

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on October 25, 2021 in the Hammond City Council Chambers and was available to be viewed at gohammond on Facebook, gohammond.tv live and per Zoom.

Council President Dave Woerpel presided.

City Clerk Robert J. Golec facilitated.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by all.

A Moment of Silence was observed.

ROLL CALL

PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Kalwinski, Torres, Tyler, Emerson, Rakos, Woerpel

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL: 9

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - I do have several updates for everybody I'd like to share. First and foremost, I wanted to ... I'm excited to announce some promotions that we are undertaking in the city of Hammond. Mayor Tom McDermott, Jr. is pleased to announce two promotions in the Hammond Fire Department for Deputy Chief and Battalion Chief. Bernie Grisolia, a fourteen year veteran of the Hammond Fire Department has been promoted to Deputy Chief. Grisolia began his career with the Hammond Fire Department on September of 2008 as an EMT. He's worked in various positions with the department. He started his career in the Fire Department working part on the ambulance crew through hard work and diligence he worked through the ranks as a Private Assistant Engineer and advanced to his current position of Battalion Chief. Mr. Grisolia was raised in Hammond and graduated from St. Francis de Sales High School. He continues always looking for opportunities for himself and obviously put himself in position to get this promotion. So we congratulate him on becoming the Deputy Chief. I probably should mention that prior to that our current Deputy Chief, Kevin Margraf has announced his retirement. I believe his last day is November 3rd or 4th. Which is why we have these promotions taking place. Of course, we want to thank Deputy Chief Margraf for all the years of service that he's done with the Fire Department. He's been an amazing person to work with, from my perspective. I know Mayor Tom will have his own comments at the next Council meeting that he's here. But he has been a great leader and we thank him for everything he's done for the city of Hammond and of course, the city of Hammond Fire Department. With Mr. Grisolia's promotion, we also want to announce that Ryan Anguiano, a seventeen year veteran of the Hammond Fire Department has now been promoted to Battalion Chief. Mr. Anguiano began his career with the Hammond Fire Department in February of 2005. During his tenure with the Fire Department he has held various positions such as private, paramedic, and engineer. Prior to joining the Hammond Fire Department, Mr. Anguiano had worked as a paramedic for the Hobart Fire Department since 1996. Mr. Anguiano's continuous in fire instruction and earned several certificates. He's a lifelong resident of Hammond. A graduate of Gavit High School. So we want to congratulate Mr. Anguiano as well. Mayor Tom did have a quote saying, "I'm pleased to be able to promote these two outstanding individuals who have remained Hammond residents throughout their

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Taillon cont. - time on the Hammond Fire Department so congratulations to Deputy Chief Margraf and now Deputy Chief Grisolia and Battalion Chief Anguiano. Next, I wanted to say just very briefly say Mayor's Night Out is coming up this Wednesday, October 27 at 6:30 pm in the 5th District in the Jefferson Elementary School cafeteria at this Mayor's Night Out we are going to have a short but special presentation talking about the Kennedy Avenue Redevelopment Project. So I know in Downtown Hammond we had a special presentation at The Hub. As everybody probably knows at this point, we took a lot of ideas that Jeff Speck gave for Downtown Hammond, stole them and are now using them for Kennedy Avenue in the Hessville area as well. So, we hope all of you can join us on Wednesday. Even though it is in the 5th District and a lot of Kennedy Avenue is the 6th District, obviously these districts are very close and are similar that they are so close to each other you probably don't even know which district you're in half the time. So, we hope that all of you can join us for that special presentation on Wednesday.

Council President Woerpel - Was there another Mayor's Night Out left at the end of the year too?

Chief of Staff Taillon - There's one Mayor's Night Out at the end of the year. I know on the signs that we put up early on, I think it says November 3rd, however because of some of the changes that we made, I believe the last Mayor's Night Out is on December 8th.

Council President Woerpel - That is in the 6th District?

Chief of Staff Taillon cont. - I don't have the location but Councilman Rakos seems to agree with you.

Council President Woerpel - Scott School on Dec. 8th?

