



City of Highland Park

Board of Police and Fire Commissioners

Return to Excellence

Hubbert Yopp
Mayor

BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of July 21, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 pm by Chairman Ryan Johnson.

Roll Call:

Present: Chairman Ryan Johnson, Commissioner Michael Curis, Commissioner Brenda Hicks, Commissioner RJ Watkins, Commissioner/Secretary Erica George, Chief Erik Hollowell, Deputy Chief Heather Holcomb, Director Lackey

Open Remarks

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 16, 2021 were approved.

Fire Department

Chairman: I want to commend the fire staff. I had one staff person installing and he did a great job.

Chief Hollowell: We have had 3 structural fires. I lost four guys to Detroit so I have to replace them.

Chairman: How is the new EMS service working out?

Chief Hollowell: The company is here but they are getting overwhelmed so we may need to get a backup company. The truck may get tied up with trivial things and can not get to other calls immediately.

Commissioner Curis: Do the firefighters get certified before they come to Highland Park? How much does it cost?

Chief Hollowell: No, they come certified. The cost is about \$6,000.

Commissioner Curis: Is there any thought about splitting the police and fire to be trained?

Chairman: We use to have public safety crossed trained staff.

Chief Hollowell: I believe we should be crossed trained.

Chairman: Do we need to use the mutual agreement more?

Chief: We still have the mutual agreement. If we need them we call them.

Police Department

Chairman: I want to give a special thanks to the high profile cases they have dealt with lately.

Deputy Holcomb: The last month has been busy. There were many buildings or areas flooded.

We were helping with flood relief and cleaning out the basements. We did move to the old DHS

building on Hamilton. We have had a lot of high profile cases. At 13000 Oakland, we had threats of bomb threats and someone in custody. He will probably be charged tomorrow. We have had a lot of homicides in the last twelve months. We have had on an average one homicide a month. The one complaint we had pending has now been closed out. The one officer did get a suspension and the other two officers were written up with training. These officers had a civil rights violation where an arrest was made and the probable cause did not add up. I think the whole department learned from this experience. We are nine days out on August 3rd for National Night out on Woodward and Avalon at 5:00pm. We will have bounce houses, pack backs to giveaway, give out the scholarship, etc.

Commissioner Hicks: For the event, do you need any assistance from the Commission?

Chairmen: I would ask everyone to attend. This is a national event and other communities are having the same event this night.

Commissioner Hicks: Does the officer who received a suspension have any other write ups?

Deputy Holcomb: Yes, we would love for the commissioners to attend. Regarding the officer, this was a first time suspension.

Commissioner Curis: What is the scholarship amount?

Deputy Holcomb: The scholarship is for \$2,500.

Commissioner Curis: I mentioned before I would pledge \$1,000. Also, I want to help with the police academy.

Deputy Holcomb: We do not have anyone for the academy but thank you for the offer.

Commissioner Curis: Are the homicides connected to Highland Park residents?

Deputy Holcomb: The suspects are not Highland Park residents.

Internal Affairs

Director Lackey: Currently, we are in arbitration. We had a termination of a police employee. We expect a decision in the next few months but this is a legal matter. I have some complaints I forwarded to the police department so I want to make sure they received them. The complaints involved a backup situation and unlawful entry.

Chief Holcomb: The unlawful entry is being investigated. There was another incident but it was not our department.

Lackey: We have a harassment complaint. It deals with integrity. There was an accusation that this officer made statements that was not truthful. It originated from an internal situation but it is on-going. In addition to the fire department, I believe the police department had some officers that left.

Commissioner Hicks: What are you doing to fill in the vacancies?

Chairmen: They are having a hard time getting candidates which is across the country.

Public Comments

Chairman: Do we have any comments?

Ms. Thomas: I wanted to find out what is the procedure to have traffic calming measures? I hear you have a lot of things going on. Today was about the fourth or fifth accident I have seen around John R.

Chairmen: Detroit has been having problems with the drag raising which spills over to Highland Park.

Deputy Holcomb: We have met with the board to put in speed bumps and other devices to help with this but we do not have a solid answer right now. This is a state wide power. Detroit is

doing everything they can to curb this problem. They have put helicopters in the sky but we do not have access. As far as the drag racing, we do not chase them. We only get the license plate then contact them to issue their ticket.

Commissioner Watkins: We have a lot of drag racing on the lodge. Is there any way we can talk to the state?

Chairmen: They are aware of everything going on. We do not have jurisdiction over Detroit but they are trying to handle these matters but everyone is short.

Commissioner Hicks: Is there a specific area that has more drag racing than others?

Chairmen: We have a lot on Hamilton.

Commissioner Curis: Do you live in Highland Park?

Angela Thomas: Yes, I live on the corner so I see everything.

Commissioner Curis: I want you to know I appreciate you joining us and I want to do something.

Chairmen: The department is doing something but speed bumps come at a cost.

Commissioner Curis: Can we add a stop sign?

Angela Thomas: The stop sign is up but people do not stop. We want to consider putting things in the center of the road to slow people down. Our fence got hit on June 8th. A biker got killed and another resident had an incident to occur as well.

Chairmen: Deputy Chief Holcomb can you put more attention on that area?

Deputy Holcomb: Yes.

Angela Thomas: They have been patrolling more. I am not sure if you are aware of the laundering from Belfour. The shelter clients are walking up and down the street. They are breaking into houses and urinating in the alley and it is making residents scared.

Chairmen: We can not do anything with the facility. Deputy Chief Holcomb can you see if you and Chief can get a meeting with the manager to discuss these concerns.

Deputy Chief Holcomb: Yes

Chairmen: Do you know if it is a shelter?

Commissioner George: I believe it is a shelter. If it is the shelter, they must take any clients regardless of background.

Chairmen: If it is a shelter then we may not be able to do anything but if there are parole programs then we may be able to do something else.

Commissioner Hicks: I have a complaint from a citizen who was not getting a response. She stated she came to the building and it took an hour for someone to come to the door. She stated her complaint was lost so that took more time. She has received her incident number for her insurance claim but it took some time.

Chairmen: Deputy Chief Holcomb, can you look into this? Ms. Thomas, I will give you a call after the meeting.

Commissioner Watkins: I just want to say I hope I did not offend the citizen by asking about the Lodge because I did not want to steal that attention from the citizen.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 pm

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

cc: City Clerk