

**HAMMOND PORT AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 17, 2024
hammondportauthority.com**

Members Present and In Person

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|------------------|---------------|
| Kristin Cantrell | Chairman |
| Rosemary Wojdyla | Vice Chairman |
| Eva Huerta | Member |
| Diane Kaminsky | Member |

Members Present Via Zoom

None.

Members Absent

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|----------------|---------------------|
| Thomas E. Kuhn | Secretary/Treasurer |
|----------------|---------------------|

Hammond Port Authority Personnel Present

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|----------------|--|
| Jeffery Smith | Port Authority Director |
| Julia Pustek | Finance Director |
| Jamie Huck | Marina Director |
| Michael Dawson | Parks Superintendent |
| Ashley Gordish | Bookkeeper & Board Recording Secretary |
| Druanne Revis | Staff Accountant |
| Kevin Smith | Attorney- Smith Sersic |
| Steve Sersic | Attorney- Smith Sersic |

Hammond Port Authority Personnel Present Via Zoom

None.

Others Present

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|-----------------|------------------|
| Dave Matura | Hammond, Indiana |
| Casey King | Hammond, Indiana |
| Larry Jennings | Whiting, Indiana |
| Maggie Dominiak | Hammond, Indiana |
| Mark Dominiak | Hammond, Indiana |
| Joey Hinds | Whiting, Indiana |

Others Present Via Zoom

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| Chris White | Stantec |
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Call to Order and Roll Call

The December 17, 2024 meeting of the Hammond Port Authority Board of Directors was called to order by Chairman Cantrell at 4:30pm. Four members are present and in person, and one member is absent. Chairman Cantrell, Vice Chairman Wojdyla, Member Huerta, and Member Kaminsky are present and in person. Secretary/Treasurer Kuhn is absent.

Chairman Cantrell called for the approval of minutes.

E. Huerta made a motion to approve the minutes of November 26, 2024 as presented. R. Wojdyla seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

Chairman Cantrell called for the Director’s Report.

Port Authority Director J. Smith reported on the following:

Staff has been working on installing bubblers, cleaning up, and prepping for winter break. Lakes and Rivers has begun working on the installation of N dock. Maintenance staff is able to start gathering plumbing supplies, and the electricity will be able to be installed soon after. We are anticipating that the dock will be ready for boaters in April. There was a meeting regarding the sound wall on Indianapolis Boulevard. Lost Marsh Golf Course staff has been working on equipment maintenance. The School City of Hammond will be having a training exercise with their teachers on what to do in case of an emergency at any Hammond school. They will be coming to Lost Marsh for training on Friday. The Splash Pad is closed, and all of the equipment and building is in good condition as it is being checked on daily. Parks staff has been cleaning up their shop. They have also been building new picnic tables and benches to go along the bike trail, Forsythe Park, and Amoco Park. There were some fallen trees in Forsythe Park that staff were able to cut up and get rid of. Come springtime, when the pontoon is put back in the water, staff is coming to take care of the eagle tree that fell on Boy Scout Island and access any damage to the pier. Maintenance continues to clean up Indianapolis Boulevard and 112th, and they are working on the equipment for grass cutting. Raquel has all of the dates booked for next summer’s concert series. She is also working with special events throughout the City at the Civic Center.

Chairman Cantrell presented the Chairman’s Report.

The Executive Session of the Hammond Port Authority of December 17, 2024 began at 3:45p.m. Chairman Cantrell, Vice Chairman Wojdyla, Member Huerta, and Member Kaminsky are present and in person. Secretary/Treasurer Kuhn is absent. Four members are present and in person, and one member is absent. The subject matter considered were matters for the discussion of strategy with respect to:

1. Contractual Concerns
2. Initiation or Pending litigation

3. Personnel matters

Pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-6.1(b) (2) (B), (D), (9). The Board certifies that no subject matter was discussed in the executive session other than the subject matter specified in the public notice.

Chairman Cantrell called for the Construction Projects Updates.

Port Authority Director J. Smith reported on the following:

Fire Station #2- The tentative completion date for this project is January 2025. The process for the demolition of current fire station #2 will begin in January.

N-Dock- Lakes and Rivers have brought their barge over. They have begun working on installing the dock. Electric installation by EMCOR and plumbing installation by marina maintenance staff will follow. The dock is expected to be completed before April 2025.