Chief of Staff Taillon - I believe it's December 8th. Let me have Mayor Tom, at the next Council meeting, go ahead and update the Council on that to make sure that we don't have any miscommunication on that last one. But I'm glad you brought that up because it does say on the signs that are posted, some that got out there early on, I think it does list November 3rd and we have changed that date to a different date which I believe is December 8th. This Wednesday also, same as Mayor's Night Out, at 2 pm is what we call Hammond's Industry Day with the Regional Development Authority, also known as the RDA. This is an event that helps Hammond showcase the Transit Development District that we created for developers that may be interested in developing and investing in Hammond. We will discuss the financial benefits of investing specifically in a TDD area and future development opportunities that we will have to offer. We will specifically talk about the Gateway Station. I know there's another station coming in at 173rd and Lyman. We have not finalized the TDD Area for that area just yet. This one will specifically target the Gateway Station and the Transit Development District that we created around that station. We'll also talk about the future Downtown Hammond Station that we are currently working with NICTD and the RDA in creating. This one will be right in the heart of Downtown Hammond and we believe it will be integral to the revitalization efforts that we are currently undertaking for the Downtown Hammond area. Which of course will correspond with some of the changes that we are gonna be doing next year to Hohman Avenue. Which we've talked at length about so I won't get into unless anybody has any specific questions on that.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Council President Woerpel - Just where is the meeting at?

Chief of Staff Taillon - So it's a virtual meeting. It will be on Zoom. It's 2 pm and any Council people that would like to get the link, I will be happy to send it to you. So if you want, I can even send it to the Council Office and then you could distribute it to everybody. So you can all be a part of it. By the way, there are at least ten developers that are currently signed up for that and maybe a few more. So it really is a great opportunity for us to showcase what we are going to be doing and the opportunities that we are going to have. I know I've heard people in the past talk about, "Well we have a station right off of Hohman Avenue, why didn't all this development happen around it a long time ago?" I don't think they had the planning efforts that we have today. I think we really, kind of, have a better understanding of if you want to be successful around the station you've got to follow the play book of things that need to happen to create that success. Things like Industry Day and talking about this future station and for example, the financial benefits of investing in a TDD, I think, will put us in a different position to attract these developers and have future development around the new station. So, I hope you all can join. It should be a nice event for us and really talk about our opportunities that we are going to have.

Councilman Kalwinski - Phil, who decided the boundaries for the districts?

Chief of Staff Taillon - It was a large group of department heads, I would say. Headed by our City Planner, Brian Poland and our City Engineer, Dean Button. But our Economic Development team Africa Tarver and Ann Anderson were heavily involved. Myself, Mayor, I think maybe Council people from time to time had some input. There's been many meetings on this.

Councilman Kalwinski - I think it was an oversight with the Council. Because I know Council people who didn't get them, (unclear) meetings.

Chief of Staff Taillon - Well, let me tell you this, so the first boundary they give you so much acreage that you can create for the first boundary and then with so much time. I know Brian can speak to this, I believe he's here, we actually get to add a certain amount of acreage to it. So the 1st District is what I would call almost a no brainer, Councilman, because it's really the Downtown Hammond area and just, you know, if you drew a circle around it, that's essentially what we focused on. We did specifically target properties that are, what I'd call, as close to shovel ready for development. But really it's all piggybacking off the new Gateway Station that's gonna be there. So, in the end, if you're an investor, if you're a developer, you're really gonna focus on, what can I build here that is gonna be successful based on this station that is being constructed. So we could create all the boundaries in the world but in the end the TDD is really gonna have ... the obvious goal of this is to have development be built up around the TDD that will be successful because are around the new station. If that makes sense.

Councilman Kalwinski - I understand that completely.

