242 Foot Portion of Street in the 2700-2800 Blocks of Eggers Avenue and Elder Avenue, an Approximately 488 Portion of Street in the 1400 Block of 127th and 128th Streets and an Approximately 1242 Portion of a North-South Alley in the 2700-2800 Blocks between Eggers and Elder Avenues in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana Sponsored by Mark Kalwinski and Petitioned by Hammond Dept. of Redevelopment</p>	23-06
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No one spoke.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Alexander- Our scholarship is available now to our Hammond students. Um, they can pick up an application with their guidance counselors. It's going to be until March 31st. Also, it is going to be awarded on April 24th. Also on May 24th is when we will have those winners come in and receive their certificates. And if they have questions, they should see their guidance counselors. We encourage each student to apply. We will give away fifteen \$1000.00 scholarships this year. Also, Prom Genie is doing a dress giveaway. This is for Highschool Seniors & Juniors that are going to Prom. It will be Saturday, March 25th from 9am to 2pm. It will be free dresses, shoes, jewelry, makeup and hair consultations. They will hold it at the Jean Shepherd. They must be a student with current ID for the 2022-2023 school year.

Councilman Kalwinski I received a communications from the Hammond Mohawks. The Hammond Mohawks, again this year will be sponsoring the Memorial Day Parade. If you would like to be in the parade, call the parade chairman, Larry Fentriss at the Hammond Mohawk Club, 219-933-9823. Thank you.

Council President Rakos- HC3 will be having a St. Patrick Day Parade on St. Patrick Day. It goes from Harding all the way down to 165th to Kennedy Avenue North. It will be the 1st ever Twilight St. Patty's Day Parade.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board - Councilman Worpel- We approved \$10,445.57 for change order number 6-10 Chicago Street Phase 2. We also approved \$50,000 for General Eng. Services First Group for their annual retainer. We approved \$12,000 for Supplemental Design Services for Stateline Street Closures from First Group Eng. We also approved \$19,000 for Supplemental Design Services for 165th and Stateline improvements from First Group Eng. Councilman Emerson did attend and inquire about re-paving. He requested and you have an update... I forgot what they told you, councilman.

Councilman Emerson- Yes, Councilman Woerpel it's on the list. I also commented on Stateline and 165th. It's been an eyesore for years. I'm glad we're seeing some movement on that.

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Upcoming meetings:
Edison Community Watch; Wed., March 1st ; Edison School; 6:30 p.m.
Harrison Park C.W.; March 7th Tues., . 6; VFW on Hohman; 6 p.m.
Hessville C.W.; Thur. March. 16th ; 6 p.m.; Jean Shepherd Center
Irving Community Watch; Fri., March. 3rd ; Irving School; 9:15 a.m.
Whiting-Robertsdale C.W.; Thur., March. 9th ; 6:30 p.m.; Calumet College

As usual, if you see anything suspicious please do not hesitate to contact our Police Department.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Kalwinski - Brought out 23-06.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE

23-03 To Appropriate of Funds from the Operating Balance for the Hammond Park
Department

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for passage.

Councilwoman Venecz- This is an ordinance that we do every year appropriating \$446,000.In this case the funds would be appropriated to various events throughout the city.

ROLL CALL VOTE (22-03)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9592 PASSED

23-04 Creating a New Fund (Fund #2474) and to Appropriate Funds within the Parks
Department for the Harrison Park Restoration Project Grant

Councilman Tyler, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved for passage.

Councilman Tyler- This ordinance is creating an additional fund, a new fund for us to accept the grant for the restoration for Harrison Park, as well as to appropriate our own funds to that, as this is a matching grant. I'm excited to see this happen. It needs a lot of specific upgrades. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (23-04)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9593 PASSED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE cont.

23-05 To Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for the Hammond Park Department

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

Councilwoman Venecz- This is appropriating funding from the operating balance from the Innkeepers Tax to the Hotel/Motel fund in the amount of \$16, 596.20.

ROLL CALL VOTE (23-05)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9594 PASSED

23-06 Vacating an Approximately 1242 Foot Portion of street in the 2700-2800 Blocks of Eggers Avenue and Elder Avenue, an Approximately 488 Portion of Street in the 1400 Block of 127th and 128th Streets and an Approximately 1242 Portion of a North-South Alley in the 2700-2800 Blocks between Eggers and Elder Avenues in the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana

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

Councilman Kalwinski- unclear...

ROLL CALL VOTE (23-06)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9595 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

23-07 To Appropriate Funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for Economic Development purposes in 2023.

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting at 5:15 p.m. on March 13, 2023 and a Public Hearing on March. 13, 2023.

Councilman Spitale- This ordinance will appropriate funds in the Hotel/Motel Innkeepers Tax Fund for Economic Development. AYES: ALL

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

23-08 Amending Fund number for FY 2021 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program funds
Awarded to the City of Hammond Police Department

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting at 5:15 p.m. on March 13, 2023 and a Public Hearing on March. 13, 2023. AYES: ALL

23-09 Appropriating the Proceeds of the Annual Action Plan and Dealing with other matters
Pertaining to the Expenditure of Plan Proceeds for Program year 2023

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading, referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a meeting at 5:15 p.m. on March 13, 2023 and a Public Hearing on March. 13, 2023. AYES: ALL

Councilman Spitale- Unclear..

RESOLUTIONS

23R-01 Authorizing the filing of an Annual Action Plan Application and Designating Signatories for
Payment Voucher on Letters of Credit for the 2023 Annual Action Plan Programs

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

Councilman Spitale- This resolution is to apply for the grants for ordinance 23-09. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adoption)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 RESOLUTION NO. R01 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Kalwinski- Unclear...

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Rosek- We need to move towards more smart developments. That does not destroy the very thing that makes us feel special. New homes, businesses, and infrastructure need to be built in locations that make economic and social sense. Mobility for pedestrians should be our number one priority. It's just as easy to go under rather than over obstacles. It takes less material and manpower to construct an underpass and it takes up a lot less space. Let's nurture the soul of our town and make Hessville a better place to live.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Linda Angiano-I want to thank Pedro “Pete” Torres for framing the resolution that this council passed last year. COSECHA went down to Indianapolis again, and it’s ongoing work. And several major cities have passed resolutions similar to the one you guys did. I saw a headline in a newspaper. An adult was killed by trying to cross the tracks. We need to do all we can to protect our children. I just think we all need to revisit this topic on the train. We can have an underpass. It is beautiful in West Lafayette. It goes under the tracks and it has sidewalks, with guardrails on both sides, to walk under the train so on that I will keep beating the drum.

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

AYES: ALL

2023 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

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

Scott Rakos, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:50 P.M.
cb/dw

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk