



# **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 5, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm by Chairman Johnson.

#### **Roll Call:**

**Present:** Chairman Ryan Johnson, Commissioner Michael Curis, Commissioner Erica George, Commissioner Watkins, Commissioner Hicks, Chief McMahon, Director Lackey, Lt. Payne

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

Chairman: Remove Chief Hollowell from the last minutes.

#### **Opening Remarks**

Chairman: I am glad everyone is well.

#### **Police Department**

Chief: We have people criticizing the police department on Facebook. Recently, we discovered a female who was deceased. The allegations are we took no efforts to locate the girl and they want me to resign. I am not bothered about me but for the people who are out here daily. The family authorized us to talk about this situation. The medical examiner believes she may have overdosed and was not outside long. We started investigations and people were used to seeing her and saw her the previous day before she was last seen. She was last seen in Highland Park. We did not find out she was missing until the night prior. Officers did a traffic stop and was given a flyer of her missing. By noon the next day, she was found. It is frustrating that people can go on social media and does not have any facts. The officers take offense and the community may take some of the misinformation as truth. I love my job and if citizens feel like I am not doing my job then I ask citizens to go to the Mayor and I can step down. Unfortunately, the way she was discovered was horrific for the family and narcotics is a problem in the neighborhoods. I need the public to set up and tell us where they are seeing these places selling narcotics. The young lady was beautiful and had a lot going on in her life.

Commissioner Watkins: There are no social media police and they say what they want to say. People listen to it without fact checking. I think the Commission knows you are doing a great job.

Chief: The officers are doing a great job. I know we may not pay the best but these officers keep showing up.

Commissioner Hicks: I think if you all continue to do what you are doing and get out in the community will be good. IT is a good idea to keep meeting with the community and let them know what is going on.

Commissioner Watkins: How old was the young lady?

Chief: She was 32 years old. She had a very caring family and they were devastated by this.

Commissioner Hicks: On Facebook, is this one person or multiple?

Chief: It started with one person and others joined in on spreading it. We try to be very transparent even when we are not perfect but we acknowledge it. If anyone needs the truth, please come talk to us. In addition, there was an individual breaking into a lot of homes, Brian Morris. Ultimately, he was using credit cards he stole in Highland Park and officers were able to identify then Detroit made the arrest. Our staffing levels are improving. We had a successful hiring event. I project by mid to end summer we are fully staffed. We hope to sponsor some people through the next academy. This gives us an opportunity to be more proactive versus reactive. We ceased over ten pounds of cocaine and heroin. The officers did a great job. We recovered a long rifle that was loaded. We are partnering with federal agents to proceed with the case further. Our animal control officer has been going through 140 hours of training to be certified. Hopefully by spring he is fully certified. We are all in with DWIHN with our partnership for CIT training. Officer Monroe is a big part of that and the grant extension.

Off. Monroe: We are working on a grant for a mental health unit to provide clinicians to ride along with officers and staff someone on our team. We have crisis care facilities. If someone is facing a mental crisis, they would go to Receiving or Henry Ford. With the crisis care facilities, they will hold them for three days. Some are hospitalized and become inpatients as far as repeat offenders.

Commissioner George: Where are the department?

Off. Monroe: We use Team Wellness, DWIHN, Cope and other crisis facilities throughout Detroit and surrounding areas. Those who are in mental crisis commit crimes and incarceration is not always the appropriate answer. The Judge has started a mental health program so people are not automatically incarcerated if they are having a mental health crisis. We would be one of the first smaller municipalities to start this program.

Chief: I am seeing a greater improvement in customer service. I see a lot of improvement.

Chairman: I think you are doing a great job. You are always open and honest. Thank you.

## **Fire Department**

Lt. Payne: For February we had 83 calls for service calls such as rescuing people out of the elevator. We had 4 major building fires. Once was at 11 Ferrand Park, 196 Pilgrim due to squatters, etc. We had a citizen complaint about water dripping onto the freeway ramp. We found an open fire hydrate and were able to shut it off. We had all the hydrates taken care of on that property. March is reading month. We will be going into the schools and read.

Commissioner Watkins: What happens with rescuing people with the elevator?

Lt. Payne: We can rescue people especially from the senior buildings to get doors open. We have the tools to open the doors and keys to the elevators.

## **Internal Affairs**

Dir. Lackey: The fire department is undergoing a digital project. They are expanding on a reporting system to reduce paper, etc. Our citizens complaints are down. We had three complaints and one was forwarded to Detroit. The other two were internal. One complaint was handled today and the other complaint was handled by the supervisor.

Commissioner Curis: Are the complaints over the one month period?

Dir. Lackey: Yes.

Commissioner Watkins: Do we get copies?

Chairman: Lackey has been taking on the complaint and commissioners have been sitting in on the complaints

Commissioner Curis: Have we thought about drones?

Dir. Lackey: We are actively seeking the funding to purchase drones. We are exploring grants.

We have to get council approval to go after grants. One drone is completely automated, it can be controlled from a computer but it is 200k. These are very big numbers for a smaller department. I am pushing for the drones.

Commissioner George: Will there be training?

Dir. Lackey: We have to be licensed and that will come with the grants.

### **Public Comments**

Chairman: Let's move to the public comments. Mr. Johnson do you have anything?

Off. Monroe: I spoke with one of the Becharas brothers. He expressed his gratitude for police department. They have been there over 100 years.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 pm

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 6:00 pm, In-person and Zoom

cc: City Clerk