

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on October 15, 2018 in the Hammond City Council Chambers.

Council President Janet Venecz presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.
Invocation by Janet Venecz.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes from October 1, 2018 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from September 26, 2018 through October 10, 2018. Claim #5823 through claim #6202, inclusive.

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to amend in claims:

#6203	Anthony Higgs	Common Council	\$69.54
#6204	Anthony Higgs	Common Council	\$88.20
#6205	Anthony Higgs	Common Council	\$7.96
#6206	Mike Albert Leasing	Rainy Day	\$97,395.14
#6207	St. Casimir School	Common Council	\$150.00

Councilman Higgs - I was interested in finding out what the claim for #5874 for the Ministerial Alliance. If someone can answer that question?

Mayor McDermott - That's for the parade. We helped support the Ministerial Alliance for the parade for the Martin Luther King Event that we have at the Civic Center. It's recurring. We've been doing that for years. It helps offset the expenses of the event.

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 CLAIMS AMENDED

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (as amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED
(as amended)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Higgs - The meeting, last meeting, I was approached by one of the audience in regards to grandstanding. I wanted to make it perfectly clear I don't have no need to grandstand for no reason whatsoever. I do my job 365 days a year, not just at election time. So for whatever district you represent or wherever you live, which I don't know, I would concentrate on that councilman.

Councilman Torres - I have two letters from Hammond Elderly Senior Citizens Home at 5111 Sohl Avenue. They are asking for donations for their Thanksgiving Dinner and also for the Christmas Holiday Celebration which will be on November 21st and December 21st. I'd appreciate if the council would donate generously.

Councilman Higgs read correspondence from Dean Button, City Engineer, responding to a letter previously sent, stating that he would add the 6100 block of Marshal and the 1000 block of Cleveland to the list of light designs. He asked for clarification of the exact location of an overlay request on the 700 block of Sohl. The 800-900 block of May St. alley was inspected. A list of sidewalks to be repaired in the 3rd District was attached. 5947 Hohman and 246 Waltham were inspected and on the list to repair.

Councilman Higgs announced that tomorrow there will be a ribbon cutting on the ground breaking for the new Hammond High School. This Tuesday, October 16th, 2018 at 4 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole and Finance Committees - Councilman Woerpel - Brought out 18-19, 18-20, 18-21, 18-22 and 18-23.

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

Tues., Oct. 16; East Hammond Pullman C.W.; Ophelia Steen Center; 6:30 p.m.

Thurs., Oct. 18; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepherd Center; 7 p.m.

Fri., Nov. 2; Irving Community Watch; Irving School; 9:15 a.m.

Wed., Oct. 17; Lafayette Neighborhood Watch.; Lafayette School; 6:30 p.m.

Tues., Oct. 30; Pulaski Park Neighborhood Assoc.; American Legion; 6:30 p.m.

South Hammond C.W.; Thur., Oct. 18; Hammond Housing Authority Bldg; 7 p.m.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz cont.

Edison Community Watch and the East Side Community Council in partnership with Home Depot will again be hosting our 7th Annual Citywide Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 27 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Home Depot. Dress the children. Bring them out and they can Trunk or Treat from trunk to trunk to trunk. If any organization is interested in participating you can contact Councilwoman Venecz or Leroy Howard Jr. with the East Side Community Council.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

18-19 2019 City of Hammond Budget Proposal

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Higgs, moved for passage.

Councilman Higgs - If I could have Heather approach the podium and give us an explanation to any additional changes to this budget from last year.

