

REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 2, 2021

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held via Zoom, on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:00 PM. Annual Notice of this meeting was provided to The Home News Tribune, the Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on January 6, 2021. In addition, notice of this meeting via zoom was faxed to The Home News Tribune and emailed to The Star Ledger and the Highland Park Planet on January 29, 2021 and was posted on the Borough website at www.hpboro.com and on the bulletin board at Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Avenue, Highland Park, NJ on January 29, 2021 and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

Present: Mayor Brill Mittler; Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Administrator Jover; Borough Clerk Hullings.

Absent: None.

On motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman George, the minutes of the Regular/Work Session Meetings held January 19, 2021, were approved, as distributed, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Mayor Brill Mittler asked the Council members to present their reports.

Councilman Hersh thanked John Marron, the Highland Park Arts Commission and the Highland Park Middle School Art Club for organizing the social justice mural that you might see on the side of Pino's on North 4th Avenue. The vision for this public art project is part of the Windows of Understanding Project which is part of our effort to transform the main street spaces into literal windows of understanding; spaces in which the community can learn about the positive strides being made by local organizations around a wide array of social justice issues that do not make daily headlines. Windows of understanding, for those who do not know, is a creative community building response to the negativity and hate being perpetrated in today's media landscape. Our belief is that through visual language artists can accommodate methods of understanding in powerful ways that cut across cultural boundaries. Windows of understanding is now in its fourth year and approximately 20 nonprofit organizations are paired with an artist facilitator to create an original work of art that addresses these identified issues for this year that include climate change, food insecurity, healing from trauma, public health and youth engagement. The works will be on display at venues throughout New Brunswick, Highland Park and Metuchen from January 18th through February 28th. Virtual and hybrid programming such as walking tours, tables and understanding events, poetry readings, performances, educational workshops, community conversations and film screenings complement the visual displays throughout the run. Go to www.windowsofunderstanding.org for more about this exhibition. Lastly, our Department on Aging can assist you in registering for a Covid-19 vaccine. Call 732-819-0052 for assistance. You can also contact the State's toll-free vaccination hotline at 855-568-0545. They can assist callers with identifying if they are currently eligible for a vaccine, pre-register for a vaccine and help them identify locations nearest to them where they can get vaccinated. Anyone who is trying to get a vaccine now understands that we do not have enough in New Jersey to serve the whole state. New Jersey is receiving about 100,000 vaccines a week and about an estimated three million people are currently waiting in the system. It is frustrating and hopefully things will improve sooner rather than later. The hotline is open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. every day and they can help callers in more than 240 different languages. You can also complete an online form at covid19.nj.gov/vaccine.

Councilman Hale congratulated Main Street Highland Park. Downtown New Jersey, which is a non-profit organization that celebrates the downtowns in New Jersey and is a small business support group, recently, awarded a place making award in the small organization early action category for their work at their annual conference on January 21st. They recognized Main Street Highland Park's attention to helping our businesses during the pandemic and the way that the staff and volunteers continued to put on a Farmer's Market and the way that they pivoted away from doing what they traditionally do for events and focus on things that they could do to help businesses. They recognized the things that they have done in the past including planting days, mural projects, outdoor movies and how to do all of those under a Covid situation. They recognized and appreciated the work that Main Street Highland Park had done along with the Borough in creating the town tables. They thought that was an innovative and great use of our outdoor space. It is an honor for Main Street Highland Park to get an award in this category and to be recognized statewide for their efforts to adapt to Covid and make a place out of a space. Another thing Main Street Highland Park is doing is that they have a mechanism for giving valentines to your local businesses that they can post up front. Main Street Highland Park will distribute the valentines to the businesses. At the last Redevelopment Meeting it was noted that they are continually work on creating, after a great deal of public input, a redevelopment plan and they look forward to presenting that to the public at some point in the future. They have had a great deal of public input and they are just at the beginning of the redevelopment process. He thanked everybody who has contributed his or her ideas on the redevelopment for downtown.

Councilwoman Canavera reported that February is Black History Month. This is a time for us not just to reflect on how far we have come, but how far we still need to go for equality. The theme for Black History Month this year is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity". The Human Relations Commission is finalizing plans for the month and they will put it on their website as soon as things are finalized. The Board of Health wanted to remind everybody to keep trying to sign up for the vaccine. They would like people to continue to try to follow them on Instagram at [hpboroboh](https://www.instagram.com/hpboroboh). The Commission for Universal Access is still looking for community input on events that the residents would like to see. Food insecurity is at an all-time high. Between the Community Food Pantry and HP Gives a Hoot they are serving over 300 families every month receive food. The Pantry is open the 2nd and 4th Thursday from 9 a.m. to

10:45 a.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on the Saturday after from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Donations can be made using their amazon wish list. HP Gives a Hoot food pantry is held every Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and donations can be made by mailing a check to the Borough. The school is providing breakfast and lunch for all children in the Borough even if you are not in the school. They are distributed from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the high school cafeteria. The Mental Health Commission has started their Facebook page, called Highland Park Mental Health Commission, and they are getting ready to start by holding their first meeting. If you are in crisis, please call for help to the Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care hotline (855-515-5700) or the Raritan Bay Medical Center hotline (732-442-3794).

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan reported that it is February and tax payments are now due. No postdated checks will be accepted. There is a 10-day grace period for tax payments and any payments received after the grace period will incur interest back to the first. There is a secure drop box for tax and water payments located to the left of the front entrance of Borough Hall for your convenience and it is marked "please put payments here". All payments left in the drop box will be posted on the next business day. Please do not leave cash payments in the drop box. The Community Development Block Grant Committee will be holding their public hearing on applications on February 23, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. and the meeting will be noticed. If you need a property tax relief form completed, contact 732-819-3787 and the Tax Collector's Office will instruct you. Do not forget about State property tax relief programs. The \$250 tax deduction is available for senior citizens, disabled veterans and surviving spouses if you qualify for our senior freeze property tax reimbursement. More information on the homestead rebate, landlord emergency grant program and others can be found at www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/relief. She reminded small business owners to talk to their bank regarding round two of the SBA Paycheck Protection Program. There are new requirements, but funds are still available. She congratulated Black Lives Matter for being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. That is a nice way to kick off Black History Month. Today is Groundhog's Day and we are in for 6 more weeks of winter. She hoped everyone has a safe commute to work or school tomorrow.

Councilwoman Foster reported that yesterday there were a number of cars that had been towed because they were parked in areas that were blocking right of ways. Parking is tight in the Borough and people need to find appropriate parking spaces to not block access for emergency vehicles and to not block fire hydrants. She asked residents not to dump their snow into the street, but to find somewhere on their property to dump it. The Department of Public Works has been out there doing a long, hard 24-hour job and she thanked the dedicated Public Works employees for their efforts. We need to be gracious and we need to be thankful that they are there making it happen for all of us. February is Black History Month and she noted that Dr. Carter Woodson was the man behind the establishment of Black History Month. He worked tirelessly throughout his life to archive our history and to archive our ancestral history and that is why we today can celebrate Black History month. She thanked Dr. Goodson for making this all happen for us. He documented black Wall Street and all the stuff that we have accomplished and all the stuff that we have not been given credit for. There is an archive and if you go there, you will find all kinds of information on all of our achievements that were overlooked and that were intentionally taken. She encouraged everyone to enjoy Black History Month. We are black all the time, but it is just an opportunity for everyone to learn a little bit more about the contributions that we have made, not only in the United States, but also across the globe.

Councilman George reported that the Native Plant Sanctuary was awarded a grant from the State for \$500. He congratulated Mary Denver, Sue Edmonds, Belinda Beetham and Andy Walters who all worked very hard. He got this news by actually meeting with the volunteers who were working Saturday in the Native Plant Sanctuary before the snowstorm hit. He thanked Pam Holzapfel for submitting a new plan for the annual grants. It is much more detailed and much more professional, works toward the management of the plan, and includes some guarantees and benefits for the planting that we need to replace. He thanked Councilwoman Canavera for getting the Mental Health Commission up and running. There is a lot of need for that right now. The Public Works Committee recently reviewed the State Storm water Management Regulations that are required to be adopted into our ordinances in March of this year. The emphasis is primarily on green infrastructure for developments with soil disturbance over one acre. So that we are not substantially impacted, the Borough has been working with the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership with regard to using Highland Park as a pilot. They will be looking at the expansion of electric vehicle facilities over the coming year. He has circulated information on that to Councilman Hale and Councilman Hersh for further discussions. February is Black History Month and he thinks that one of the most significant years in black history was 2020. It was a real wakeup call and we need to realize what Barack Obama said when he took the presidency years ago, he said we need to recognize our diversity as well as our commonality. We are not all the same, we do not have the same interests, except we all have our family and our kids, we want to educate our kids, and we want to live well. When we reach such a massive divergence on psychological and moral issues that let us forget that is when we unmake history. Black history in 2020 and proceeding into 2021, especially anyone who witnessed the procedures of January 6th, recognizes we have stepped back. It is not that we really need to realize that we have things to work on, the country took a step back and this country and this area needs to be more like Highland Park. We recognize our diversities; we work with those; we recognize that not everybody is the same, but we have a commonality of interest which is all of us have the right to be happy, to raise our families, to get our kids in our high quality schools and to be well and to be safe. We need to spread that message because this country desperately needs it. Black History in 2020 became everyone's history and we need to recognize all of that and this year needs to be dedicated to that.

Borough Administrator Jover echoed Councilwoman Foster's appreciation for the hard work of the Public Works team that has been out there for quite a bit. She has been checking on them regularly and they are doing their utmost with what is a very large amount of snow and very few places to put it. She asked residents to know that they are aware there are some spots that need extra attention and they will make a point of getting to those first thing in the morning. If you have concerns, you can just call them starting at 7:00 a.m. If you think something was forgotten or is a particular danger, let them know, and they will make a point of going out there and addressing the situation. She thanked everybody for their patience as they continue to dig out of this. There is a county call-in center if you are having trouble with or wanting

assistance with registering for a vaccine. The County’s call center is 732-745-3100. She encouraged everyone to use all available resources and to not hesitate to call the Borough and they can point people in the right direction if they run into trouble. Unfortunately, we are dealing with the supply problem, but we are going to keep pushing ahead.

Borough Attorney Schmierer - No report.

Councilwoman Foster added that if there is a need for a warming center with this cold weather; residents should contact the Highland Park Police Department.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan noted that the North Side and Triangle are having garbage collection tomorrow, but there is no recycling collection this week. Borough Administrator Jover urged residents to be careful with the movement and the placement of the toters. Garbage collection is more important than recycling collection. While the garbage is being collected, there will be fewer crews on the streets clearing snow. Councilman George added that they would be trying to hit the more important areas and then getting to the side streets. He asked residents to be patient. The Superintendent of Public Works asked him to remind people to be careful with the placement of their toters because some driveways still are not clear.

Mayor Brill Mittler reported that February is African American History Month. In honor of our own African American history, I would like to celebrate the life of one of Highland Park’s own treasures...Ms. Juanita Collier. Sadly, Ms. Collier passed in 2020. But, her memory is a blessing to us all. Born Juanita Malia Augustono in Highland Park in 1929 she was the oldest living African-American here until she passed last year. As a young woman, she was determined to become a research chemist after graduating Highland Park High School in 1946. A strong commitment to her dreams eventually led to fruition. While at Rutgers, she obtained a job as a laboratory aide at ER Squibb (Bristol Meyer). She then went on to study chemistry and mathematics at Virginia Union University in Richmond. With her degree in hand, she returned home to Highland Park. As outlined in her obituary, “In 1951 Mrs. Collier received her baccalaureate in Chemistry and Mathematics and returned to New Jersey "ready to work". However 1950's America was not ready to hire "colored", unmarried, women - degreed or not! After answering over 40 ads in her discipline Mrs. Collier took a file clerk job and enrolled in the evening graduate Chemistry program at Rutgers. She later secured a position in the US Army Ordinance Laboratory at Raritan Arsenal as a "Chemist Trainee" where after six months she was promoted to "Chemist Analytical". Increasing her professional stature and compensation, Mrs. Collier rose through the ranks of companies like Bristol Meyer, Colgate Palmolive R & D, and finally RCA Semiconductor Division before resigning from industry to pursue a full time graduate degree in Educational Media Technology at Rutgers which she completed in 1973.” But, it was here in Highland Park that Ms. Collier will always be remembered for her commitment to our community and our youth through her work with the then Highland Park Juvenile Conference, Park Planning and Preservation, and Voter Registration Committees, as well as the Cultural Art Commission. I had the distinct pleasure of sharing the high school auditorium stage with Ms. Collier at the 2017 Highland Park Dr. King Humanitarian Awards event. Today, at the beginning of African American History Month let us remember and celebrate the life of Ms. Juanita Malia Augustono Collier, a true Highland Park hero. Finally, making our own history to advance equity issues and justice in Highland Park, I do want to thank the members of the newly formed Mayor’s Equity Advisory Council for their commitment to helping me move our community forward as we look at ways to improve community involvement in police practices. The leadership of our police department has been paving the way for this by welcoming community input at open public forums, regularly posting documents on their website and holding meetings with residents interested in exploring concerns. There is more to be done and the work has only begun.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves. The total time for this session is 21 minutes; three minutes maximum per speaker. Comments are limited to items on the agenda. If you want to speak on an item that is not listed, there will be an opportunity to do so later in the meeting.

Christo Makropolis, Edison, New Jersey commented about the amendment to the Council’s Rules of Order and Black History Month. He also commented that he had trouble with the agenda.

No one else appearing to be heard, the Mayor closed the public discussion.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

- Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
- Opposed: None.
- Abstain: None.
- Absent: None.

No. 1-21-49

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-19 allows for a municipality to adopt a temporary budget within the first 30 days of its budget year when contracts, commitments or payments need to be made prior to the adoption of the regular budget; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park requires additional appropriations to maintain operations until such time that the Borough Budget is adopted;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, County of Middlesex, that the following temporary emergency budget appropriations be authorized:

DEPARTMENT	TYPE	AMOUNT
DGRP	O/E	\$ 8,000.00
PERS	O/E	\$573,342.00
PFRS	O/E	\$839,602.00

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
 Opposed: None.
 Abstain: None.
 Absent: None.

No. 1-21-50

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that transfers of 2020 budget appropriation balances shall be made as follows:

Description	From	To
Borough Administrator OE		4,100.00
Electric		2,150.00
Legal OE		55,000.00
Street Lighting	2,150.00	
Communications OE	10,000.00	
Mayor & Council OE	10,000.00	
Borough Clerk OE	10,000.00	
Group Insurance	5,000.00	
Police OE	4,100.00	
Dept. of Aging OE	20,000.00	
Total	\$61,250.00	\$61,250.00

The Clerk reported advertising an ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, CHAPTER 3, "ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT", for consideration of passage on final reading by title and that affidavits of publication thereto are on file. She also reported that the ordinance had been posted and made available to the public, as required by law.

On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote, the above-entitled ordinance was taken up on final reading by title.

Mayor Brill Mittler declared the public hearing on the ordinance open to all officials and persons present and called upon all those wishing to speak for or against the ordinance to do so.

Christo Makropolis, Edison, asked what the ordinance amendment referred to. Borough Clerk Hullings explained that the ordinance adjusts the boards/commission under the appropriate standing committees of Council.

No one else appearing to be heard and no objections having been received in writing, the Mayor closed the public hearing.

On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, the ordinance entitled as above was duly adopted on first reading by title by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
 Opposed: None.
 Absent: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera, and carried by unanimous affirmative voice vote:

No. 2-21-51

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Ordinance entitled, "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND SUPPLEMENT THE REVISED GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, CHAPTER 3, "ADMINISTRATION OF GOVERNMENT", passed on final reading at this meeting be delivered to the Mayor for his/her approval, and if approved by him, that the same be recorded in full by the Borough Clerk in a proper book kept for that purpose, and be advertised by publishing the same by title in the "Home News Tribune", of Neptune, New Jersey, a newspaper published in the County of Middlesex and circulating in this municipality, there being no newspaper published in this municipality, in the manner prescribed by law.

Resolution Nos. 2-21-52 through 2-21-60 were duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Foster, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.
 Opposed: None.
 Absent: None.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-21-52

WHEREAS, Section 3-20 of the "Code of the Borough of Highland Park" provides that the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park shall adopt Rules of Order to govern all Council proceedings; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park wish to amend the Rules of Order which were adopted by said Council on January 5, 2021; and

WHEREAS, Article XV of the Rules of Order adopted on January 5, 2021, Section 3 permits the Rules of Order to be amended by a two-thirds vote on a roll call, taken at two successive Regular or Adjourned meetings of the Borough Council; and

WHEREAS, a roll call vote will be taken on the proposed Amended Rules of Order at the Borough Council meeting on February 2, 2021; and

WHEREAS, if, as a result of the roll call vote on the Amended Rules of Order on February 2, 2021, two-thirds of the Borough Council vote to adopt the Amended Rules of Order a final vote will be taken on the Amended Rules of Order at the Borough Council Regular meeting on February 16, 2021.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, Middlesex County as follows:

1. The Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park by a two-thirds vote on a roll call hereby agree to adopt Amended Rules of Order to govern the Borough Council proceedings during the calendar year 2021 or until said Rules are further amended by the Council.
2. The Council of the Borough of Highland Park pursuant to Article XV, Section 3 of the Rules of Order for the Highland Park Council shall vote again on the adoption of the Amended Rules of Order at its meeting on February 16, 2021 and if said Amended Rules of Order are again adopted by a two-thirds vote on a roll call, then the Rules of Order shall be deemed amended as of February 16, 2021.
3. The proposed Amended Rules of Order are on file with the Office of the Borough Clerk and may be inspected during regular office hours.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-21-53

WHEREAS, the Highland Park Fire Department would like to apply to FEMA for funding for critically needed resources to equip and train paid and volunteer Fire Department members, enhance efficiencies, and support community resilience; and

WHEREAS, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants Program offers opportunities for funding for Operations & Safety, Regional Operations, and vehicles; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and submit, on behalf of the Highland Park Fire Department, the grant application to FEMA, a copy of which is attached to the original of this resolution.

The following resolution, introduced by the Recreation and Arts Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-21-54

WHEREAS, the Office of Aging is interested in purchasing a 15-passenger van with wheelchair access to replace its existing minivan; and

WHEREAS, NJ Transit administers the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 Grant program for the state of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Borough's transportation needs are not met through the Middlesex County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute and submit, on behalf of the Office of Aging, the grant application to NJ Transit, a copy of which is attached to the original of this resolution.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-21-55

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park seeks to upgrade its phone system for enhanced reliability and cost savings; and

WHEREAS, three (3) quotes were solicited and were received as follows:

Document Solutions	\$31,728.72 (Annually)
Verizon OneTalk	\$34,152.00 (Annually)
Xtel Communications	\$17,031.60 (Annually)

and

WHEREAS, the Administrator's Office has recommended that VOIP services be purchased from Xtel Communications based on their quote for same and significant cost savings potential over what is currently being paid; and

WHEREAS, under ESCNJ Contract #19/20 – 30 the Borough may purchase said services from Xtel Communications; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Borough Administrator is hereby authorized to sign a 3-year contract with Xtel Communications for VOIP services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Borough Administrator forthwith.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-21-56

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has need of the services of a Special Planning Consultant for the calendar year of 2021 and

WHEREAS, such services are professional services as defined in the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, Brian M. Slaugh, PP, AICP is a licensed professional planner of the State of New Jersey with extensive experience in municipal land use and planning matters and has heretofore been appointed as Special Planner for 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council desire to provide a written agreement providing for the compensation of Special Planner; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are not to exceed the amount of \$10,000.00 without further resolution of Council; and

WHEREAS, funds will be available for this purpose in the amount of \$10,000.00 in Account No. 1 -01-20-155-233, upon adoption of the 2021 municipal budget, as reflected by the Certification of Funds Available by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are authorized and directed to execute and attest on behalf of the Borough, an Agreement for professional services with Brian M. Slaugh, PP, AICP, Clarke Caton Hintz, 100 Barrack Street, Trenton, NJ 08608, a copy of which is attached hereto, and that notice of this contract be published as required by law and that a copy of executed Agreement be placed on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-21-57

WHEREAS, ILAN LANCRY, Sergeant of Police, has retired from the Borough of Highland Park effective December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, per the requirements of the Agreement between Borough of Highland Park and P.B.A. Local No. 64, Ilan Lantry is entitled to unused accrued time payments in the amount as calculated below.

2020 Accrual Balance	Hours	Per Hour	Total
SICK	122.10	69.8427	\$ 8,527.80
VACATION	171.20	69.8427	\$11,957.08
COMP	7.98	69.8427	\$ 557.35
TOTAL			\$21,042.22

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the unused accrued time payment in an amount not to exceed \$21,042.22 be approved and distributed in the next available pay cycle.

The following resolution, introduced by the Economic Development and Planning Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-21-58

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact on businesses and restaurants located in Highland Park; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to further assist businesses in the Borough’s downtown, Borough Council authorizes the temporary closure of So. Third Avenue off of Raritan Avenue and partial closure of No. Fourth Avenue off of Raritan Avenue until the pandemic emergency has been abated; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the closure is to offer restaurants and businesses additional space to set up tables and chairs for outdoor dining and displays of their items for sale; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 39:4-8, street closings that exceed forty-eight (48) continuous hours require the approval of the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park:

1. Pending approval from the New Jersey Department of Transportation, So. Third Avenue off of Raritan Avenue and partial closure of No. Fourth Avenue off of Raritan Avenue shall be closed to vehicular traffic until the pandemic emergency has abated.
2. The Police Department shall work to prepare a plan to minimize traffic issues from the closure.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-21-59

WHEREAS, the Borough has contracted with Integrated Systems and Services, Eatontown, NJ, for warranty/service for the Police Department video camera/swipe card system; and

WHEREAS, said contract has expired; and

WHEREAS, the Borough desires to renew said agreement for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021; and

WHEREAS, three (2) quotes were solicited and received as follows:

Integrated Systems and Services	\$9,000.00
Innovative Electronic Systems	\$12,246.00

and

WHEREAS, funds shall be available for this purpose in Account No. 1-01-25-240-235 in the 2021 Municipal Budget upon adoption in the amount of \$9,000.00, as reflected by the certification of funds by the Finance Director, shown below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Police Chief is hereby authorized and directed to execute on behalf of the Borough an Agreement for warranty/service with Integrated Systems and Services, 541 Industrial Way, Suite B, Eatontown, NJ 07724 at a cost of \$9,000.00 for the period January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021, said agreement to be in a form approved by the Borough Attorney and that notice of this contract be published as required by law and that a copy of executed Agreement be placed on file in the office of the Borough Clerk.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-21-60

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that all claims presented prior to this meeting as shown on a detailed list prepared by the Borough Treasurer, and which have been submitted and approved in accordance with Highland Park Ordinance No. 1004, shall be and the same are hereby approved; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall include in the minutes of this meeting a statement as to all such claims approved as shown in a Bills List Journal in accordance with said Ordinance.

The bills approved for payment at this meeting, Bills List 2/2/2021 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 41.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves. Speakers are limited to 3 minutes and the discussion to end at 9:00 PM.

Christo Makropolis, Edison, New Jersey made comments that were irrelevant to any business relating to the Borough of Highland Park.

No one else appearing to be heard, the Mayor closed the public discussion.

