



CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Return to Excellence

Glenda McDonald
Mayor

BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of March 22, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Johnson.

Roll Call:

Present: Chairman Ryan Johnson, Commissioner Brenda Hicks, Commissioner RJ Watkins, Commissioner Curis, Commissioner/Secretary Erica George, Mayor Glenda McDonald, Internal Affairs Investigator Lackey, Corporal Fergeus, Chief McMann, Chief Hollowell

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of January 25, 2023 were approved.

Police Department

Interim Chief McMann: Attempting to hire more candidates and moving in a positive direction.

Corporal Fergeus: School resources and establish K9.

Chairman: It has been a tremendous change.

Corporal Fergeus: School resource officer will monitor the school and be the first on scene with any critical incidents. The K9 they can track and do drug tracking. It is good community involvement.

Chairman: Where will we get the K9?

Corporal Fergeus: I am not sure. I know it is through a grant. The school officer will be through both schools.

Fire Department

Chief Hollowell: We are shy of 200 fires year to date. I will introduce you to the new hire he is third generation Parker and currently during administration. He is grateful for the opportunity.

Mayor: This is a wonderful young man. He has always done something wonderful for the city and at Michigan State. He has worked with the government. I am happy to see a Highland Parker stepping up to be a firefighter in the city.

Chairman: How does our number compare to last year?

Chief Hollowell: We are slightly up from last year. We are having more fires with vacant structures.

Chairman: Is it due to squatters or arson?

Chief Hollowell: This is not my department to decide but I would assume arson.

Chairman: Please email your report this week.

Internal Affairs

Lackey: We are interviewing three people this Friday and one individual is from Highland Park for the fire department. Since the chief has been on board, we have received a lot more interest and marketing has improved. We are looking to switch our law enforcement system. Now, we have the resources to do this and start the process. Our AXON contract for our body cams, etc., expires this year. We will look at that and see what the best direction under the new Chief is. We submitted an administering software called Blue Team. It will give us early warnings and track. It has more accountability and used by state police. It is completely grant funded. We recently acquired patrol vehicles. We redesigned them as well. One of the cars has the graphics on it already and can get that on Facebook. The design was based upon votes.

Chairman: Can you send that design in email to the Commissioners? Can you talk more about the software and early warning signs of tracking performance?

Lackey: The administering tracking software gives detail to the patrol supervisors it can target use of force, tardiness, etc. The system can tell us this officer has had this many offenses and you want to take a look at it. We can look at the history of an employment and the incident they were tied too and use it to manage how we move forward. We have been with Core Service Bureau in 2014. It was Highland Parks first digital record keeping system. We have reached a point where we have outgrown it. We are hoping to get Clemis software which is and managed by Oakland County. It is big in data sharing for community policing, data, e-citations, etc.

Commissioner Hick: What is the status on getting information for protocol on officers receiving the rules and protocols?

Chairman: When it is training involved, we are looking for a mechanism that they signed off on a training.

Lackey: We met with a company so we can update our critical policies. We could potentially do a complete overhaul to put it in line with accreditation. We do have a grant and the chief has been in touch with the grant administration because it is costly. The software has the ability to create a digital log for them to sign off. In the meantime, we are developing something until we can get that done. Lastly, we have a new disciplinary board. We have a new hiring board which a few commissioners sit on.

Chairman: Chief McMann joined us. Do you want to add anything? Will the K9 be new?

Chief McMann: It will be new, and the animal receives years' worth of training before we get it. It will be a young puppy and then the K9 and the trainer will be trained and working together. I appreciate you all participating in our hiring board.

Commission Affairs

Chairman: We want to be more visible. Tomorrow will be a state of the city at Healing Springs at 6pm.

Commissioner Watkins: The neighbor that requested the speed bumps. Did we have a chance to look at into the speed bump?

Chairman: We had to have a commission done and we had to go through the city to see if there were funds available. There had to be a feasibility study done which as well was costly. This was on Oakman. The issue was drag racing.

Chief McMann: I recall this being brought up. It was my understand they had to hold the traffic commission meeting. The program would have to be rolled out city wide and not tailored to one street. We are looking to update our streets. I don't think we are further along than we were at that time. I am happy to participate and bring these meetings forward.

Mayor: It is a fee and funds we do not have currently. We are looking to find a grant because this fund is not in our general funds. This issue is for a few citizens. Again, we must do a traffic commission meeting and put the people in place together. We have a new DPW and Chief, so this is something we have on our radar. The city council did give us the funds and our former Mayor veto these funds along with some traffic controlling devices. Oakland will be torn up and under construction between Tennyson and Davison so putting something down right now will be torn up. They do have removal speed bumps, but I have learned from Detroit that people remove the speed bumps. The citizen you are speaking of knows where we are financially and is understanding.

Commissioner Watkins: I know we had a commissioner with problems at his store. Did that get taken care of?

Commissioner Curis: Yes, they are working on a solution, so it is on-going. At least it is being worked on.

Chairman: I want to make sure our new meetings on the fourth Wednesdays of the month are posted on the website.

Lackey: I believe that has been updated.

Commissioner Curis: Thank you Mayor for being present and for the opportunity to be more involved.

Mayor: I appreciate you all stepping up and getting more involved. I have been doing research across the country and I believe the job is to do the job we were designated to do. We need people to have a different eye. From my experience, a committee is always better to see that vision more. I am about to appoint some people to other commissions. Thank you for staying and joining in with me in this quest to bring Highland Park back to excellence.

Lackey: We have the picture of the patrol car. (This picture was shared on the zoom.)

Public Comments

Chairman: A former officer, Menge, wanted to read a statement.

Menge: He stated he was approached about returning to the Highland Park police department. He left in 2021 after seven years. I assisted Chief McMann in auto theft. I helped Chief Coney. I worked many homicides in that time and violent crimes. For unknown reasons, the mayor at that time demoted me and placed me back in patrol. There was a grievance filed and I was a promoted. I have not had any citations. The former Mayor launched several investigations, and all were unfounded. I love the city of Highland Park and was there recently. I have reached out to senior staff and the Chief with my desire to come back. I have great respect for the commissioners and Mayor McDonald. I never thought I would leave Highland Park. I worked with detective Thomas for years. The litigation that happened I tried to negotiate with the city to give me my job back and I tried to ask the city to give me my job back. I never wanted to settlement. The former Mayor took it to an extreme level. We were working to try and put this behind us. In that time, the Mayor and Terry Ford shot down me coming back. My desire is to come back and I would love to do so. My record speaks for itself. I want to continue to try to do good for the city and I appreciate the city. I appreciate the time and hope for the opportunity to continue to serve.

Chairman: Thank you for coming today and we will follow up with the Chief and Mayor.

Commissioner Watkins: The gentlemen that was murdered on Victor, did they ever get closure?

Chief: We will have to come back to that.

Commissioner Watkins: Are you familiar with that case?

Chief: We are dealing with obstacles with the prosecutor's office. We have some leads but getting some resistance from the prosecutor's office.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 26, 6:00 pm, Zoom
cc: City Clerk