

The regular meeting of the Hammond Common Council of the City of Hammond, Lake County, Indiana was held on November 13, 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 was observed

ROLL CALL

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

ELECTRONICALLY PRESENT PER ZOOM: None

ABSENT: Emerson

TOTAL:8

MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Good evening, Council. Obviously, I'm not the Mayor, for those who don't know me who are maybe watching online, I am Scott Miller, the Chief of Staff. Mayor sends his regards, but could not be here tonight. It seems like it's been a long time since we last met, but it's only been a couple weeks. Since that time, the new Gateway Station has come online, and many of you got to go out and see it. It's amazing, and we're excited for the west lake corridor to open up. It'll have 5 direct routes to Chicago each morning, 5 direct routes from Chicago back to South Lake County each afternoon, and many intermediate routes where you can get off and go onto the traditional east/west train. We had the pickleball ribbon cutting at the Jean. Several of you were there, and it's been packed ever since. The first 3 days, they had 308 new sign ups for pickleball in just 3 days. It's great for coming in businesses, the location is perfect for that, very exciting. I stopped by there this past weekend too, every court was full. It's an exciting time at the Jean. We had our Veteran's day parade and ceremony after that, by all accounts, people were telling me it was the biggest turn out from the community that we've had for that. We had I believe close to 60 different participants walking in the parade, so again, another highlight for the city. That night, maybe apropos with the elections coming up, we had the Hammond Boxing Club have a match at the Civic Center, again, I got to see several of you there, and we got to see our youth compete against other boxing clubs in the region. It was a really great turn out, looking forward to a lot more events at the Civic Center coming up this year. We survived another election day. Congratulations to Lonnie Randolph, and Carolyn Jackson, and re-winning their seats, and Morton Alumnus, Frank Mrvan Jr. for winning his seat. I'd also like to wish a good luck to Melissa Guerra and Evangeline Stanford as they lead the School Board moving forward. Councilman Woerpel, myself, and Anne Taylor from Economic Development traveled to Chattanooga, last Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday on a One Region trip. Couple highlights to share with the Council, I was excited to learn about quantum computing, because as you may have already heard, we have that already scheduled to come into our downtown. That Purdue is going to be taking over, I believe the dialysis center right there, 40,000 square feet, and adding quantum computing. Without trying to get real technical, what quantum computing is, is to be able to take really large real time data sets and process them. A traditional computer just does one thing after another really fast, this is to take a lot of inputs, like maybe all of the regional traffic in Chicagoland at one time, and be able to optimize everybody's routes, or all these different data points

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller cont-for the weather and be able to actually have a real prediction of the weather that wasn't previously possible. So that's already scheduled to come into Hammond, like, that's already coming, so that's what the Purdue initiative in the Downtown, excited for that. There's plenty more I could share with you, I'd be happy to talk to you about what they're doing well in Chattanooga. It was a testament to a community though that was working together with all their resources to move things forward, so exciting about that. Now, moving forward, a couple events for you to be aware of, November 18th, at 10 o'clock on 222 Douglas we have a ribbon cutting for the Culture Barber College. Again on 222 Douglas on November 18th, 10 o'clock. Later that day and that night is the grand opening of our new 70 million dollar YMCA. I know some of you are coming to the ceremony that night. If you still wanna come, just let me know, and I can get you on the list. I've got to tour it, many of the staff here have been able to tour it. It's amazing, and it's gonna be a real blessing for the community. We are actively working with them to get an employee discount for all the Hammond Employees. We pitched in pretty big to make that project happen, and we feel like that's one of the ways we can help encourage participation and support what they're gonna be doing at the Y. We have our annual tree lighting ceremony on November 29th, Black Friday, 5-7 right here at City Hall. On Saturday, December the 7th, we do have our Hammond holiday parade, the same route we've been using in the past. 15 minutes prior, we will have a santa sprint down Indianapolis Boulevard. You may not know about this part, at noon, afterwards, downtown in the HDC hub, they will be having a food fest. We've encultivating, we have a commercial kitchen in HDC downtown, and we have a lot of food vendors that are gonna be having their products for people to try, so the idea is to come for the parade, and then if you want lunch, head downtown, hop into the HDC hub, and try out some of these locally sourced foods. At the next meeting, I know you're probably wondering about collective bargaining, I know Mayor always gives an update, I'll just say that we're progressing very well, and I, with respect to Mayor since he's not here, I'll just say that I do anticipate you will have one if not more, collective bargaining agreements for your consideration at the next meeting for your approval, so really moving forward with that. Some exciting news about the data center expansion, up in the first, so hopefully that should be for the next meeting. That concludes all of my updates, I do have, if the Council has questions about Homebound, when we get to that section, I'm absolutely prepared to talk about it. So alright, thank you very much, or any questions from anyone?