Work Session:

State Mandated Changes to Storm Water Management Ordinance – Councilman George noted that the Public Works met to discuss this several times. We discussed at the last meeting in January the real nuts and bolts of what needed to be done. The amendments were referred to Sustainable Highland Park and the Environmental Commission and we got their comments back. The Borough Attorney is working on the draft ordinance. The primary changes relate more to development work, but they use several keys which are similar to the existing storm water management plan; how much acreage is being disturbed. Once those are keyed in, it does include a number of green infrastructure initiatives to control storm water runoff which were not premiered in the former storm water management plan. He has the State DEP’s FAQ list on those changes which he can circulate to everyone prior to consideration of the ordinance. When Ed’s office completes the changes, they will get the ordinance out along with the FAQ’s. The primary changes are to developments, which disturb over one acre. As the Environmental Commission commented, given our subsoil makeup, which is basically shale and clay, some of the green infrastructure suggestions are good, but we probably will not run into many of the problems that they foresee which are related more to groundwater transfer. The other thing is there are some changes required for floodplains. We do not really have any development that likely to occur in the floodplains, but the overall green infrastructure suggestions will certainly help. The Meadows Trail has been working on river replanting in the floodplain along the river so the changes are probably going to help us a lot with the riverfront. The Borough Administrator reached out to the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership and he has spoken with them. They will have some input going forward as there are also some federal changes and more state regulations that they are willing to assist us with. The Borough Administrator is working on a memorandum of understanding with them. Mayor Brill Mittler asked whether this would in any way affect the river trail project. Councilman George noted that he does not believe it does. Councilman Hale asked with changes to the flood basin if it makes it more difficult for anything to be developed down there. Councilman George noted that it does not specifically affect Highland Park and the Meadows Trail. What it does affect is any storm water runoff that would run into those areas from development. The storm water regulations that we have to adopt into our ordinance are looking to control that a little bit better and to use green infrastructure which is actually a better filter than many mechanical means and also able to filter a much greater amount of water. He does not believe there can be any development in a floodplain. It is going to assist Highland Park over the long haul. Our floodplains are the filters for storm water runoff. The Meadows Trail and the Native Plant Sanctuary are great filters in our area that not a lot of other towns have. Borough Attorney Schmierer agreed with Councilman George and noted that it is really a matter of the magnitude of the disturbance in the area and they have had that conversation with CME, who they are working with on the ordinance, and they did not think that the river trail would be negatively impacted. Councilman Hale asked if there is money to help implement those green infrastructure suggestions or is this something that the Borough will pay for. Councilman George noted that there is no finance attached to this specifically but there are other funds available such as the infrastructure bank that may have money. He believes a percentage of CDBG money can also be allocated towards, if not the green infrastructure, than the planning for it. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the storm water management rules would not apply to Borough projects, but they apply to development projects from the private sector. She believes the way the DEP approaches it moving forward is that developers, be it municipal or otherwise, would have to follow these new rules. The Borough has done some green infrastructure projects in town with the rain gardens along the Avenue and the teen center. This ordinance is very much in alignment with the direction the Borough has been going and it has actually been years and years of discussion about these regulations at the DEP to get to this point. The better way to handle this is through redevelopment if we want to implement green infrastructure.

PSE&G Solar Field Project Update – Borough Administrator Jover noted that the Borough has cleared the last final step in the process and they have closed out our permit for the disruption of the old landfill. They developed a good working relationship with DEP and with PSE&G and the Department of Public Works was helpful with managing the cleanup that had to be done along the Meadows Trail. The solar panels have been there and working for some time and this project has taken a lot of people to get it to where it is and we finally have the paperwork that needs to go back to the Board of Public Utilities.

Goals

Councilman George noted that for 2021, he would like to circulate a list of the general goals and suggestions for individual goals and discuss with the Governing Body what they would like to accomplish in 2021. One of his individual goals every year has been electric vehicles and they have accomplished that goal. Another goal was to replace old jeep Cherokees with electric vehicles and installation of charging stations. Hybrid vehicles were obtained for the Police Department. Phase III is to make our ordinances and our building department and development more electric vehicle friendly. PSE&G announced last week their new initiative for municipal electric vehicles.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted on motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, Foster-Dublin, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan.

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

No. 2-21-61

WHEREAS, Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Borough Council is of the opinion that such circumstances exist.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park, in the County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

1. The public shall be excluded from the closed session at close of tonight’s open session.
2. The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
(Litigation)

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3. It is anticipated at this time that the above stated subject matter will be made public when these matters are resolved or as soon thereafter as it is deemed to be in the public interest to do so.
4. This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Foster, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk