

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on November 20, 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 Council President Venecz.

Moment of Silence by Councilman Higgs and Councilman Markovich

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

Council President Venecz- I would like to announce that the Hammond Common Council, met in an Executive Session to conduct interviews for Personnel on November 13,14, and 15. I would also like to announce that Ms. Jessica Castillo is here from the Area Career Center with some of her students. I welcome her.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes from November 05, 2018 and place on file.

Councilman Markovich - I would like to have an additional conversation listed under when motion send Sharon Daniels the Personnel Director, for filling out job applications, full disclosure of all discussion that was made by the Council at the time, addition to page 19 and page 20 of the minutes. I so move.

Councilman Torres second the motion.

Council President Venecz- What is it that you're adding to page 19?

Council Markovich- Uh, there's conversation that's on the tape that's not listed there. Discussion between the Council Persons. I would like to have that all included on there and noted in the minutes.

Council President Venecz - Motion by Councilman Markovich, second by Councilman Torres, to add the additional conversation to page 19 on the minutes from November 5, 2018.

Councilman Markovich - Correction 19 and 20, and also during the roll call discussion when the vote roll call was being voted on.

Council President Venecz - Any discussion all those in favor? Opposed?

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Markovich, supported by Councilman Higgs, moved to approve the claims from October 31, 2018 through November 14, 2018. Claim # 6655 through claim # 6933, inclusive.

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

#6934	Bownet Sports	CDBG	2,366.78
#6935	BSN Sports	CDBG	2,957.25
#6936	BSN Sports	CDBG	2,015.17

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

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- I would like to announce a Thanksgiving Feed the Homeless Event being held in my district from 4 to 8 pm on 11-20-18 at Lil Lou’s Barber College at 5625 Hohman Ave. This is Thanksgiving for the homeless. A dinner will be served. Free haircuts and shaves.

Councilman Higgs- I would like to thank Councilman Spitale and Councilman Markovich for their participation in the annual food dinner that I give at the Mt. Zion Pleasant View Plaza for the residents that live there. I really appreciate Councilman Markovich coming out and helping at the event. The residents look forward to it. It’s an annual event that I’ve been doing for about 17 years.

Councilman Markovich- I received correspondence dated 09-19 -18 from the City Clerk, that an Executive Session of the Hammond Council, the City of Hammond, was held on 09-19-18 at 5:30 in the Hammond City Council Chambers. A roll call was taken. Markovich, Spitale, Kalwinski, Torres, Higgs, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos, Venecz, and the topic was City Council Personnel.

Council President Venecz - And who did you receive that from?

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilman Markovich- City Clerk, we have copies in your mailboxes. Minutes of the Common Council meeting dated November 15, 2018 an Executive Session of the Hammond Common Council was to be held on November 15, 2018 at 6pm in the Caucus Room. The Hammond City Clerk’s office was present. Says here there was no meeting held. It was also a legal notice in the newspaper stated that notice of Executive Session, please take notice that the Hammond Common Council, of the City of Hammond will hold an Executive Session on 11-20-2018 following the Council meeting, pursuant to Indiana code, the meeting will be held in the Council Caucus Room 205, 2nd floor, Hammond City Hall, 5925 Calumet Ave., as motioned at the Council Meeting on 11-05-2018. The following will be discussed, Personnel and Ligation. From the City Clerks Office.

Councilman Higgs read a card of thank you he received from Douglas Leday Sr. and family.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee - Councilman Woerpel- Brought out 18-25 and 18-26.

Police and Fire Committee - Councilman Rakos - Brought out 18-27.

Community and Crime Watch Committee- Councilwoman Venecz- Upcoming meetings:
Tues., Nov.20; East Hammond Pullman C.W. ; Ophelia Steen Center; 6:30p.m.
Wed., Dec.05; Edison Community Watch; Edison School 6:30p.m.
Tues., Dec.04;Harrison Park Crime Watch VFW 5820 Hohman Ave 6:30p.m.
Fri., Dec.07;Irving Community Crime Watch; Irving School; 9:15a.m.
Wed., Nov.21st Lafayette Neighborhood Watch Lafayette School 6:00 p.m.
Tues., Nov. 27; Pulaski Park Neighborhood Assoc.; American Legion 6:30 p.m.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING - FINAL PASSAGE

18-25 Creating a New Fund for the Hammond Fire Department Grant Funds

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

Councilman Higgs- Basically what it does it allows individuals who apply for grants it help the Fire Dept., the line item will be identified so we will know where funding is going.

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. 9422 PASSED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

18-28 BZA; Z-18-09; For a Variance of Use from Zoning Ordinance to Allow a Central Plant Facility for Dry Cleaners and Laundries located at 1200-1600 141st Street and 4009-4043 Calumet Avenue within the City of Hammond, Lake County Indiana.

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

Councilman Kalwinski - Tonight we would be voting for a Variance of Use from Zoning Ordinance to allow a Central Plant Facility for Dry Cleaners and Laundries located at 1200-1600 141st Street and 4009-4043 Calumet Ave., subject to the conditions stated in the petition .

Councilman Higgs- I would like to personally thank Mr. Robert Brown and their company for investing in Hammond. It's a great investment, \$45 million dollars, I applaud your efforts. Thank you for staying in Hammond.

Councilman Kalwinski- In discussions in caucus what was mentioned was there are 95 employees with Unifirst now and they will be looking at a 10% bump when they finish the new facility, also approximately 60% or more of the employees are Hammond residents, and when you total out the building, the property, and the machinery, the investment will range between \$12 and \$14 million dollars, and so we are grateful. While they're leaving the 2nd District, they're remaining in Hammond in the 1st District. And also met with them before this petition to see what the landscaping and the design on the outside and there was some discussion and agreements about some upgrades to the property that weren't included initially, so thank you to Unifirst and all the fellows I worked with to get that done I appreciate it.

Councilman Higgs- I am sure the Mayor is extremely happy about this project, as well he probably wants to speak in regards to this project, as well the benefit of keeping them in Hammond. Mayor, would you like to say something?

Mayor McDermott - Yes, councilman.

Councilman Higgs - I just was wondering if you would like to say something.

Mayor McDermott - I'm not a shy person. I usually come up and speak for myself. I appreciate you summoning me though. But no, it's a great project. It's a success story. I heard a couple of people say that they're moving out of the 2nd and into the 1st, that's not the case at all. Actually this is a case of success. They got too big for their building. They had to do multiple shifts, and trying to hire more people so that they can get it done in one shift . So their current location is between the railroad tracks on Calumet, literally limited by size. This is a success story from the 2nd district. This is a piece of property on 141st and Calumet that has been vacate since I've been Mayor, which is a long time. It's a good addition to the 1st, but I don't want anyone to think that them leaving the 2nd district, cause they were very successful in the 2nd, which is why they're moving to the 1st. Physically, they're unable to stay in the current space. So, thank you very much, Councilman Higgs, I wasn't trying to be disrespectful. It's just you guys were doing a pretty good job of your own.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Councilman Torres- As councilman of the 2nd district, I'm not bitter at all that they're moving from the 2nd District. I am just happy they're staying in Hammond.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried 9/0/0 VARIANCE OF USE Z-18-16 APPROVED

Councilman Higgs- I received a correspondence from the Hammond Resource Equal Employment Opportunity and all Department Heads, from Heather Garay, City Controller. Please find the revised educational assistance program form for reimbursement tuition expense for employees. Also included in the 2004 Executive Order authorizing this program. If you have employees that will be seeking reimbursement for tuition assistance they must use this form, follow the procedures outline in the Executive Order and provide all the documentation. Reimbursement to employees in your department is contingent upon your dept. having funds available in their budget. If you have any questions regarding the educational assistance program, please call Sharon Daniels at 219-853-6501.

Councilman Higgs- I would like to thank the Public Works Dept. in regards to 5603 Calumet Ave, where there was an abandoned property in my district for a number of years. Where they were basically throwing debris all behind the building on a number of occasions. I had to address it in regards to trying to get it cleaned up. I really appreciate from the Hardest Hit Fund, the funds were dedicated for demo projects within the city of Hammond, Gary, and East Chicago. Finally, this property is gone. I really appreciate their efforts in getting this done. It was really an eye sore.

Council President Venecz- I wanted to mention that we had a ribbon cutting this past week at Edison Park. It was the 1st park of the ones that are being renovated that was completed, its beautiful. I am particularly proud because you always hear me talk about Edison Community Watch, and our neighborhood group collected over 800 pounds of plastic bottle caps to get two plastic benches made out of recycled bottle caps that we donated to the Edison Park project. It blended in perfectly to such a beautiful design. And I just wanted to let everyone know that they need to come over to Edison Park. Take a look at the beautiful park on the South side of our city and admire the benches that our community group donated.

Mayor McDermott - I want to address a food fight we had at the last meeting. And just sort of address the issue. I don't care how we march forward, but I think the public was confused of what we talked about 2 weeks ago regarding the residency ordinance. I believe in the residency ordinance. As Mayor, of course, I proposed it. I know the council believes in the residency ordinance, there is no doubt in my mind about that. We were talking about a one time exemption that would have left the residency ordinance in place. Just want to make that clear. I think there's a misconception in the public what happened two weeks ago. Of course when you eliminate departments as we've done, and I am the Mayor, so I've asked the council to authorize, and you guys authorized, there are vacancies people are losing their jobs. We are trying to make tough decisions with people

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

Mayor McDermott - that we know, and in this case, we were talking about a one time exemption leaving the residency ordinance in place, and that was the debate. At no time was there any discussion ever about the residency ordinance itself. I don't know if you guys want to go further, if not, I am fine with that. Certainly not trying to start any arguments. Trying to make it clear to the public we have people losing their jobs, because decisions I made closing down the Court. The Clerks staffing has gone way down, people are trying to find jobs within the city. That was the dilemma we found ourselves in. I know you knew what we were arguing about, but the public was confused about it. Another thing is we weren't hiring anyone off the streets either. This particular employee has over 20 years with the city, has been here way before the residency ordinance was in place. We don't make it a habit to hire non residents, that's not the way it works here. I don't know if anyone else, I just wanted to clarify that for the public. I figured we might as well do it at the Council Meeting cause this is where we had the debate 2 weeks ago.

Council President Venecz- I would like to announce that coming up on December 19, 2018, the East Side Community Council, in partnership with the Hammond Police Department, is having their holiday treats giveaway. If you have time to wrap gifts, please give Leroy Howard or Councilwoman Venecz a call. Please lend your support .

Councilman Higgs- I would like to acknowledge a couple of my constituents that are in the audience. One happens to be on the Redevelopment Commission, Gregory Myricks, they had a meeting and he is here tonight. As well as one of my other constituents in the audience. Thank you for coming.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

None

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

AYES: ALL

Janet Venecz, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:

Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:40 p.m.
dw

Minutes approved at the Common Council meeting of December 10, 2018.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*