Councilman Woerpel- As you said, Mr. Miller, we took that tour to Chattanooga, with One Region, I've been a member of that now for 8 years, and it toured a lot of spots that started I guess as an organization, I was asked, what'd they do. It started as an organization to spur development in cooperation around transportation, and the thing, other than, the very insightful quantum computing thing, that was over my head but whatever. The thing I noticed on this trip, and maybe you can elaborate on it some, is a lot of what the success stories of redevelopment around the train that we've seen over the last 8 years, but especially on this trip, Hammond is doing already, as far as getting economic growth downtown, and I know a lot of these cities, bring the universities in the area downtown to spur growth. I think we were in the Chamber of Commerce building down there, and directly across the street, was a carbon copy of the Calumet National Bank Building that is being redeveloped just like ours is. I don't know, it's kinda cool when you visit these towns and they tell you, this is what successful cities do, and we look at it now, 8 years down the road and we're doing it already. Would you agree with that statement?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- I would say this, that in a perfect world, we would have everything open at the exact same time, but we don't live in a perfect world, so it's let's get this done, this done, try to move everything

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

MAYOR'S ADDRESS cont.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller cont- forward. I think we have all the building blocks in place to for anyone who is a nay sayer about downtown or that area, just wait, like, just wait. I'm a very excited for what's coming. We're gonna have our train station downtown in 2 years, we're gonna have 300 more units, the bank will be open this spring. We'll have an RFP for your consideration soon too on the Rimbach property across the street, that's another 200 units. Up at the gateway station, there's all this property that's, and you guys saw it when we were on the tour, just north of the gateway station is gonna be mixed use/residential right there. We have all the pieces, and I think part of the thing that I think we have to come to terms is that part of draw of living by the train station is Chicago. It is, and that's not a bad thing, it's not a bad thing that we have people that maybe work, and they do some of their fun in Chicago, but they wanna come back to Hammond for all the benefits that we have here in Hammond. That's one of the things, when you look at all the other places that we've gone, there's a major metropolitan city. There's Denver, there's Pittsburgh, there's Chattanooga. Hammond is not right now a major metropolitan city. It's a great urban city. We have all these advantages, but Chicago is. So we have to come to peace with that mind set, that hey, this could be really great for us. The fact that we can hop on a train, and get to downtown in less than 20 minutes. For the younger generation, and no disrespect to anybody in here, I'm not in this either, I'm not the younger generation, but they don't necessarily want a car. They don't necessarily want a car. They want to use public transportation. They want to be able to hop on a train and get to wherever they wanna go, or a bus, or a rideshare when they can't get on one of those. I am, to your point, Councilman Woerpel, I am very excited about the direction that we're headed, and I do think we have many of the building blocks in place. I wish they were all energized right this moment, but we're getting there. I see nothing but positive energy coming out of this city.

Councilman Woerpel- The point I'm making is, you know, growing up and living in this city for the 63 years that I've been alive, I read and see a lot of criticism. One of them was something you brought up, about the Shepherd Center, why pickleball? Well I would go in there sometimes at night, and there'd be 2 or 3 people in there just shooting baskets, and it's a fully staffed building. Like you said, it's a club and residents can join too. Another criticism I hear too, is downtown Hammond, will never be what it once was. Well I don't think anybody expects it to be what it once was, it's just redeveloping it the right way. When you here all these experts from these other cities, and economic development and all that tell you, this is what you need to do, we're doing it. Am I going to declare it a success? No, not yet, but it's better than just letting it sit there with nothing down there, right? That's all I got to say.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman Salinas, supported by Councilman Spitale, moved to approve the minutes of October 28, 2024 and place on file. AYES: ALL

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to approve the claims from October 24, 2024 through November 6, 2024. Claim #9328 through #9818, inclusive. In the amount of \$3,971,577.84.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

APPROVAL OF CLAIMS cont.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved to amend the Claims to add additional claims:

- #9819 in the amount of \$500 to the School City of Hammond Skill for Life
- #9820 in the amount of \$100 to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana
- #9821 in the amount of \$100 to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana
- #9822 in the amount of \$200 to the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana

ROLL CALL VOTE (amendment)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion Carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS AMENDED

ROLL CALL VOTE (Claims as Amended)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion Carried 8/0/1 CLAIMS APPROVED
(as amended)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilman Salinas- I wanted to announce that Washington Irving School is holding their winter coat drive and food drive. They're accepting coats of all sizes and condition, and any unopened and unexpired food items can be dropped off at the main office at the school. Thank you.