City Controller Garay - As we discussed at a few of our budget hearings, this session there were a few minor changes from last years budget. The General Fund increased less than 1%. The total budget is about \$68.5 million. That includes a 2% increase in salaries for all employees. Our largest expenses continue to be College Bound at \$4.6 million, insurance costs at \$12.2 million and public safety, which includes \$48.5 million on the General Fund and \$55.5 million Public Safety funds. That's broken down by about \$33 million as Police expenses and about \$23 million in Fire expenses. So, as we saw through the budget hearings, the different graphs and charts we talked about, we tried to cut where we can in our Supplies and Services line items. We really are pretty lean there and the bulk of it that is left is Personnel expenses. So, we see the majority of those personnel expenses going to our larger departments, Public Safety and then Public Works. We are able to shift some expenses to out LIT and CEDIT Funds to cover the cost of insurance and utilities. Our gaming budget, there was a change there. We have all of the \$12.5 million transferred to the General Fund to help with that shortfall there. All districts will be receiving \$1.75 million. The Shared 10% will receive \$1 million and Mayor's Gaming will receive \$4.25 million. The Shared 10% funds are used for citywide matching projects for the Engineering Department that we typically do grants for. We did receive a special LOIT Distribution a couple years ago so we've carried that forward and felt that we were able to reduce the 10% to allow for a little bit more money to be distributed amongst the districts and the Mayor's Gaming. Our major sources of revenue continue to be property taxes, though we take a large hit there. We probably will only collect about \$32 to 33 million, and that's assuming a 92% collection rate, which is net of the Circuit Breaker. Our entire levy, our max levy is at \$47 million. We lose about 11 of that to the Circuit Breaker. So, our entire levy, when we reduce the Circuit Breaker amount there we're only collecting at that 92% rate, so when we're talking about \$11 million loss to the Circuit Breaker Credits, you can see pretty easily where we need that \$12.5 million transfer from the Gaming to make our budget work. We still will collect about \$35 million, possibly a little bit more in the Gaming Funds. Your budget reflects that and that's from Shared Gaming dollars from Development Agreements as well as the taxes generated by the Emissions Tax and Wagering Tax on the Gaming sales. We

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

City Controller Garay cont. - also will collect about \$8 million in water sales. Debt, we have not retired any debt this year but we'll be retiring the 2008 Judgement Bonds next year and we did add the Park Bond Debt onto this years budget which will account for some of the increase that you see in the overall budget itself, and that is going to go towards those four district pools that will be redone and we'll hopefully see some of those opening next year.

Councilman Higgs - Again, Heather, I want to applaud your efforts and I can identify people within the administration that are really doing a wonderful job and you are one of them and I acknowledge your responsibility and what it takes as an accountant because I have one in my family as well. But, certainly I really appreciate your knowledge.

City Controller Garay - Thank you. I appreciate, Councilman.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

AYES: Markovich, Spitale, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

8/1/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9417 PASSED

18-20 2019 Hammond Sanitary District Budget Proposal

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

Councilman Higgs - Marty, if you could step to the podium and explain if there are any additional costs that you will occur in 2019, I would appreciate it.

Marty Wielgos, Sanitary District Manager - I'm gonna let Rachel go through that and answer those questions for you, Councilman. There really isn't a whole lot of change. Our budget for the Sewer Department is pretty consistent and she'll talk to you a little bit about Debt Service.

Rachel Montes, Business Manager, - In the Sewer Maintenance budget the largest increase was in Repairs and Maintenance, as we went over in the budget workshop that we had. We're gonna have money left over from 2018, so we are now able to now fund a lot of our repairs from this fund. The other increase is another lease purchase, we're gonna replace one more Vactor and we are also gonna replace a Service Truck that is over twenty years old. Other than that, Salaries is 2% raise on the Sewer Maintenance. The Debt funds, the Non-exempt, there was an increase due to the Bonds Series 2015 and that bond has an adjustable rate, and we also issued a Bond 2018C for a Headworks project that will also increase that budget. Our Exempt fund had an increase due to refunding Bond Series 2018. The payments are higher in the beginning years and the interest decreases as the bond grows older and bond interests reduced on some of the older bonds, so there's actually a decrease in that budget.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE cont.

Marty Wielgos - One thing I just want to remind the council on is that the Sewer Maintenance Budget, about \$4 million, disappears with the caps next year. So, in 2020 that is gone. So I'm working with staff, I'm working with Heather, I'm working with the Mayor, coming up with some different plans. Obviously, the city can not run without a Sewer Department, it would be detrimental. It just wouldn't make any sense. So, what I'm trying to do is to come up with replacing \$4 million that gets lost with that tax cap. I just wanted to remind you because I'll be coming back to talk to you about what we believe the best plan is to do that.

Councilman Higgs - One way probably would be to increase fees. Just a suggestion. Food for thought. Being a councilman for so many years I'm knowledgeable, so thanks.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9418 PASSED

18-21 2019 Hammond Redevelopment Budget Proposal

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9419 PASSED

18-22 2019 Civil City Salary Ordinance

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

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9420 PASSED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Higgs - I just wanted to thank Mark for meeting with me in the proposed design of the Martin Luther King Park. We had an opportunity to meet last week at 7 a.m., early in the morning to just go over some general plans. So I just want to thank him for taking his time out to schedule that and meet with me.

Council President Venecz - Is that in reference to Mark Heintz with Parks?

Councilman Higgs - Superintendent of Parks, that's who take cares of all the parks in the city of Hammond. I'm sure you're aware of that.