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - Are there any other questions about the TDD boundaries? Lastly, there was an email sent out to all employees. I would imagine all the Council men and women received it as well. So I just wanted to read it very quickly. "Over the past several months our administration has been researching the city's health insurance options. Our goal is always to insure that our employees and their families, as well as qualifying retirees and their families are afforded the best coverage while at the same time being fair and reasonable to the city's finances and budget. As you know, the city's third party administrator and broker has been Professional Claims Management for as many years as I can remember or otherwise known as PCM for over two decades. They have served us well. Mr. Dave Baker has been a true partner with the city while providing the service. We were recently notified that PCM would not be renewing their agreement with the city and would no longer be providing health insurance services after January 1, 2022. Fortunately our administration had been diligently researching this issue and had met with all the national carriers to determine which would best suit the city's needs while making sure any change in coverage would minimize impact to the covered people that are currently in the plan. I (Mayor Tom) am therefore happy to announce that United Healthcare will be the city's health insurance carrier as of January 1, 2022. Even more pleased to announce that this transition will result in few, if any, changes in coverage. It will not result in any increase in fees that you pay for your health insurance coverage. This change will also allow for faster processing of claims and payment to healthcare providers. Amy Smith in our Controller's Office, which I'm sure we've all talked to for insurance purposes over the years, will continue to be our liaison between city employees and United Healthcare should any issues arise. This transition will require all of us working together and as the year moves on, more information will be provided including when transition meetings and on boarding to United will be made available to our employees and other covered persons. Our consultants, the Meyers Glaros Group, will be assisting us during the transition." So I hope you welcome United Healthcare with us as our new carrier. As the memo said, we're very excited. Although we've had great insurance over the years, this is an opportunity. And based on the meetings that I participated in, it seems like we're gonna have more modernized apps and things of that nature, technology, so that it will make insurance needs and coverage easier on all of us. If anybody has any questions on that, I'm happy to answer as best I can. There is gonna be a few meetings coming up that will get a lot more specific with the change over, what we call the on boarding, so over the next couple months I'm sure you'll be inundated with information on this change.

Councilwoman Alexander - Phil, I'm not sure if you could say this now or if you could let us know later, I see that it says that PCM would not be renewing the contract. Is there reasons behind why they are not?

Chief of Staff Phil Taillon - When PCM let us know, they sent us an email that said they no longer would offer contract for future services, I think we believe it was a personal decision by Mr. Dave Baker. He didn't get specific on what it is. I know he had at some point was talking about retirement and things of that nature but he did not get specific as to why they wouldn't be offering new services going forward.

READING OF MINUTES

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to accept the minutes from October 12, 2021 and place on file.

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilman Rakos, supported by Councilwoman Venecz, moved to approve the claims from October 6, 2021 through October 20, 2021. Claim #5105 through #5382, inclusive.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Kalwinski - Brought out 21-42.

Capital Improvement Board - Councilwoman Venecz- We met on October 18th. We approved \$20, 000 for the Hoffman Avenue Street Trail. We also approved \$322,950 for the Marquette Greenway from Kennedy to Cline. We have a meeting scheduled for November 1st. It's tentative at this point. It may be a Zoom meeting. So, please check with the Engineering Department or online to see if that meeting is going to take place.

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

Wed., November 3rd ; Edison Community Watch; Edison School; 6:30p.m.

Wed., October 26th; Harrison Park Crime Watch; VFW; Cancelled.

Thur., November 18th ; Hessville Crime Watch; Jean Shepard; 6:00 p.m.

Fri., November 5th ; Irving Community Watch; Irving School; 9:15 a.m.

Thur., November 5th ; Whiting Robertsdale; Calumet College; 6:30 p.m.

Wed., October 27th; Hammond Elderly Crime Watch; 1:00 p.m.

These meetings are great to find out what's going on in your neighborhood, what's going on in your City, and get a lot of questions answered that you may have. And as usual, if you see anything suspicious, call 911. Because community is not just about me, it's about us. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Councilman Tyler-Sorry for the confusion, but that Harrison Park Crime Watch did get rescheduled. It's been scheduled for next Tuesday. So, November 2nd at 5:30. We normally meet on the first Tuesday of each month and this was going to be a special meeting to try to fit one in for October but instead, we decided to push it back so that our Park Department Director Jim Talon could come and speak about potential upgrades to Harrison Park. So, once again that meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 2nd at 5:30 pm at the VFW Post on Hohman. So, anybody in the Harrison Park Community, please come out and join that meeting and hear updates, potential updates, potential updates that we could be pursuing for Harrison Park over the next few years. Thank you.

