

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on August 26, 2024 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.

Moment of silence observed

**ROLL CALL**

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: None

TOTAL:9

**MAYOR'S ADDRESS**

Mayor McDermott- Thank you for the invite. Nice to talk to you all again. This is my report for August 26, 2024. Mayor's activity log, met with multiple department heads over the last 2 weeks about salary requests for the 2024 budget. I just wanted you all to know that Megan and I are doing lots of work getting the budget ready to turn into you. Negotiating new 4 year contracts with Teamsters Local 142 Rep and the Hammond Sanitary Sewer Department representatives. Meeting with Controller's Office regarding employee health insurance statistics. Meeting with Hammond Local 556 on duty fire firefighters at Central Firehouse, where we discussed upcoming negotiations as well as issues and problems facing Hammond Firefighters on a daily basis. I met with representatives from the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce over a letter I sent to them and the Economic Development team in regards to an event that Lakeshore Chamber was holding at the Hard Rock Casino. Negotiating a new 4 year contract with Teamsters Local 142 rep and Hammond Public Works representatives. I met with 4<sup>th</sup> District Councilman Bill Emerson regarding multiple issues across the 4<sup>th</sup> District in Hammond and as well as our upcoming Mayor's Night out set for Wednesday of this week. I met with City Planner Brian Poland about the new U-haul facility. It's gonna be located off Kenwood and Calumet streets. As a delegate of the nominee Kamala Harris, I attended the Democratic National Convention in Chicago last week. I was appointed to this role by the State Chairman Mike Schmul. Hammond was represented quite well at the DNC. Our State Representative Carolyn Jackson was there. Victor Lopez was there. Kevin Smith was there. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> District Councilman Barry Tyler was there. It was great to see Hammond so well represented. I appreciate everyone being out there. I got to appear on National TV this year. I was recognized as a veteran supporter of Kamala Harris for US President. So it was a really cool week. I think Chicago did great. Hammond was well represented. I think it was widely successful. So thank you to everybody that helped with that. Last but not least, I appeared with Jed on WJOB Morning Show again and took phone calls from the audience on multiple issues. I wanted to let the Council know that there is an opening currently in the Battalion Chief ranks of the Hammond Fire Department. Battalion Chief is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest rank of the Hammond Fire Department. We have 2 Battalion Chiefs on each day. These are filled by the Fire Chief and by the Mayor. This position was created when former Battalion Chief Danny Diembala was promoted to Assistant Chief Drill Master. He vacated this Battalion Chief spot which is in Fire Service. We posted this job internally even though we did not have to do that. We've been

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont.- doing that lately with the firemen. Posted this job internally and many qualified people applied for the position. We narrowed it down to 3. The final interviews are taking place tomorrow. One of those 3 will be chosen as our next Battalion Chief of the Hammond Fire Department. The 3 finalists are Casey McCluskey, Matthew Matts, and Tommy Markovich. One of those 3 will be selected as the next Battalion Chief of the Hammond Fire Department. Update on Police and Fire negotiations- Police negotiations, I reported to you last meeting, that we sent to FOP our final offer after prolonged periods of negotiation. It was apparent to us that any further progress couldn't happen financially for us with the significant raises we made in our offer. We're asking the FOP to vote on the current offer we made. FOP is in receipt of that offer and I believe that a vote is being scheduled shortly. Goals of the negotiation for us are recruitment and retention. Four years ago, we did a good job of taking care of our pension problems. We're focused now on recruitment and retention. Recruitment of new officers when we have openings and retaining the officers we had. That's where we're suffering right now is the retention, and the recruitment quite frankly. We're trying to fix that with negotiations. Fire negotiations have sort of slowed down. My team is awaiting for the information from the Firefighter's union before we can move forward. We have to get this information. We've been waiting for about a month now. I imagine we will get it shortly. Fire negotiations aren't moving as fast but we'll make it up through the rest of the year. Teamsters and the Operating Engineers are negotiating with us also. As I indicated in my monthly report, we've already started negotiations with the Hammond Public Works and the Hammond Sanitary District's Sewer Department. I wanna remind the Council that we gave all of our CDL drivers a \$3 pay raise and for the people that got a \$3 pay raise mid year, we're gonna put them in for 0 percent pay raises in this year's budget cycle. We've already made the Teamster's aware of that. That should save us a couple bucks in next year's budget. I wanted to update everybody and what's going on with the Haunted House. The old Reaper's Realm and firework stand on 177<sup>th</sup> Street. We are working with the land owner's on an agreement. The land owner's as a reminder is the Meyer Family. We're working with the Meyer's family on an agreement. Working with this is complicated because there are numerous beneficiaries that the Meyer's family has to deal with to talk about our offer. Tentatively we do have a deal with them, we're just working out the logistics at this point. I anticipate we will have a finalized agreement probably by the time we all get together again in the next 2 weeks. Keep in mind that this all takes place between the City of Hammond and the Meyer family, the owner of the Meyer's Castle. The owner of the land and the Meyer's Castle. The lessee, the one we talk about a lot is the Halouska family. They've been lessee's at that property for decades. They run a firework stand as well as a haunted house. I've recently spoke with John Halouska, representing the Halouska family. I informed John that the City of Hammond would not object to one more year of the Reaper's Realm regardless of who owns the property at that time. Having Reaper's Realm takes some planning. It takes a lot of hiring. Takes a lot of thought put into it. They didn't want to go forward with all of this without the assurance that they'd be able to do Reaper's Realm one more year. We agreed that regardless of who owns the property, by the time that roles around, that Reaper's Realm will have one more go at that location. Since this was announced, the Halouska family was given one more 4<sup>th</sup> of July and one more haunted house. I know that doesn't make them feel great, but it's better than what the alternative was I guess at that time. So we're moving on that. Like I said, I should know more when we get together in a couple of weeks. And last but not least, I've been bouncing this item for the last couple months and I keep looking at Councilman Salinas and I keep telling him, next meeting we're gonna be ready to move on this resolution. I'm gonna say it again today Councilman Salinas, by the next meeting, I imagine we will finally be ready to move forward with the resolution regarding the demolition of the former hospital site. The resolution

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR’S ADDRESS cont.

Mayor McDermott cont- between the City of Hammond and the Franciscan’s. The status is as follows. Why this resolution is still on hold, our City Engineer Dean Button, and Franciscan’s construction manager have agreed on specification for Mayor McDermott cont. -the recycled concrete. This was a great breakthrough and allowed the city to be comfortable knowing that the fill that’s used on that side is gonna be good for redevelopment when that occurs. Another complicating factor there was Purdue Northwest’s and what they’re gonna actually own and where their building’s gonna be located. The Chancellor and I met recently, and there is an agreement as to what the Purdue parcel is gonna look like. This will allow the donation agreement between Redevelopment and Franciscan to properly set forth for the property to be donated which includes the frontage along Hohman Avenue. So basically what I’m saying is those 2 items were holding us up and they’re clearing up right now. So I’m gonna say it one more time. I think by the next council meeting, Councilman Salinas, we’re gonna be ready to move forward with the Franciscan resolution. But this delay has given our legal team time to work out an agreement with Purdue Northwest, and the City of Hammond and Franciscan. I think it’s like a global settlement. So that’s my report. I’m not sure if anyone has any questions.

Councilman Kalwinski- The Purdue site, is that the Medical Arts building across the street from the hospital?

Mayor McDermott- No sir. It’s the oncology center, I believe. If you look at the site, Councilman Mark, it’s the NE corner of the site, ok? Purdue previously before we started negotiating with them, Purdue was getting basically all the frontage on Hohman Avenue, which would have left the city the back end, the Stateline end. I didn’t feel that was fair to the City. How are we gonna market when the only access is coming off of Stateline. So we asked Purdue to work with us, and Purdue agreed to go, instead of North and South, they’re gonna go to the East and the West. They’re gonna have their piece of property on the top right quadrant basically. The bottom left quadrant is the parking garage. That’s gonna be owned by the City. The rest of it will be torn down and Redevelopment, Councilman Mark. That’s where we are right now. I’ve been keeping Councilman Salinas in the loop. I know the rest of the Council is probably not, so I apologize for not keeping you in the loop on that. But we’ve worked through those issues. It’s taken awhile but I think we’re finally through it.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Emerson, moved to approve the minutes of August 12, 2024 and place on file.

AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved to approve the claims from August 7,2024 through August 21,2024 Claim #6992 through #7510, inclusive. In the amount of \$10,185,908.81.

ROLL CALL VOTE (claims)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried

9/0/0

CLAIMS APPROVED

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilwoman Venecz- We all received a notice of a memorial dedication ceremony for the Standard Steel Car strike that took place on December 9, 1919. Standard Steel Car workers were killed. 62 were injured. There will be a memorial service on September 14<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m at the Ophelia Steen Center. It's at the corner of Columbia and Highland. Just to give a little bit of history, the 4 workers that were killed from Hammond, at the time, were not in the position for grave markers. They were buried in Calumet City. Well, the United Steel Worker's Union has stepped up and generously donated, so that these 4 gentleman from Hammond who were killed on that corner back in 1919, will finally have grave sites. So please come out and honor their memory.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Capital Improvement Board- Councilman Emerson-The Capital Improvement Board met on August 19,2024. We dealt with:

Item A-Funding Allocation #203 for the HAST signage and striping project with Hawk Enterprises in the amount of \$21,732.70 and that was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district.

Item B-Funding Allocation #204 day lighting utilities for Downtown Hammond Station, Dyer Construction Company in the amount of \$8,283.22, and that was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district.

Item C-Funding Allocation #205 replace signal controller at Trail Crossing, Hawk Enterprises in the amount of \$5,716.65, and that was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district.

Item D-funding Allocation #206 replace traffic signal pole at 165<sup>th</sup> and Stateline. That's the SE corner of Stateline and 165<sup>th</sup> Street, Hawk Enterprises in the amount of \$24,420.00, and that's in the 4<sup>th</sup> district.

Councilman Woerpel-It's more of a question for Dean or Bill. I noticed they started the stoplight there by the Sportsplex. Is there a lane being added?

Dean Button- No

Councilman Woerpel- I just noticed they kinda got that one side kinda chopped off there by Keith's Fiber.

Dean Button- They're narrowing the West side of the street and widening the East side of the street. There will be a center turn lane that approaches the signal.

Councilman Woerpel- Thank you

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

Edison Community Watch; Wed., Sept 4; 6:30 pm; Edison School

Hessville Crime Watch; Thur., Sept. 19; 6 pm; Jean Shepherd Center

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz cont-

Irving Community Watch; Fri., Sept. 6; 9:30 am; Irving school and this is a bi lingual program.  
Whiting/Robertsdale Crime Watch; Thur., Sept, 12; 6:30 pm; Calumet College  
South Hohman Avenue neighborhood Watch will have a meeting sometime in October.

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilwoman Venecz - Brought out 24-15.

ORDINANCE 3<sup>RD</sup> READING- FINAL PASSAGE

24-15 An Ordinance Creating a New Fund (Fund No. 4439) to Facilitate the 1% Municipal Food and Beverage Tax 24-15

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Woerpel, moved for final passage and adoption of 24- 15

ROLL CALL VOTE (PASSAGE)

AYES: Alexander, Spitale, Venecz, Salinas, Tyler, Emerson, Woerpel, Rakos

NAYS: Kalwinski

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried 8/1/0 ORDINANCE NO. 9638 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

24-16 An Ordinance Amending Title VII of the Hammond Municipal Code Traffic Schedule III and Setting a Speed Zone Limit on Hohman Avenue from Sibley to Douglas Street to 20 MPH

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

24-17 An Ordinance Amending Title VII of the Hammond Municipal Code Traffic Schedule III and Setting a Speed Zone Limit on Kennedy Avenue from 165<sup>th</sup> to 169<sup>th</sup> Street to 20 MPH

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Salinas, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title.