Councilman Tyler- I have a few items that I want to share. One is of course, the YMCA opening that is in my district right now, despite Councilman Woerpel trying to re district. I just want to invite everybody to sign up for a tour. You can do so on the YMCA's website. They open fully on the 20th, which is next Wednesday, so excited for that. The second thing I wanted to announce, is that to residents on Erie Street, I have communication from the Water Department, they have done a study in terms of, there were complaints about the water pressure on Erie Street, and there is an issue in a lot of the homes over there, where they're going to switch out your meters, for a larger model over the next couple weeks, so if you get contacted by the Water Department, please respond so that they can come out and switch those out, if you are having issues with your water pressure. Lastly, I just wanted to thank the rest of the Council who have contributed to our annual turkey giveaway. This is our 4th year that we have been doing this event. It will be Saturday, November 23rd at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of the Ophelia Steen Center. This year we were able to give out 200 turkeys. So if you are a family in need, please attend that. You have to be a Hammond resident, you have to show ID. It's a drive through event, so we'll just place the turkey in your car, after we verify your ID, and your residency in the city. There are no early arrival. Hopefully everyone will arrive at 9 o'clock. Normally takes us 30-45 minutes to handout the turkeys, so it's a quick event. It is first come, first serve, so please get there if you are interested in picking up a turkey. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

COMMUNICATIONS cont.

Councilwoman Alexander- This Saturday, North Township, will be doing their 16th annual coat drive from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m where they will be giving new coats for children. Children have to be present with their parent or guardian to receive one of those coats. So for those that are in need of a coat, I recommend that you make it over to Wicker Park this Saturday at 9 a.m. to get a coat for your child. The child has to be present so they can make sure the size fits.

Councilman Rakos- I just want to announce that HC3 will be having their Frostyville event, at the Hansen Community Center, 2823 Martha, in Hessville. It'll be on Saturday, December 7th, from noon til 3 p.m. It'll be after the parade. The Challenger Learning Center will be there, Winter Wonderlab, raffles, Santa, Elves, and face painting. Come and join us for holiday shopping, treats, and entertainment. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council as a Whole Committee - Councilman Kalwinski- Council as a Whole will be bringing out 24-27.

Community and Crime Watch Committee - Councilwoman Venecz- Upcoming meetings
Edison Community Watch; Wed., Dec 4; 6:30 pm; Edison School
Harrison Park Crime Watch; Tues., Dec 3; 6pm; VFW on Hohman
Hessville Crime Watch; Thurs., Nov 21; 6pm; Hansen Library
Irving Community Watch; Tues., Dec 10; 9:30am; Irving School
Whiting/Robertsdale; Thurs., Nov 14; 6:30pm; Calumet College

ORDINANCE 3RD READING- FINAL PASSAGE

24-27 An Ordinance Authorizing the Extension of the Maturity of \$39,000,000 Variable Rate Demand Sewage and Solid Waste Disposal Revenue Refunding Bonds (Cargill, Incorporated Project) Series 2005 of the City of Hammond, Indiana; The Execution and Delivery of a First Supplemental Indenture of Trust; The Execution and Delivery of a First Amendment to Loan Agreement Between Cargill, Incorporated and said City; and Related Matters

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

ROLL CALL VOTE (passage)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion carried

8/0/1

ORDINANCE NO. 9644 PASSED

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

24-28 An Ordinance Codifying the City of Hammond Homebound Program (Down Payment Assistance) and Amending Award and Eligibility Requirements

Councilman Spitale, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved the proposed ordinance to 1st and 2nd reading by title, with a Council as a Whole committee meeting at 5:15 p.m. on November 25, 2024.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Some of the genesis of bringing this forward to the Council for consideration actually came out of the Realtor's breakfast. Councilman Spitale was there, and some of the feedback we received from, we had about 170 realtor's there, was that the previous amount of \$2500 was not enough to make any measurable difference in a down payment assistance program. This was not generated directly from internal discussion. This is from outside stakeholders coming to us saying hey, for this program to have value, we need to increase the amount. The big news is, we're asking the Council to consider to add in City employees as another encouragement for them and being consistent with our residency ordinance to be able to afford and purchase their first house in Hammond.

Councilman Kalwinski- What did the realtor's think the right amount was?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- The \$10,000 in front of you, is the amount that was recommended. This is, just for the financial peace, it's funded out of gaming at \$50,000 a year. We have \$40,000 in that budget now, so if we end up having more qualified applicants in a year, we'll either have to option of the Mayor allocating more gaming money, or it would go into some sort of wait list process to the next year.

Darrell White- Good Afternoon Council, like the Chief of Staff said, this came from the Realtor's breakfast. A lot of feed back came from there. Currently, low income receives \$2,500 for existing homes, and new construction receives \$3,500 and this ordinance will also add full time City Employees, including the Water Department, Sanitary, and Port Authority, and increase the award amount to \$10,000 and new construction homes.

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- Council, one other point of clarification is, there's really 2 programs. This is the one that identifies City Employees, Teachers, Firefighters, and Police. There's a second program that is managed by HUD that is funded through federal dollars that is income based, and that's the one that anyone can apply for in the City is the income based down payment assistance. That'll be handled through a separate process, that doesn't come through you guys because of the federal nature. What's in front of you is for the categories that I mentioned, but separately we'll be increasing the amount of the HUD down payment assistance for those that are financially disadvantaged as well.

Councilman Tyler- Sorry, Mr. Miller, on page 2 it says in addition to income based eligibility, is there also income based eligibility for Police Officers, Firefighters, and Educators?

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- There's nothing in this that would make them automatically disqualified. The reality of the situation is most of them would not qualify because they make too much. Those income guidelines are not set by the City, they're set by HUD through the Home Program, But that could increase in the future, so we didn't want to cap it and say that they were excluded because if those guidelines from the feds increase, we wouldn't wanna say they're disqualified.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES cont.

Councilman Tyler- Thank you

Chief of Staff, Scott Miller- You're welcome

ROLL CALL VOTE (1st & 2nd reading)

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Emerson

Motion Carried

8/0/1

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

None.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Councilman Salinas- I wanted to shine some light on a Hammond Program that I recently took part in, myself and Council member Dan Spitale, it's through the Hammond Police Department. It's titled the Citizens Police Academy. It's an 8 week program, and it covered training and all aspects of law enforcement, topics such as police ethics, traffic stops, self defense tactics, and tasers, crime scene processing and fingerprinting, shoot, don't shoot simulations, narcotics enforcement, de escalation of situations, community affairs, jail procedures, and there were demonstrations from K-9, SWAT, and RIOT teams. This program really shined light on the different layers that the Police Department officers go through, and I know me personally, it showed me a new level of commitment that these officers make to our community in the careers that they chose. I wanted to highlight some of the officers that were a part of the program and say thank you to Chief Short, Assistant Chief Long, Lt. Thomas, Captain Strabavy, Sgt. Gonzalez, Lt. Mickey, Sgt. Holbrook, Lt. Coulter, Sgt. Matonovich, Sgt. Ferrarini, Capt. Bunner, Sgt. Peterson, Sgt. Deboer, Sgt. Mahoy, Sgt. Taylor, Capt. Grasha, Sgt. Clark, Sgt. Laurinec, Lt. Markert, Sgt. Quick, Capt. Maldonado, Sgt. Cook, Lt. Vaught, and the K-9 was Arrows. Arrows was pretty slick. He was able to find all the different packages that were hidden and his demonstration alone was pretty phenomenal, but I wanna say thank you, and I want to encourage any resident that is interested in seeing the inner workings and the behind the scenes dealings that our officers undergo, and some of the new technologies that are available and that they utilize everyday to take a look at this program. I had a phenomenal time, and I know Dan really enjoyed it as well. So I just want to say thank you overall to the Hammond Police Department.

Councilwoman Venecz, supported by Councilwoman Alexander, moved that the meeting scheduled for Monday, December 23rd, 2024 be rescheduled to Monday, December 30th, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. AYES: ALL

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Laurie Czulno- I have noticed a number of fire hydrants that are locked out. I presume that means they are non functioning. This is of concern to me, there was a fire in Chicago Heights, it ended up with the loss of 2 homes, and part of it was non functioning fire hydrants. My understanding is they had to go 1000 yards to find a functioning fire hydrant. It's just something that needs to be looked at. We don't think about them until we need them and when we need them, we need them. So I just wanted to bring that to your attention. Thank you.

*Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk*

PUBLIC EXPRESSION cont.

Nathan Reeder- I wanted to talk to the Council today, because I've been to a few recent events and something bothered me. This has been bothering me for about 2 years now. I wanted to meet with you guys. Our housing market has tripled in the last 10 years. I will take the heat for the Mayor from all these 70+ people that come to meetings and yell at the mayor. I want to be involved. I want to give you information on the housing market. Come meet me at my office. We have an opportunity to fix our budget.

Councilwoman Alexander, supported by Councilman Tyler, moved to Adjourn

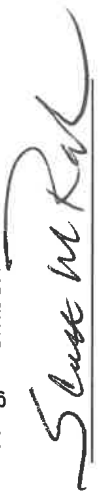
AYES: ALL

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	9	23	15	28	13	15	28	13			
Katrina Alexander	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	E	A	P						
Dan Spitale	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Janet Venecz	E	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	P	A	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	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Barry Tyler	P	P	P	E	P	E	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
Bill Emerson	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A			
Dave Woerpel	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	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	P	P	P	P	P	P	A			
Initials	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	RJG	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.



Scott Rakos, President
Hammond Common Council

ATTEST:



Robert J. Golec, City Clerk

Time: 6:40 p.m.
mg/cb

Prepared by
Robert J. Golec
Hammond City Clerk