Councilwoman Venecz - You just didn't state his last name.

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to Code Enforcement regarding weeds at Norfolk Railroad by Sohl Avenue and Calumet Avenue. The weeds on both sides are extremely high, over four feet.

Councilman Higgs - The street is actually Fayette, it's in the 2nd District, not the 3rd. So, it's from Calumet to Sohl and it's on Fayette where the weeds are extremely high and have been high for quite some time. That's in the 2nd District of the city of Hammond.

Council President Venecz - All in favor? All opposed?

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: OCTOBER 16, 2018

Councilman Torres, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to send a letter to the city's Street Lighting Department and also to NIPSCO. It regards NIPSCO poles on the west alley of 5200 block of Ann Street. Pole #74/382, that's the south end, it does not have a light. Pole #844/54 is burned out. If we could get those replaced. We put an order in May, no response from NIPSCO. Let's see if we could get a response this time.

AYES: ALL

LETTER SENT: OCTOBER 16, 2018

Councilman Higgs - Also I submitted a letter to Mark in regards to some trees so hopefully... I approved and signed off on the letter to give him some additional funding to get the dead trees within my district. So, hopefully we'll get them down shortly and he has that list. I would appreciate it if he could get them torn down as quickly as possible. Some of them I've been looking at for about two years and they're just sitting there. Hopefully I can get them down. I've been requesting them, to get them down, for quite some time.

Mayor McDermott - A lot of the complaints and letters that I hear coming from the council, you know, could go a lot quicker if you go through the Hammond 311 App. It would literally happen the next day. Like, Councilman, if you pull up to a light that's burned out, take a picture of it on your smart phone or just type in the pole number. It goes right to the department. Instead of waiting two weeks until the next Council meeting

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont. - and then having your secretary type out a letter and then send the letter to the department. The process could take a couple weeks. You could do it and it will be done the next day.

Councilman Higgs, same thing, I suggest you use Hammond 311. It's a lot faster. It gets you to the front of the line. A lot of these complaints that you guys are writing letters over can be handled right on your smart phone, and I know you have smart phones. I just want to point that out because we constantly tell the public that we want them to use this, it's more efficient. I think the Council should lead by example and do it themselves also. Just my two cents.

Council President Venecz - There is also an area on NIPSCO's website that you can report an out light.

Mayor McDermott - You can do crime tips. You can do all kinds of stuff on Hammond 311 and we have thousands and thousands of people using it every year and then there are still members of the Hammond Council that want to send a letter like it's 1972. I mean, we have technology that gets you to the front of the line and you're a Council person, you're gonna be at the front of the line. If you see these problems just put them there. I just did the one on Fayette, it was easy. I just pulled up Fayette, said tall grass, boom, done.

Councilman Higgs - Mayor, if I felt comfortable enough with doing that, and I've done it, that would be one thing. But the reality of it is to assure that it's documented and I have documentation, I send a letter. That's what we pay a secretary \$50 something thousand to send letters.

Mayor McDermott - I don't agree. I think it's grandstanding.

Councilman Higgs - That's your point of opinion, you're entitled to that.

Mayor McDermott - I think a lot of the stuff could be done. If I saved everything up for the Council meeting, I came in here and talked about the hundreds and hundreds of things I did every Council meeting, you guys would probably scratch your heads and say, "Why are you doing this, Mayor?" I could just take care of it on my phone, and I do.

Councilman Higgs - My responsibility to my constituents is to answer their call and I'm not here to argue with anyone. I'm gonna get the job done one way or the other. So, if I have to stand before City Hall and plead for someone to get it done, I'll do it. Whatever is necessary for the job to get done.

Councilman Emerson - I would point out, you know you had mentioned the NIPSCO website, I've used it and there's also a comments section on there and you can feel free, Councilman, to mention that you're a councilman or not. But that seems to work for the NIPSCO poles, anyway.

Councilman Torres - As far as 5200 block of Ann is concerned, our Lighting Department is aware of that. They've been aware since about May. They notified NIPSCO several times and NIPSCO have seemed to ignored it. That's why I thought sending NIPSCO a letter might speed up things somewhat.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Woerpel - I guess I want to give my 5th District Supervisor a shout out because when I have an issue, whether it's Code Enforcement, Street Dept., Lights, I call him and it's taken care of that day. So, good job Jeff Rutherford.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None.

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

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:45 p.m.
cb

Minutes approved at the Common Council meeting of November 5, 2018.