



# CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

## BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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Return to Excellence

Glenda McDonald

Mayor

### BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

#### Minutes of February 5, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by Chairman Johnson.

#### **Roll Call:**

**Present:** Chairman Ryan Johnson, Commissioner Michael Curis (online presence), Commissioner Erica George, Commissioner Watkins, Commission Hicks, Chief Erik Hollowell, Chief McMahon, Director, Lackey, Detective Paul Thomas, Mayor Glenda McDonald (online), Lt. Payne

#### **Opening Remarks**

Chairman: Welcome everyone and happy new year. We are glad to be back to serve the people.

#### **Police Department**

Chief: We are working on funding for our jail. We have some blueprints and plans as well as communication with the county which looks positive. We were given permission from council for the RFP and getting quotes on the cost. We would like to get everyone in the Hamilton location and leave Woodward for a mini station.

Commissioner Watkins: Is this location the lock up?

Chief: Yes, that is the goal. We need to structure this building for that purpose.

Chairman: Would we have to structure something outside?

Chief: No, we only keep them for three days then be transferred.

#### **Fire Department**

Lt. Payne: For January, we did 112 calls in January. There were 3 major building fires, 11 careless cooks, 4 fires, 12 EMS calls, and 3 mutual aid calls with Hamtramck. We had a total of 73 other runs. We have implemented a program where we use to do rounds of hydrates in the fall. We are now doing it during the winter every day.

Chairman: Do we check them each day or follow a schedule?

Lt. Payne: We section sections of the city per day. We have about 6 or 8 hydrates that are frozen. We are trying to get a steamer. The three major building fires were the abandoned bookstore, and it is multiple fires due to the homeless population keeping warm or setting things on fire. We had a fire on John R and an abandoned garage on W. Grand. The chief is attempting to get us a pick-up truck.

Commissioner Watkins: What did you all assist the police with?

Lt. Payne: We may have to help with welfare checks and get access into the house, etc.

Commissioner Watkins: Are many people in the house?

Chief: Yes, we have saved many lives. There are a lot of elderly we have helped who have fallen.

Chairman: How do you secure the buildings?

Lt. Payne: Belfour has been used from business owners etc. We do not resecure the buildings.

Chairman: For the buildings not secured does the owner get ticketed?

Chief: Our ordinance department will follow up with citations. We have the legal department getting involved as well. If we have a situation with a health and safety matter, the Mayor will order to board up the first level so no one gets in.

### **Internal Affairs**

Dir. Lackey: Previously notified the Commission regarding investigations of three police employees. We will not get into the outcomes.

Chairman: Have we had any new citizen complaints?

Dir. Lackey: There is an ongoing complaint that we are staying diligent with. Our complaints have come down. So far, there have only been two and they have been substantiated.

Chairman: Without given names, can we give outcomes.

Dir. Lackey: One officer was given a two day suspension. There was another officer giving a 60 day suspension overall without pay. The third officer was terminated.

Commissioner Hicks: Was this the result of the Commission meetings we sit in?

Dir. Lackey: Yes.

Chairman: We have been sitting in on these meetings.

Chief: We take these complaints of discrimination and use of force very serious. It results in significant discipline up to termination. It poses risk to the department and city. We do provide a lot of training. For officers in long suspensions have been to trainings. The message in the training is "Get on board or get out". We are sending our officers to crisis intervention training. It teaches officers how to speak to people and how to listen to people to figure out how they can help. We partnered with DWIHN with the former Detroit Chief and the program has been great. They come here and trained.

Commissioner Hicks: What is the status on social workers?

Chief: We had a grant and asked for an extension of the \$500,000. The grant was more involved. DWIHN is now providing some of these social workers. They have a lot of resources that we did not know was available and how to pay for this assistance. The old days of dropping people off to the hospitals does not work. DWIHN has been able to provide long term treatment. We are seeing results.

Chairman: I commend you Chief to serve the community and not tear it down.

Chief: We have been working on some cold cases and we are making positive progress.

Commissioner Hicks: How far back?

Chief: We have gone back to the seventies. We have been able to meet with families out of state. These are positive stories to give someone closure.

Commissioner Watkins: Did we find out about the case we mentioned before?

Det. Thomas: We are talking to the prosecutor at this time of some of our leads.

Mayor: I am here to observe and listen.

### **Public Comments**

Chairman: We have Mr. Johnson here.

Johnson: In regards to the distribution building on Hamilton and Grand getting on Davison and Lodge, would it be a Fire Department or Water Department but it is a leak and it ices up. You have to be careful when you make that turn.

Chief: We do not have any hydrates. We could get with DPW because the property is vacant. There is no hydrates besides the perimeter of the building.

Johnson: It is similar to the green fluid that was leaking before but it is clear water.

Chief: I know there is some retention ponds but we can mention it.

Lt. Payne: Tomorrow, I will go on the property to make sure it is not a hydrate issue then contact DPW.

Johnson: The police department was mentioning the funding for training on how to deal with mental health. Wanted to know about the training and one officer was trained.

Chief: There are 44% of officers trained in crisis intervention. This is the training I was mentioned earlier. The officer are buying into the training. The instructors are making it a positive thing.

Johnson: The vacant building Dixon Bookstore, who is responsible to contact the owners. Off Woodward, there are people in those vacant structures and unfortunately living in there and burning things.

Chief: We go through and build up the buildings but then people go back in. Ordinance is following up but many companies are blocked by LLCs. We are trying to force new developers to renovate. We are fighting a tough battle.

Johnson: Lastly, residents park anywhere and on the sidewalks. They have a garage or alley entrance. We see it between John R and Buena Vista, FerrandPark and McLean.

Chief: I can tell you that citations are pending for residents on John R. You may see it but eventually someone is getting cited.

Chairman: You can call the front desk.

Mayor: I have had calls. I have sent the police over. People were ticketed. Unfortunately, they do come back and park. We have a situation on Buena Vista that is going through the court process. Our signs are missing and the signs are being ordered. But, some of these matters have to go through the courts. We are ordering signs for John R, Brush, etc. We just put up signs on Oakland blocking Gerald. We see it and we send the police out but they come back. So if you see it then call so we can send someone out.

Chief: I thank Mr. Johnson for participating and it is a pleasure to see it.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 pm

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 6:00 pm, In-person and Zoom

cc: City Clerk