Wind Turbine at Forsythe Park- Attorneys have been researching and going through their files in regards to the wind turbine. We plan to have maintenance done every 4 years on the wind turbines.

Chairman Cantrell called for Old Business.

There was no old business to discuss.

Chairman Cantrell called for New Business.

E. Huerta made a motion to approve the HPA retiree insurance rates for the 2025 fiscal year. R. Wojdyla seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

D. Kaminsky made a motion to approve the travel request for the Hammond Port Authority Director and employees to attend the International Marina and Boatyard Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; the PGA Golf Show in Orlando, Florida; and the Chicago Boat Show in Rosemont, Illinois. E. Huerta seconded the motion.

Discussion: D. Kaminsky added that the State Board of Accounts requires the Director to be given Hammond Port Authority Board approval and permission to travel. These conference are dedicated to providing the Hammond Port Authority professionals with up to date information and networking.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

R. Wojdyla made a motion to approve the 2025 budget, salary schedule, organizational chart, and long term obligations. D. Kaminsky seconded the motion.

Discussion: R. Wojdyla mentioned that the 2025 Budget has been presented to the Board and discussed in its Budget Workshop with those recommended changes made and reflected in the budget as presented. The State Board of Accounts requires these items to be approved before the start of the new calendar year.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

E. Huerta made a motion to approve the performance agreement for entertainment at the Hammond Marina for the annual Venetian Night. R. Wojdyla seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

D. Kaminsky made a motion to approve the transfer of funds for the following accounts:

The following transfer requests are per budget.

\$280,000 from Fund 628 to Fund 626 Marina

\$220,000 from Fund 628 to Fund 627 Construction

\$100,000 from Fund 628 to Fund 627 Bank 03S R&M Savings

\$200,000 from Fund 628 to Fund 630 Lost Marsh Golf Course

\$355,000 from Fund 628 to Fund 631 Parks

The following request is not per budget.

\$15,000 from Fund 629 Lakefront back to Fund 628 Embarkation.

Funds returned to Fund 628 as not all funds transferred were needed.

E. Huerta seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

R. Wojdyla made a motion to approve the HPA employee vacation & compensatory time extension. E. Huerta seconded the motion.

Discussion: R. Wojdyla added that the staff at all Port facilities and locations worked throughout most of the entire year short staffed. With the various personal safety mandates and precautions put in place and implemented, staff put in extra days and weeks safely preparing to open, manage, operate, and now close the marina, golf course, and Wolf Lake Memorial Park facilities and grounds. Staff should not be penalized due to these circumstances and events. This time must be used in the first quarter of 2025.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

Chairman Cantrell called for the approval of Purchase Orders.

E. Huerta made a motion to approve the Purchase Orders as follows:

- 626 – Marina Operations
- 627 – Construction
- 628 – Embarkation
- 630 – Lost Marsh Golf Course
- 631 – Parks
- 708 – Payroll
- All Electronic Transfers and Bank of New York Mellon

D. Kaminsky seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

Chairman Cantrell called for Public Comment.

Dave Matura of Hammond, IN expressed his dissatisfaction in the decision to remove the vegetation and phragmites at Wolf Lake. He said that this has never been done before, and it has been done in extreme. While it is a good thing to remove phragmites and extend the shoreline for fishermen, too much of a good thing is extreme. Matura questions if this was supervised and professional? Or was it done in a negligent manner? He said that there was unnecessary removal of other trees and plants instead of just the invasive phragmites. While Director Jeff Smith did respond to Matura's email, he feels as if this was still done without a plan in mind and uncontrolled. Matura believes that this created more of a problem than it solved. Matura is interested in the Port Authority's plan going forward and why this was done in such excess. He states that Cargill is very visible from Wolf Lake, and that the noise level for the locals has increased due to the decrease of vegetation.

Casey King of Hammond, IN said that WREN (Whiting Robertsdale Environmental Neighbors) was founded by Lynn Hanes last January who could not be here today. This organization was created to be an advocate for the environment, and they desire to have a closer relationship with the City of Hammond. They also wish to form connections with conservations organizations. King said that recently bald eagles were named the national bird, meaning that they are federally protected. There has been sightings at Wolf Lake, and the upcoming firework shows pose a danger for these birds. He suggest that the city moves the firework show somewhere else instead of the eagles habitat.