ORDINANCE 3RD READING-FINAL PASSAGE

21-42 An Ordinance Reclassifying Certain Lands in the City of Hammond for Zoning Purposes and Amending Ordinance No. 8514 (An Ordinance Establishing a Zoning Plan for the City of Hammond including the Regulations and Maps to Administer the Zoning Plan in Order to Provide for Orderly Growth and Development Within the City, all in Accordance with the Comprehensive/Land Use Plan, as Amended) for Property commonly known as: 2450 New York Avenue.

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

Councilman Kalwinski-Just to summarize, this is a rezoning ordinance to allow for the construction of a dorm on the property of Cal College as well as open space that will be used as a field for athletics and that's the reason for the rezoning. Thank you.

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

ORDINANCE NO. 9528 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

21-43 Vacating a 22,690 square foot portion of Forsyth Square lying between 119th St., Warwick Ave., Hamann Court and Forsyth Square Lying Between 119th Street, Warwick Avenue Hamann Court and Forsyth Square in the 1900 block of Forsyth Square in the City of Hammond Lake County, Indiana

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Spitale , moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Committee Meeting on November 8, 2021 at 5:15p.m.,with a Public Hearing on November 8, 2021.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

21-44 Creating a New Fund (Fund #297) for FY2022 Lake County Drunk Driving Task Force Grant Funds

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilwoman Alexander , moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title and referred it to the Council as a Whole Committee with a Committee Meeting on November 8, 2021 at 5:15p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

None

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Rakos, moved to reappoint Caryn Janiga to the Hammond Library Board for another 4 year term, that will extend through 2025.

Councilwoman Venecz-Caryn has served on this board for quite some time. She is an asset, as you know. Caryn knows how to watch every penny. So it really helps on the library board. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS cont.

ROLL CALL VOTE (appointment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

APPOINTMENT APPROVED

Councilman Emerson- I wanted to announce that the city is having the 8th annual Veterans Appreciation Day Parade, Saturday, November 6, 2021. Obviously, at 10:00 am. The parade route will be Olcott Avenue at 173rd east to Hessville Park Veterans Memorial, A brief ceremony at Memorial Park immediately following the parade. It is the only one in Northwest Indiana that we know of. If you know a veteran or you just wanna say thanks, and if you are immobilized in any way, you can ride on a trailer. So, the 8th annual Veterans Day Parade, for further information, you can call 219-853-6378. Thank you.

Councilman Tyler- I just want to go on record and clarify that as of right now, we are operating under the Governor's Executive Order for virtual meetings, which in the future would allow for anybody to vote on any item including budget items in the future via Zoom or any electronic means. Just want to clarify, at the last meeting Councilwoman Alexander and I weren't able to vote on the budget. In the future anybody who's virtual should be able to. Just want to clarify that.

Councilwoman Alexander-At the next meeting I'll give the updated COVID numbers. I just want people to know that I am not gonna give them today. I'll give them at the next meeting.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

George Stoya- I believe that I've been more than patient myself and the good citizens of Hammond. Is Hohman Avenue ever going to open up again? I enjoyed the distinction that was brought out, I think it was last meeting, concerning the new ordinance requiring city employees to report whether or not to report an arrest. Unless you have a conviction against your name. What about a person's privacy and that's fundamental? It seems quite arbitrary and almost subjective. Councilman Kalwinski and Councilman Tyler objected somewhat, and I think their objecting, if I may be so bold, as to the objectivity of it all.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to adjourn.

ROLL CALL VOTE (adjourn meeting)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried

9/0/0

MEETING ADJOURNED

2021 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	May	June		July		Aug		Sept		Oct		Nov		Dec	
	24	14	28	12	26	9	23	13	27	12	25	8	22	13	27
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	P			
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Janet Venecz	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Mark Kalwinski	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P			
Pete Torres	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Barry Tyler	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P			
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Scott Rakos	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Dave Woerpel	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	<i>DW</i>			

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.



Dave Woerpel, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:


Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:40
cb/dw

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk