



CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK

BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Return to Excellence

Glenda McDonald
Mayor

BOARD OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Minutes of October 2, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by Chairman Johnson.

Roll Call:

Present: Chairman Ryan Johnson, Commissioner Michael Curis, Commissioner Erica George, Commissioner Watkins, Chief Erik Hollowell, Chief McMahan, Detective Paul Thomas, Off. Monroe, Mayor Glenda McDonald

Opening Remarks

Chairman: Welcome everyone and thank you for everyone being here. We would like to thank the Mayor for being here.

Police Department

Chief: Those of you may have known Officer Clayton who passed away at the end of October. We are looking to put up a plaque in the department. We had a successful pill drive and recovered 35 pounds of pills. Every pill recovered did not end up in our drinking water, etc. On November 20th, we will have a suicide prevention event with a guest speaker. This event can educate you and help you with helping someone else. We brought three new officers on staff but we are still not fully staffed. We hope to send two people to the next academy in January. We are not lowering our standards and could have hired more people but we are not to maintain our standards. We are starting to get a positive representation and we want to get accredited.

Commissioner Watkins: How many do you have on staff now?

Chief: We do not share that information due to officer safety but we can add about six more officers including civilian positions. We have holiday events coming up with the recreation center.

Chairman: Are you going to do Toys for Tots or something similar?

Chief: The Marines were great and helpful but there are several organizations in Highland Park and we found out their were dual applications because people are going to each group getting toys from all groups. We are partnering with the recreation center. I did try to partner with the six groups in Highland Park but we are working with some private resources. Also, we are not a 501c(3) so it is harder to get some of those donors.

Chairman: Didn't we have a non profit 501c(3)?

Chief: Yes, but when Chief Holcomb left she dissolved it. We will try to establish another one.

Chairman: I was able to speak to many residents in the community and they are respecting the department and you, Chief.

Chief: The men are putting in a lot of hours. We are focusing on customer services and not causing the city drama.

Chairman: Captain Clayton was an asset to this department and was always in his uniform greeting everyone at the front door. Let's do a minute of silence.

Commissioner Curis: I have a connection with Chief White and if you all need any support or connection with Detroit then I would be happy to connect you.

Chief: Yes, thank you. This week our officers will be going through an eight-hour course on mental health. We are still working to get social workers through a grant. I discovered through the city of Detroit that they constantly call for mental health cars to address situations but that can delay situations. We want to be able to use the less amount of force and keep everyone as safe as possible.

Chairman: We asked in the last minute if you could talk with DRMM's Director about the concerns of citizen Johnson who is present.

Chief: I have met with him. He is in a difficult position as well trying to make that program work. He offers many programs but he can not mandate. I want to invite him to chat with the Chief so he can address some questions.

Chairman: If citizens are on parole then could we connect with parole officers to mandate programming.

Chief: We do not have too many problems with the housing program but the homeless people are where we experience difficulty.

Commissioner Curis: If my customers were causing a problem then you all will have a problem because if I have a problem then I have to deal with it. I think he can deal with it.

Chief: I understand. Some of the funding is coming from the city of Detroit. I have spoken to some of the other facilities that they run better than this facility.

Chairman: It seems like we are the dumping grounds for the city and we have to appeal it so we are not a dumping ground.

Chief: I hate to say a dumping ground because they are people.

Chairman: I am not calling the people a dumping ground but the city needs to do something.

Chief: I think we experience the problem with the private businesses and some of them want them to work for them and pays them then wants them to leave. The plaza did put a fence up to stop the traffic in the alleys but I do not know if that creates a fire hazard. It was something we talked about closing that alley with Dr. Audi. On a positive note, it will cut down on some of the activity. People are relieved when it shuts down and sad when it opens.

Commissioner George: The homeless numbers are in the thousands and there is not enough space. The funders have a difficult time finding space to place people so when organizations like DRMM have enough space the funders want to fund that space.

Fire Department

Chief: The Fire Department has a 501c(3) that the police department can use. Our man power is perfect. The problems we are having are contractors coming and opening up the hydrates and we are working with the water department. My concern is if the water freezes.

Chief McMahon: Do vendors have permits? If so, please send me the names.

Chief Hollowell: We have one vendor that has a permit. Angels' Night was a success. We had nothing. There was a break in at the department and we put up a fence. Right now, we are ok but when we get runs I am nervous that the person cased the place already. The firemen were on the building sleep.

Chairman: Can the police do anything?

Chief McMahon: We talked about putting up sensors like in your home.

Commissioner Watkins: What would they do with the equipment?

Chief Hollowell: They sell it. The last person came in and reached over the staff.

Internal Affairs

Dir. Lackey: For the fire station I have something in mind to give them a technological head up. We have noticed a trend in our recent complaints regarding customer service. We have a few serious complaints. There was a prior officer that closed out his judicial disposition that happened today. The person resigned.

Chairman: DO we have any active community complaints?

Dir. Lackey: We have four complaints. There are three that are demeanors. There is one that is serious that we are dealing with currently.

Chief: One of officers was blasted on the news and portrayed as being a thief. I did not like it. Todd Perkins represented the person. There were videos shown from FOYA and accused him of stealing but this was money compensated through a search. WE are able to determine the accusation as false. We were blindsided and not given an opportunity to state our case and give all the facts. That bothered me. If you felt this guy did something then come to us. We will give you the information and it is defamation and I think it is horrible. If anyone is watching, please contact us and give us an opportunity. I have been on the receiving end and it sucks. You feel defeated and hopefully we can put an end to it. We have a ton of procedures, you can file a complaint and we are willing to work with you.

Public Comments

Chairman: Mr. Johnson is here today.

Johnson: The issues I had were answered regarding the officer going through Mental Health training. IT did not make since to have only one person. Lastly, being able to speak with the Director at DRMM which was addressed today.

Mayor: We are having a toy drive and there is a box at City Hall and the Recreation Center. The Parker Pride group is trying to collect toys. We are asking for your participation.

Chairman: We will definitely participate.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 pm

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 6:00 pm, In-person and Zoom
cc: City Clerk