ROLL CALL VOTE (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried 9/0/0 MOTION CARRIED

*Prepared by  
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Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

24-18 An Ordinance of the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana upon Recommendation of the Hammond Economic Development Commission Designating a Certain Area Within the City as an Economic Development Target Area Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved the proposed ordinance to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading by title, with a public hearing and a Council as a Whole Committee meeting at 5:15 p.m. on September 9, 2024

ROLL CALL VOTE (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried

9/0/0

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

24R-13 A Declaratory Resolution Determining That a Certain Area of the City of Hammond, Indiana be Designated as the Townplace Suites Economic Revitalization Area in Which Deductions from Assessed Valuation may be Requested by an Application to the Common Council of the City of Hammond, Indiana Pursuant to Indiana Code 6-1.1-12.1

Councilman Kalwinski, supported by Councilman Woerpel, moved for adoption, with a public hearing on September 9, 2024.

ROLL CALL VOTE

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion Carried

9/0/0

RESOLUTION NO. R13 ADOPTED

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Woerpel- I would like to take this moment to wish our Council President, Scott Rakos, a happy 85<sup>th</sup> birthday yesterday and for about 2 months, he's older than Dave Hamm.

Councilman Rakos- 2 months and a week. Thank you again, Councilman Woerpel.

Councilwoman Alexander- I would just like to give my condolences to the Simmons, Fletcher, and Williams family in the loss of Edward Simmons III. He was a Hammond High graduate. Class of 1996. He was funeralized this past Saturday. We all know Maxine Simmons. She's a native to everything that we do around the City and with the School City. I just want to continue to give them our prayers and condolences at this time.

*Prepared by  
Robert J. Golec  
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Ken Rosek- I had to work in the sun today because there was no shade. It's been awhile since there was no shade. The new trees on Kennedy need water. They're dropping like flies. It's frustrating, and someone needs to do something. The city is blocking estimates on the underpass option. All other governments say other options are available. The city is blocking other options for no reason. The feds say they would pay for and prefer another option. This is an opportunity for the city to do an amazing job, and you're letting it pass us by. An option where the road moves when the train comes, is the fastest construction time. It's an obligation by the council to investigate this option. Residents deserve to see these figures on designs.

Jana- There is going to be a documentary about the Briar East Woods, and I urge you all to check it out. I have interviewed 10 locals. I have worked with scientists and environmentalists. I am honored to give them a platform. This project is important to me. More people need to know how the City is trying to destroy nature. Without Ken Rosek, none of this would be possible. It's not too late. It's our right as humans to protect our earth.

Councilman Woerpel, supported by Councilman Salinas, moved to Adjourn

AYES: ALL

2024 HAMMOND COMMON COUNCIL ATTENDANCE RECORD OF  
ELECTRONIC AND PHYSICAL PRESENCE

	Jan		Feb		Mar		Apr		May		Jun		Jul		Aug		Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	8	22	12	26	11	25	8	22	13	28	10	24	8	22	12	26				
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	<u>9</u>			
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Janet Vencz	E	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Mark Kalwinski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Alfonso Salinas III	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P			
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P			
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Dave Woerpel	A	P	P	P	P	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	P	P	P	P	P			
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	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.

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk



Scott Rakos, President  
Hammond Common Council

Time: 6:34 p.m.  
mg/cb

Prepared by  
**Robert J. Golec**  
Hammond City Clerk