Larry Jennings of Whiting, IN understands the concerns of WREN, but he is happy with the decision to remove the phragmites. He appreciates the process of taking out the phragmites and dead vegetation so the regrowth can be controlled. He is sure that the people in charge have taken into consideration the amount of wild growth at the lake. He is looking forward to the Port Authority beautifying the area with trees and the appropriate vegetation. Jennings emphasizes the the lake is so important to the area with wind surfing, boats, fishing and then some. There is so much to do in the area with the Pavilion, Lost Marsh Golf Course, and Wolf Lake itself. This successful recreation will continue to bring young families into new homes in the area.

Lakefront property is a goldmine bringing taxes in and people to support local businesses. Jennings appreciates and believes that this is a step in the right direction to take recreation to the next level.

Maggie Dominiak of Hammond is wanting to be a voice for the ecosystem that can't be heard. She understands that what was done may be better for people, but the fact that the lake isn't meant for just people was not taken into consideration. Recognizing that recreation is important, Dominiak is concerned with the balance of respecting and protecting the environment. She agrees with the concerns that have been raised with her fellow members of WREN, but how can we find balance with protecting the species? Is conservation an avenue that will be taken? If so, how will you get there? If not, why is it not a priority? The work being done maybe improve human life, but is detrimental to wildlife. She mentioned that she noticed more dead animals on her daily walk after the phragmites were cut down. She says that we need to find a way to manage the lake so it can be enjoyed while still preserving what is there. Dominiak questions why conservation isn't a priority. She agrees that the lake should be enjoyed by residents, but not at the expense of wildlife.

Mark Dominiak of Hammond believes that this presents an opportunity for the Port Authority to invite WREN to collaborate on the planning phases. While Dominiak is not sure of the process of how things are decided, there has been many legitimate concerns raised. Working together would help produce a more well-rounded result. He is curious to see how things are going to bounce back after the phragmites and vegetation are gone. The animals now lack shade and habitats. Where is the balance?

Joey Hinds of Whiting, IN thanks Port Authority Director Jeff Smith for his work and involvement on explaining how phragmites are being treated. He suggests for the Port Authority to work with WREN. He also wonders how Stantec is involved, and their relationship with the Port Authority. Hinds provided some pictures of eagles that are at Wolf Lake. He proposed that New Years fireworks be moved from Wolf Lake to somewhere else to protect the eagle's habitat.

Chris White from Stantec was on Zoom. He said that the contract began last year focusing on the southeast shoreline near the kayak launch ramp. Stantec treated and cut the phragmites and woody invasive species. This is a conservation of the shoreline for the restoration of the shoreline, and going forward the growth will be easier to cut and maintain. Stantec will do a foliar treatment in May/June of 2025 for other invasive species. This allows for the natives to come back and re-sprout. The goal is to merge opinions by restoring the shores native species and to do it ascetically.

Vice Chairman Wojdyla and the board members would like to thank Julia for all her hard work on the budget. She makes the process smooth and easy.

Dave Matura asked the board if they made an impression coming to the meeting. Chairman Cantrell appreciates and thanks the organization for being present at the meeting. She likes the thought of merging ideas. Vice Chairman Wojdyla added that the board values the ecosystem. The board gives these things the most consideration and are sensitive to it.

Chairman Cantrell announced the Next Meeting.

The Board of Finance will meet for a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 3:45p.m. The next regular meeting of the Hammond Port Authority is scheduled for Tuesday, January 21, 2025. These meetings will be held at 701 Casino Center Drive, Hammond, IN 46320. The Board may attend in person or by Zoom with the stipulations adopted in Resolution 21-03 approved by the Board on July 27, 2021. The Executive Session will begin at 4:00p.m, the Construction Meeting will begin at 4:15p.m. and the Regular meeting will begin at 4:30p.m.

Chairman Cantrell called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

E. Huerta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Kaminsky seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Yes: E. Huerta, D. Kaminsky, R. Wojdyla, K. Cantrell

No: None.

Motion passes, 4 approve.

The December 17, 2024 Board of Directors meeting adjourned at 5:07pm.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MEMORANDUM

The Executive Session of the Hammond Port Authority of December 17, 2024 began at 3:45p.m. Chairman Cantrell, Vice Chairman Wojdyla, Member Huerta, and Member Kaminsky are present and in person. Secretary/Treasurer Kuhn is absent. Four members are present and in person, and one member is absent. The subject matter considered were matters for the discussion of strategy with respect to:

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