

BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK
COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX
REGULAR MEETING – APRIL 18, 2023

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, and was called to order by Mayor Foster 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 4, 2023. 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 4, 2023, and has remained continuously posted as required by law.

Present: Mayor Foster, Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Clerk Santiago.

Absent: Borough Administrator Jover

Flag salute led by Diane Reh.

On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Canavera the minutes of the Regular meeting held May 3, 2022, Regular and Executive Session held on May 17, 2022, Regular and Executive Session held on June 14, 2022 and Regular and Executive Session held on July 5, 2022, were approved, as distributed, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Mayor Foster reported about remembrance of the Holocaust. She mentioned while she attended a conference in Atlantic City, she met with the Director of Local Aid and Economic Department of Transportation. She discuss road diet on Raritan Avenue, she wants measures to slow down traffic. The second area of discussion was a permanent closure to South Third Avenue car traffic to car traffic near Raritan Avenue. She had a conversation with the DOT officials stressing the importance of this issue. They will follow up with her soon. The Mayor mentioned a former Police Officer who lived in Highland Park who passed away in 2022, bequeathed his will to give a general sum of money to be given to various charity organizations in Highland Park and purchased several Township vehicles. The Mayor stated that on Saturday April 22nd is the Earth Day annual event.

Councilman George thanked the Mayor for marking the importance the Holocaust. He wished for peace, health and happiness for those of us celebrating Eid-al Fatr this week. He stated condolences to the family of Ralph Yarl is just not enough. The murder of a young man for just ringing a doorbell is a sickness that we all have to own and work to cure. Society has to change. Library Report – he reported that there was a long, steady, heavy rain over the weekend and was pleased to report for the first time in years that there were no leaks! The most recent repairs have hopefully cured this long time problem in the Library roof and our hopes are that it will last. The DPW Superintendent has also found a company that was able to service the one HVAC unit which had failed, and that unit has been working well for the last few weeks, and should extend the life of the unit for some time. The Library Board of Trustees conducted interviews of the final two candidates for the vacant Executive Director's position and selected Michael Bobish, currently the Assistant Director of the library in another Middlesex County library, and has accepted the offer of the position effective May 8th. The Mayor and I met Michael last night at the Board meeting and he will be at the next Council meeting on May 2nd to meet all of us and the town. The Library Construction Project will be gearing up soon. The resolution to approve an agreement with Molba Carpentry is on the agenda for tonight, we will be meeting with the contractor to set the schedule. However, we anticipate that due to the scope of the work, there may be closings of the physical building. Staff is already planning expansion of remote services and we have been working with the Borough Administrator to locate space for storage and possibly have access to the holdings of the library. The Chief of Police has made an offer of employment to Officer Jonathan Laraj, who has accepted the position and we welcome him to our community. He was highly recommended by the Public Safety Committee and he will start in our Department on May 2nd. Based on the study performed by the Police Department and the recommendation of the Public Safety Committee, the planning for changing the flow of traffic at Irving School has been finalized. It will change the westerly flow of traffic on Central Avenue from South 11th Avenue to South 10th Avenue by making it one way. The Public Works Committee recommended that the change go in to place for a few weeks before the end of this School Year so that residents and parents can get used to the change this year and start the 2023-2024 School Year with the plan in place. The Department will hold an Operation Take-Back Collection of unused medicines at the Community

Center this weekend on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 2pm. Vaping equipment can be turned in if the batteries are removed. Finally, the resolution to approve joining the ARRIVE Program is on the agenda for tonight, we will be joining our neighboring communities of New Brunswick, Woodbridge, and Edison in partnership with Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care to provide a health care responder on emergency call, which involve a person with emotional or behavioral challenges. The program also provides more training for all responders to be able to better respond to the needs of persons when intervention and understanding can defuse situations with trained personnel. He mentioned the Mayor has let us know that the Borough and other organizations have been the recipients of a grant from the Estate of Ida Kushner for upgrades and updating. While many of the details are pending final resolution, the Borough is a grateful recipient of a number of grants to certain qualified non-profit agencies which operate under the Borough's umbrella. Finally, the Library will receive much needed new bathrooms and the Community Room will be redone into a state of the art facility with technical upgrades. In addition, the Library will receive an outdoor seating area in the space along North Sixth to provide seating and other facilities. Again, these are rough outlines and details will be presented as they are finalized.

Councilman Postelnik reported he wanted to reiterate the Food Shopping Assistance Program that is available through the Department of Community Services. He mentioned that there will be regular scheduled weekday trips to various grocery stores, a Community Center membership is required, which includes a \$20.00 membership fee. You can contact the Community Center at 732-819-05 or go on the Highland Park website. Aftercare will be available for summer day camp, Monday through Thursday 3pm to 5pm. Please go on the recreation website for information for various camps. The Yarn Art Installation on the Albany Street Bridge is set for May 6, 2023, weather permitted. The Arts Commission won a Park Partners Grant.

Councilwoman Kim-Chohan wanted to remind everyone that today is tax day. She stated that she hoped everyone found their Anchor checks useful and let's do it again next year.

Councilman Hale reported the Farmer's Market started on April 7, 2023. The annual 5K race and the Spring Street Fair are coming. The 5K race starts at 9 am, the Street Fair and Earth Day start around 11/11:30 am. He mentioned that in front of Pino's on Main Street there is a parking lot and there's on in front of the Sushi Place. The Planning Board approved the Redevelopment Plan for the supermarket lot.

Councilwoman Canavera reported the Board of Health wants to remind everyone that April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The rape abuse and incant national network hotline is 1-800-656-HOPE. She stated that the Commission for Universal Access, would like to remind people that April is National Autism Awareness Month. She mentioned that the Community Food Pantry is opened on the second and fourth Thursday from 9 am to 10:45 am and again at 6 pm to 7 pm. Saturday following Thursday from 9:30 am to 10 am. The Highland Park Gives a Hoot Food Pantry is every Tuesday at the Zone 16 Center from 10 am to 11 am. Donations between these two programs could be made by mailing a check to Borough Hall with a memo stating It's for the HP Gives a Hoot Food Pantry. The Mental Health Commission wants to remind anybody with a mental health crisis to reach out for help. The Middlesex County Crisis hotlines are Rutgers University Behavioral Health Center at 855-515-5700. The Raritan Bay Medical Center hotline is 732-442-3794 or you can text home741741. She stated that residents asked are very happy with the job the Borough's doing getting them to stores.

Council President Hersh reported he serves on the Public Works Committee and he wanted to thank everyone up here for their amazing remarks and said it is an honor to service with compassionate and deep thinking members of the community. He stated as the Mayor mentioned our Environmental Commissions Earth Day event is on Sunday May 7, 2023 from 11 am to 3 pm. The Earth Day Fair is part of a larger Highland Park Street Fair event. The Environmental Commission will be setting up tables along with Sustainable Highland Park on North 3rd Avenue from Raritan Avenue to Dennison Street. The street fair is rain or shine, if it does rain the Earth Day event will be moved indoors to the Community Center. He said Sustainable Highland Park and the Highland Park Ecology and Environmental Group began doing two cleanups per month on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month. Please come to an upcoming Environmental Commissions Meeting or a Sustainable High Park Committee meeting and provide any feedback on what locations that we might be missing. The Environmental Commission's website for scheduled public cleanups is hpeeg.com. The Public Work Department is growing and we welcomed 3 new employees. Bulk trash collections are running and we are currently booking appointments for April and May, for more information please contact the DPW at 732-514-1277. We provide electronic recycling drop off at the DPW Building, 444 Valentine Street, the service is free for Borough residents. Electronic devices accepted are televisions, computer monitors, desktops, laptops, printers and fax machines. All other electronic items may be disposed of via regular household garbage or collection or bulk trash. You can contact the DPW for additional

details. He reported that the Shade Tree Advisory Committee met this month. Letters were sent out on March 24th confirming tree requests. Mayor Foster asked if we still have the recycle coach app. Council President Hersh replied that we do have the app. The recycle coach helps you track your garbage collection and recycling pickup, as well as recycling garbage so you'll never miss it particularly on holidays.

Borough Administrator Jover – No Report.

Borough Attorney Schmierer- No Report.

Public Participation

Mayor Foster 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.

Lois Lebbing, North 2nd Avenue indicated she would like photos of all prior Mayors including Mayor Foster to be displayed at Borough to show diversity female, black, anything good here. She requested we move the employee who has been here for a long time and the Mayor upstairs. She stated there was a bullying problem and it goes on today, you have mean girls working here. She requested information from the Clerk's office to look through, she saw more than duplicate copies of the same information. As she was reviewing the paperwork it was getting late and told the girls she would be back to finish reviewing, when she returned back the mean girls mixed up the papers and she had to start all over again so the bullying is continuing. People should know that there's a diverse path and it would be very helpful if the bully mean girls were downstairs and you and the longtime employee were upstairs. It's just a matter of sensibility and diversity.

Mayor Foster replied I'm not quite sure about this mean girl thing that you're proposing. Let me say that our employees do yeoman's work in getting the request of OPRA and I know there's volumes of them that is requested on a constant weekly, daily basis and they do their best to make sure that they address the needs of our constituents. Talking about moving persons back and forth, we have tried it. We have grown in many areas and the space that we utilize downstairs is best used at this time for myself and everyone who works downstairs. We don't have enough space upstairs to accommodate everyone.

Council President Hersh echoed the Mayors sentiments that our staff is very hard working and does an enormous amount of work for the town. You only see a very little bit.

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

ORDINANCES REQUIRING A SECOND READING:

Ordinance No. 23-2070

The Clerk reported that Ordinance No 23-2070 entitled, An Ordinance Amending Chapter 9 Concerning the Expiration of terms for Members of Various Boards, Committees and Commissions was duly advertised for consideration of passage on final reading by title and affidavits of publication are on file. The ordinance was also posted and made available for public inspection as required by law.

Mayor Foster 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.

No one 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, Ordinance No. 23-2070 entitled as above, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:
Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik
Opposed: None.
Absent: None.
Abstain: None.

ORDINANCES REQUIRING A FIRST READING:

Ordinance No. 23-2072

The Clerk reported that an ordinance entitled, An Ordinance Authorizing a Lease with Raices Cultural Center Pertaining to 20 River Road, Block 502, Lot 6, also Known as the Eugene Young Environmental Education Center has been introduced in writing by the Economic Development and Planning Committee for consideration of passage on first reading by title.

On a motion made by Councilwoman Canavera, seconded by Councilman Postelnik, the ordinance entitled as above was tabled, by the following roll call vote, to wit:

ROLL CALL” Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik
 Opposed: None.
 Absent: None.
 Abstain: None.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS – RESOLUTIONS.

Resolution Nos. 4-23-114 through 4-23-119 were duly adopted on a motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilman Postelnik, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

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

Resolution No. 4-23-114

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland has determined that the personal property described on Schedule A attached hereto and incorporated herein is no longer needed for public use; and

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park intends to utilize the online auction services of GovDeals located at www.govdeals.com; and

WHEREAS, the sales are being conducted pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-36 and the guidance set forth in the Division of Local Government Services’ Local Finance Notice 2019-15,

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

1. That the Borough of Highland Park is hereby authorized to sell the surplus personal property as indicated on Schedule A on an online auction website entitled govdeals.com.
2. The terms and conditions of the agreement entered into between Govdeals and the Borough of Highland Park are available at www.govdeals.com and in the Borough Clerk’s office.
3. That a certified copy of the within Resolution be forwarded to the Chief Finance Officer, Public Works Superintendent, and Administrator.

Year	Make	Model/Description	VIN/Serial No.
1996	Ford	Jet Flusher	1FDYR82E0TTV014404
2004	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FAFP71W4YX201971
2000	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FAFP71W4YX201972
2006	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FAFP71W36X130677
2007	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FAFP71WX7X138292
2010	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FABP7BV0AX124378
2006	Ford	Crown Victoria	2FAFP71W56X130678
2003	Eloin	Street Sweeper	P-3924-S
1998	Jeep	Cherokee	1J4FJ28S77WL212145
1990	Chevrolet	Suburban	1GNEV16K9LF159596
1998	Ford	Expedition	1FMPU18L4WLC27850
2006	Dodge	Durango	1D4HB38P46F190085

Resolution No. 4-23-115

WHEREAS, there is a need for replacement of a hot water heater at the Highland Park Police Department; and

WHEREAS, three (3) quotes were solicited and only one quote was received as follows:

AAA All Services, Inc. t/a Ken’s Plumbing & Aaron Sewer Service	\$9,293.13
Grainger	\$9,745.64
All County Mechanical	no quote provided; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Public Works has recommended that said services be purchased from AAA All Services, Inc. t/a Ken’s Plumbing & Aaron Sewer Service based on their quote for same, response time, experience and equipment; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Current Fund Account No. 3-01-26-310-232, in an amount not to exceed \$9,293.13 and will be provided for in the 2023 Municipal Budget as adopted, as reflected by the certification of funds by the Chief Financial Officer no. 2023-34.

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

1. The Superintendent of Public Works is hereby authorized and directed to accept the quote for removal and replacement of hot water heater at the Highland Park Police Department from AAA All Service, Inc. t/a Ken’s Plumbing & Aaron Sewer Service, 1606 Route 27, Edison, NJ 08817, at a total cost not to exceed \$9,293.13.
2. A certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Superintendent of Public Works and the Chief Financial Officer.

Resolution No. 4-23-116

WHEREAS, pursuant to duly advertised Notice to Bidders solicited pursuant to the provisions of the Local Public Contracts Law, on March 23, 2023, sixteen (16) bids were received for the Highland Park Public Library Interior Renovations for a Base Bid as well as two Alternates, as described in the bid tabulation attached hereto as if full restated; and

WHEREAS, the lowest bid for the Base Bid alone, and the Base Bid plus Alternates 1 and 2, was submitted by Molba Carpentry, Inc. t/a Molba Construction, 392 Liberty Street, Little Ferry, New Jersey as follows:

Base Bid	\$697,300.00
Alternate 1	29,500.00
Alternate 2	9,400.00; and

WHEREAS, the Borough’s architect and Borough Attorney have reviewed the bid submitted by Molba Carpentry, Inc. t/a Molba Construction and advises that it is responsive and in compliance with the minimum bidding requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Borough seeks to award a contract for the Base Bid only at this time to Molba Carpentry, Inc. t/a Molba Construction for the not to exceed total contract amount of \$697,300.00; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are available in Capital Fund Account No. C-04-55-831-001, in an amount not to exceed \$697,300.00 and will be provided for in the 2023 Municipal Budget as adopted, as reflected by the certification of funds by the Chief Financial Officer no. 2023-36.

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

1. The Council hereby awards a contract for the Highland Park Public Library Interior Renovations to Molba Carpentry, Inc. t/a Molba Construction, 392 Liberty Street, Little Ferry, New Jersey, for the Base Bid alone and not to exceed total contract amount of \$697,300.00.
2. The Mayor and Clerk are hereby authorized and directed to execute an Agreement consistent herewith.

Resolution No. 4-23-117

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park has a need for arboricultural services in connection with the Borough’s 2022 NJDEP Stewardship Planting Grant; 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, Richard Wolowicz of Richview Consulting is a Licensed Tree Expert (License #281) in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council desire to provide a written agreement providing for the compensation of Richard Wolowicz and his firm to serve as the Borough’s arboricultural expert on the execution of the 2022 NJDEP Stewardship Planting Grant; and

WHEREAS, funds for this purpose are not to exceed the amount of \$7,500.00 without further resolution of Council; and

WHEREAS, funds will be available for this purpose in the amount of \$7,500.00 in account No. G-02-41-766-200 provided for by the 2023 Municipal Budget, as reflected by the Certification of Funds Available by Chief Financial Officer Certification no. 2023-35.

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

1. The Mayor and Borough Clerk are authorized and directed to execute and attest on behalf of the Borough, an Agreement for professional services with Richard Wolowicz of Richview Consulting, 4 Maude Lane, Hackettstown, NJ 07840-5619, a copy of which is attached hereto
2. Notice of this contract be published as required by law and that a copy of the executed Agreement be placed on file in the Office of the Borough Clerk.

Resolution No. 4-23-118

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 30:4-27.1, et seq., sets forth a policy for public mental health cooperation between police departments and mental health service providers to insure the safe and effective delivery of mental health services responding to certain behavioral crisis calls; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Highland Park wish to support the delivery of said services by having the Borough of Highland Park Police Department participate in a pilot program with the Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care Services.

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

1. The Mayor and Clerk of the Borough of Highland Park are hereby authorized to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care Services to cooperate in the delivery of behavioral health care services.
2. A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding is on file with the Borough Clerk and may be inspected during regular business hours.

Resolution No. 4-23-119

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 4/18/2023 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 42.

RESOLUTIONS REQUIRING A SEPARATE READING.

Resolution No. 4-23-120 was duly adopted on a motion made by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, seconded by Councilman Hale, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

ROLL CALL Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None.

Resolution No. 4-23-120

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, State of New Jersey, that the following additional temporary emergency budget appropriations be authorized:

DEPARTMENT	TYPE	AMOUNT
Neighborhood Preservation Program	O/E	\$125,000
Middlesex County Arts Parkstock Program	O/E	\$5,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Chief Financial Officer of the Borough.

APPOINTMENTS:

On motion made by Councilwoman Canavera and seconded by Councilman George, the following to the Public Information Commission: Laurel Kornfeld, Mason Resnick, Haim Cohen, Molly Turner, Jen Voorhees, Olivia G. Parker, Valeri Drach Weidmann, HP Library Representative, Mark Krieger, BOE Representative and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

ROLL CALL Ayes: Councilpersons Canavera, George, Hale, Hersh, Kim-Chohan, Postelnik

Opposed: None.

Absent: None.

Abstain: None..

Mayor Foster appointed the following: Rent Leveling Board – Jared Bilanin, Alt. 1 Landlord, Human Relations Commission – Almetra Lundy, Alternate No1. No Confirmation needed.

SECOND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Mayor Foster 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.

Lois Lebbing asked what the Public Information Commission does? Council President Hersh replied the Committee aggregates items of interest and works with our Communications staff on Quarterly newsletter, contents for social media and the website. It’s advisory.

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

Work Session: - None

There being no further business, on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Kim-Chohan, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago
Borough Clerk