



City of Highland Park

Board of Police and Fire Commissioners

Return to Excellence

Hubbert Yopp
Mayor

BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of June 16, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm by Chairman Ryan Johnson.

Roll Call:

Present: Chairman Ryan Johnson, Commissioner Michael Curis, Commissioner Brenda Hicks, Commissioner RJ Watkins, Commissioner/Secretary Erica George, Fire Inspector John Newvine, Chief Kevin Coney, Director Lackey

Open Remarks

Chairman: The Mayor is waiting on instructions from the Governor once we can meet again in person.

Commissioner Curis: On most of the boards I am on, we usually report to the city once a year. A city council member called me and did not know we had a police commission. I think we need to be more visible and give an annual report of what we do. I think we need to go in front of the city council.

Chairman: I do not have a problem. I believe the council knows we are here. Our names are printed in the Highland Park newsletters. This may be a newer councilmen. I know the Mayor went to the council prior to be coming back on the Commission. I will speak with the Mayor on how we move forward. Upon my return to the commission, I am going to put a letter together for the Mayor regarding our focus. I will forward the document to you all so we can give our input. I will send it to Chief Coney as well then to the Mayor.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of May 19, 2021 were approved.

Fire Department

FF. J. Newvine: We did 76 calls last month which is a good amount. We had a fair amount of building fires. We had medical calls and accidents. I did just get a shipment of smoke detectors for the community. The citizens need a Highland Park ID and they can receive one for free.

Chairman: How many some detectors?

Newvine: I believe there is 25.

Chairman: Are there any age limits?

Newvine: No. I am trying to get more but with COVID there is a shortage.

Chairmen: Do you know what is going on with the EMS system.

Newvine: Rapid Response is gone. On June 1st Lifeline moved in. They seem to be busy and doing well as far as I can tell.

Commissioner Watkins: Are the calls spread out?

Newvine: It varies. I know on Friday we did one call and Sunday we did six calls. Unfortunately we can not control the calls.

Commissioner Watkins: It seems like that would tire out the firemen. Is there a backup situation?

Newvine: There is always a backup. We can call mutual aide in Hamtramck and Detroit.

Police Department

Chief Coney: I want to give an update on the shootings. On Davison and Woodward we had a drive by shooting recently. At this time we have no suspects. The shooting that happened at the gas station at Davison and Woodward one guy was killed but they both shot simultaneously. Due to them pulling their guns at the same time, the charges were dropped. On Geneva, we had a homicide a month ago. We have a suspect we are looking at. The information is at the prosecutor's office. Once we have the information we will apprehend him. At Bargain Basket, there was a guy charged for that shooting. On Avalon, that is an ongoing investigation. The drag racing is ongoing. The shooting on Rosa Parks, we are investigating but the guy is being uncooperative. On Geneva this past weekend we had a shooting at a familiar house. We have footage from the blue light. Chief Holcomb sent out packets to vendors (Kroger, Better Made and Meijer) for National Night Out on August 3rd. We did the 'Run Rich Run'. Chief Holcomb, myself and others raced and we sent in the video. We put it on Facebook. We did have an officer investigated by the FBI. She has been suspended without pay. We have three officers who recently graduated from the police academy Brown, Otis and Bryant. We have a civil rights incident that was issued which we disciplined two out of three officers. The third officer is off and will be disciplined upon return.

Commissioner Watkins: What happened?

Chairmen: This situation will have some legal issues so we will not discuss this matter.

Chief Coney: We do have asexual harassment complaint. Homicide is up 33% nationwide. There is a study being done. Chicago is the highest. The ages are 14-20. We have a lot of the shootings happening due to COVID.

Commissioner Watkins: Do you find this true in Highland Park?

Chief Coney: Highland Park is a tight knit community so many of the shootings are outsiders. The Blue Light is truly helping. We are able to retrieve some of the footage. We are trying to get ahead of it. Detroit is having problems as well.

Chairman: I will say we get some of the issues because we are in the middle of the issues.

Chief Coney: We did a city wide clean up by Cottage and Woodward. We cleaned up on Florence and Louise where trash was dumped. Greater Detroit was the company who assisted in picking up the trash. One of our officer supervisors have been in supervisory training due to discipline issues.

Commissioner Curis: We want to donate the \$1,000 for National Night Out. I was with Rafael Washington and he spoke very highly of you. There were no officers involved in these shootings correct?

Chief Coney: Correct.

Commissioner Curis: I want to commend you all for your efforts. That is impressive.

Internal Affairs

Lackey: We had a termination and the person is challenging that through arbitration which will be next month from the police department. We have another employee who was terminated in the past just file a lawsuit today. Chief Coney spoke about the officer who was investigation and the other matters are on-going. I have nothing else to update on in a public form since many of the matters are legal.

Commissioner Watkins: Does the FBI have to notify the city before coming in?

Lackey: No, they do not.

Chief Coney: If they do say something it is out of courtesy.

Chairman: Many times they will not tell you because they do not know who is involved. This is no reflection on our police department. You all do a wonderful job.

Lackey: I concur. It does not just happen in Highland Park.

Chief Coney: They Mayor sent me to a meeting last week and they're trying to make MCOLEs bill pass. If officers are not acceptable by the state then an officer can not get a job. I will say the complaints on a police officer matter because an officer had forty complaints. The forty complaints could be because a citizen was pulled over for speeding. Highland Park is doing an excellent job.

Chairmen: As you know, you can not tell why an officer was fired from department to department. I agree they need to know what the complaints were for.

Lackey: MCOLEs got a law change in 2016 that gave them a greater ability to monitor officers. I have seen an officer who has a sustained charge and is ultimately charged then MCOLES does get involved. With the new law they have a greater insight. In the last year, a bill was passed to require departments to pass along information from administration and personnel files to the next department. I will have a department reach out to me for an officers' information. I am glad this is happening.

Chairmen: Any updates with Blue Light?

Lackey: We have some people who can not afford it. We added a few sites in Highland Park. We do not have alot of participation in Ecorse. They had some administration changes. We have 8 new people. It takes us about three weeks to put up a sight. You never know what you are going to get into. We may initially evaluate it and find that something else is wrong but I am about doing the job correctly and getting it done if it takes some time.

Commission Affairs

Commissioner Chairmen: Hopefully before the next meeting, I will get this document out.

Public Comments

Chairman: No public present.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:4] pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 6:00pm, Zoom

cc: City Clerk