

REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 19, 2019

A Regular Meeting of the Highland Park Mayor and Council was held in Borough Hall, 221 South 5th Avenue, on Tuesday, February 19, 2019, and was called to order by Mayor Brill Mittler at 7:02 PM. Mayor Brill Mittler read the Open Public Meetings Statement.

Present: Mayor Brill Mittler, Councilpersons Fine, George, Hale, Welkovits; Borough Attorney Schmierer; Borough Administrator Jover; Borough Clerk Hullings.

Absent: Councilpersons Foster-Dublin, Kim-Chohan.

Mayor Brill Mittler read proclamation for Ruth Solomon in honor of her 100th Birthday. She will deliver the proclamation to her tomorrow.

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

Councilman Fine reported that this evening at 6:00 PM, the Community Development Block Grant Committee held a public hearing. At the meeting, the Community Development Block Grant committee voted to recommend that the Council vote in favor of submitting an application to the County by March 1st of this year for \$78,500 for proposed Borough projects for Senior Outreach, Senior Transportation, Sign, Awning & Building Façade Improvements, our Summer Camp Program, our Community Outreach Program, and the Highland Park Community Food Pantry. The next meeting of the Highland Park Free Public Library's Board of Trustees will be held on Monday, February 25th at the Library at 7:30 PM.

Councilman Hale recognized the work of the Commission for Universal Access. They work tirelessly to make sure that all residents of Highland Park have access to various facilities and buildings and take into consideration people with special needs and disabilities. He reminded everyone that there is a registry with the Highland Park Police Department for people with mental illness or disability to notify them so that if there is any interaction, the safest and best way for interaction can happen. It is a voluntary registry.

Councilwoman Welkovits reported that she was glad to be part of the Highland Park team that hosted a grad student studio class from the Rutgers Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy and the Project for Public Spaces. The project aims to create a place making project in Highland Park to create connections between health, place, equity, transportation, and economy. Place making is a modern planning tool that is temporary and inexpensive and the aim is to improve the health of our residents and promote a vibrant economy. Other members who attended this class were Trish Sanchez and Sean Meehan of the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee, Main Street Director Rebecca Hersh, Borough Administrator Teri Jover, and her assistant Emma Missey. She gave a shout out to CBS News Weekly Sunday Morning calendar for including this coming Saturday's New Jersey Bike Summit which is held annually at Mercer County Community College. This is the first time it will be broadcast on such an important news channel. She will be there on Saturday along with some members of the Safe Walking and Cycling Committee.

Councilman George reported that he does not have a report this evening, but would give a more comprehensive report at the next meeting. The weather reports have turned worse for the area. There are a number of streets in town that have no parking during snow removal. Keep cars off the road. May have early dismissal from school.

Borough Administrator Jover reported that they have proposals from PSE&G Direct Install for upgrades in the Borough buildings. The program is a 70%/30% split, with the Borough being responsible for 30%. The cost will be covered over a three-year period. The Council will vote to authorize the agreement on the Consent Agenda. The Borough now has water filling stations at the water fountains for filtered water in the Borough buildings.

Borough Attorney Schmierer- No report.

Mayor Brill Mittler thanked Councilman George for being the Acting Mayor while she was away on vacation. She received phone calls about a strange/obnoxious odor in Highland Park. She spoke with the Middlesex County Utilities Authority Director, Joe Cryan. The County purchased the Edgeboro Landfill and the smell was from gas being released from the landfill and the winds carried the smell to Highland Park.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves.

Herb Gross, Adelaide Gardens, reported that the remains of a US Sailor have been recovered and is being flown back to the United States. He was from Nixon, NJ and served on the USS Oklahoma.

Dan Stern Cardinale, Harper Street, asked if there was a final timeline for the interview process. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that they hope to have someone in place by the beginning of April. Borough Administrator Jover noted that the oral exams are complete and the essay exam was issued last week and is due March 4, 2019. The exams will be scored by the NJ State Police Chief's Association. By March 15, 2019, the goal is to have had the interviews with the Public Safety Committee and the Mayor. The goal is to have recommendations presented to the rest of the Governing Body at the March 19, 2019 meeting, with the swearing in of the Acting Chief and Acting Captain at the April 2, 2019 meeting. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the Highland Park Equity Commission is taking all the questions submitted at the meeting on the 6th and culling them together. Councilman Hale added that at the February 6th meeting, there were approximately 100 people in attendance. They broke into small focus groups and generated about 100 questions that they would like to be asked of the candidates. The Highland Park Equity Commission is in the process of prioritizing and consolidating the information to create a list of questions. Mr. Cardinale asked about the progress of having public participation in the interview process. Borough

Attorney Schmierer noted that the Labor Attorney attended the February 6th meeting and explained the process. They both reviewed the statute and looked at the employment processes that are normally followed in the Borough. They have concluded under Title 40A, the statute that dictates how the Governing Body moves ahead, that individual members of the public will not participate in the interview process, nor be present when the interview process takes place. It is a personnel decision that the Governing Body will make. Questions will be or could be asked about the personal history file of the three candidates and when someone starts to talk about their personal history file and questions related to that, it would not be appropriate for a member of the public to be present. They have advised the Governing Body that there will not be an opportunity for individuals to be present at the interview process that will be conducted by the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Cardinale asked if there will be a separate session to discuss confidential information and a session to discuss non-confidential information. The big thing from that meeting that everyone wanted was for the public, and specifically members of that Commission, to be able to see or be present for that interview process. There is not a whole lot of trust from the public that this process is going to be done in a way that they have confidence in if they are not actually there to see it. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that the citizens of this community have elected a Governing Body. The Governing Body is charged with the responsibility of hiring an Acting Chief and Acting Captain and that is the process. There is nothing in the statute that says individuals of the public shall attend an interview process. Different communities approach filling Police Department promotions differently. The law is clear that the responsibility for appointing the Acting Chief and Acting Captain is a responsibility that is vested in the Governing Body and they do not see the opportunity for individuals to attend the interviews that will take place because it could lead into material related to personnel.

Susan Gutwill, Valentine Street, commented that many people in the community are upset that there is not transparency and they want a bias free Police Department and that they have a right as citizens to be part of that transparency. No matter how much organizing this group has done, there will be no input and there will be no transparency. She wondered where the democracy is in that given that there have been very serious questions about racial profiling among the Police. Councilman Hale pushed back on the idea that there is zero transparency in this process and that there is nothing that has been listened to. The questions that were generated at the public meeting and the fact that all of the information that was gathered at the public meeting was given to a citizen commission and that citizen commission is organizing and putting the questions together, prioritizing them and identifying key questions to be asked during the interview process. All of those things are generated by the work of the Equity Commission and came about because of the actions of the public in this process. Additionally, there will be a Police Mentor hired to mentor the new Police Chief. Ms. Gutwill asked where the mentor would come from. Councilman Hale noted that the Equity Commission would be able to be a part of the hiring process for the mentor. It is a consultant relationship, not a personnel relationship. There has been a great deal of public input and public access to this and that the process has been improved through that access.

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 Fine, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, George, Hale, Welkovits.

Opposed: None.

Abstain: None.

Absent: Councilpersons Foster-Dublin, Kim-Chohan.

No. 2-19-70

WHEREAS, a need has arisen to provide adequate funds for certain budget items pending adoption of the Local Municipal Budget for 2019 and NJSA 40A:4-20 provides for the making of emergency appropriations in such cases; and

WHEREAS, the total emergency temporary resolutions adopted in the year 2019 pursuant to the provisions of NJSA 40A:4-20 (Chapter 96, PL 1951), as amended, including this resolution, total \$6,035,266.00; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of Highland Park (not less than two-thirds of all members thereof affirmatively concurring) that in accordance with NJSA 40A:4-20;

1. An emergency temporary appropriation be and the same is hereby made for the budgetary appropriations herein:

2019 TEMPORARY OPERATING BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	ACCOUNT NUMBER	2019 TEMPORARY BUDGET #2
BOROUGH ADMINISTRATION		
Salaries & Wages	20-100-1	49,609.00
Other Expenses	20-100-2	6,234.00
MAYOR & COUNCIL		
Salaries & Wages	20-110-1	8,672.00
Other Expenses	20-110-2	2,494.00
MUNICIPAL CLERK		
Salaries & Wages	20-120-1	41,330.00

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Other Expenses	20-120-2	6,923.00
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FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION		
Salaries & Wages	20-130-1	15,300.00
Other Expenses	20-130-2	33,311.00
ANNUAL AUDIT		
Other Expenses	20-135-2	-
TAX COLLECTION		
Salaries & Wages	20-145-1	21,535.00
Other Expenses	20-145-2	3,885.00
TAX ASSESSMENT		
Salaries & Wages	20-150-1	15,853.00
Other Expenses	20-150-2	3,078.00
LEGAL SERVICES		
Other Expenses	20-155-2	91,875.00
ENGINEERING & PLANNING		
Other Expenses	20-165-2	5,775.00
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		
Salaries & Wages		1,838.00
Other Expenses	20-170-2	28,088.00
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		
Other Expenses	20-140-2	28,744.00
CENTRAL SERVICES		
Other Expenses	20-316-2	21,656.00
PLANNING BOARD		
Salaries & Wages		1,838.00
Other Expenses	21-180-2	8,701.00
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT		
Salaries & Wages	21-185-1	5,330.00
Other Expenses	21-185-2	3,977.00
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	21-195-2	1,000.00
GENERAL LIABILITY/WORKERS COMPENSATION		
Other Expenses	23-211-2	202,240.00
EMPLOYEE GROUP HEALTH		
Other Expenses	23-220-2	433,500.00
POLICE		
Salaries & Wages	25-240-1	900,478.00
Other Expenses	25-240-2	46,213.00
POLICE DISPATCH/911		
Salaries & Wages	25-250-1	62,704.00
Other Expenses	25-250-2	656.00
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT		
Other Expenses	25-252-2	919.00
FIRST AID CONTRIBUTION		
Other Expenses	25-260-2	-

FIRE		
Salaries & Wages	25-265-1	57,166.00
Other Expenses	25-265-2	18,769.00
LOSAP		
Other Expenses	25-265-2	4,331.00
MUNICIPAL PROSECUTOR		
Other Expenses	25-275-2	9,188.00
STREETS & ROADS		
Salaries & Wages	26-290-1	289,413.00
Other Expenses	26-290-2	31,946.00
APARTMENT COLLECTION		
Other Expenses	26-305-2	56,175.00
PUBLIC BUILDINGS & GROUNDS		
Salaries & Wages	26-310-1	11,581.00
Other Expenses	26-310-2	46,988.00
MOTOR POOL		
Salaries & Wages	26-315-1	19,743.00
Other Expenses	26-315-2	39,113.00
BOARD OF HEALTH		
Other Expenses	27-330-2	250.00
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	27-335-2	250.00
COMMISSION ON IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE AFFAIRS		
Other Expenses	27-336-2	250.00
SAFE WALKING & CYCLING COMMITTEE		
Other Expenses	27-337-2	250.00
SUSTAINABLE HIGHLAND PARK		
Other Expenses	27-338-2	800.00
HISTORICAL COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	27-339-2	250.00
COMMUNITY SERVICES - RECREATION		
Salaries & Wages	28-370-1	15,127.00
Other Expenses	28-370-2	3,938.00
COMMUNITY SERVICES - AGING		
Salaries & Wages	28-371-1	55,587.00
Other Expenses	28-371-2	6,786.00
ARTS COMMISSION		
Other Expenses	28-374-2	250.00
SHADE TREE ADVISORY COMMITTEE		
Other Expenses	28-375-2	250.00
TEEN CENTER		
Salaries & Wages	28-373-1	17,750.00
Other Expenses	28-373-2	
ELECTRICITY		
Other Expenses	31-430-2	40,000.00
STREET LIGHTING		
Other Expenses	31-435-2	62,000.00

TELEPHONE		
Other Expenses	31-440-2	16,984.00
FUEL OIL/GASOLINE/NATURAL GAS		
Other Expenses	31-460-2	29,271.00
SANITARY LANFILL		
Other Expenses	32-465-2	69,563.00
Salaries & Wages	22-195-1	84,853.00
Other Expenses	22-195-2	4,014.00
CABLE TELEVISION		
Other Expenses	30-411-2	1,706.00
ACCUMULATED SICK LEAVE		
Salaries & Wages	30-415-1	16,275.00
COMMUNICATIONS		
Salaries & Wages	20-105-1	25,076.00
Other Expenses	20-105-2	9,883.00
MUNICIPAL COURT		
Salaries & Wages	43-490-1	55,259.00
Other Expenses	43-490-2	3,084.00
PUBLIC DEFENDER		
Other Expenses	43-495-2	1,575.00
Salaries & Wages	29-390-1	174,166.00
Other Expenses	29-390-2	90,643.00
COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES		
Other Expenses	42-401-2	11,665.00
M.C.I.A. RECYCLING		
Other Expenses	42-402-2	2,363.00
ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES		
Other Expenses	27-340-2	3,938.00
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS		
NJDEP Radon Awareness	41-707-2	2,000.00
Fire Victims Donations	41-735-2	10,015.00
Community Development Block Grant	41-708-G	58,567.00
STATUTORY EXPENDITURES		
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM		
Other Expenses	36-472-2	86,121.00
UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION INSURANCE		
Other Expenses	23-225	1,313.00
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM		
Other Expenses	36-471-2	-
POLICE AND FIREMAN'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM		
Other Expenses	36-475-2	-
	SUBTOTAL	3,600,241.00
DEBT SERVICE		
BOND PRINCIPAL		
Other Expenses	45-920-2	625,000.00

INTEREST ON BONDS		
Other Expenses	45-930-2	242,369.00
M.C.I.A. LEASE/LOAN		
Other Expenses	45-950-2	79,500.00
DBIZ LOAN		
Other Expenses	45-925-2	-
	SUBTOTAL	946,869.00
	GRAND TOTAL	4,547,110.00

2019 TEMPORARY WATER AND SEWER BUDGET

DESCRIPTION		2019 TEMP
OPERATING		
Salaries & Wages		63,140.00
Other Expenses		630,933.00
Middlesex County Utilities Authority		330,750.00
STATUTORY EXPENDITURES		
Public Employee Retirement System		-
Social Security System		5,000.00
DEFERRED CHARGES		
Overexpenditure Budget Appropriation		-
	SUBTOTAL	1,029,823.00
DEBT SERVICE		
Payment of Bond Principal		460,000.00
Interest on Bonds		67,450.00
	SUBTOTAL	527,450.00
	GRAND TOTAL	1,557,273.00

2. Said emergency temporary appropriations will be provided for in the 2019 budget under the various captions listed herein.
3. A certified copy of this Resolution will be filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

The Clerk reported advertising an ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, CHAPTER 9 OF THE “CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, 2010” BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS, 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 Hale, seconded by Councilman Fine, 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.

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 Hale, seconded by Councilman Fine, the ordinance entitled as above, being Ordinance No. 19-1981, was duly adopted by the following roll call vote, to wit:

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, George, Hale, Welkovits.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilpersons Foster-Dublin, Kim-Chohan.

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

No. 2-19-71

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Ordinance entitled, AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY, CHAPTER 9 OF THE “CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF HIGHLAND PARK, 2010” BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS, passed on final reading at this meeting be delivered to the Mayor for her approval, and if approved by her, 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 East Brunswick, 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.

On motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Welkovits and carried by affirmative voice vote of all councilpersons present, the ordinances entitled, AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SHARING OF A MUNICIPAL TAX COLLECTOR WITH THE TOWNSHIP OF PISCATAWAY, was tabled from consideration.

Resolution Nos. 2-19-73 through 2-19-84 were duly adopted on motion made by Councilman George, seconded by Councilwoman Welkovits, and carried by the following roll call vote, to wit:
Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, George, Hale, Welkovits.
Opposed: None.
Absent: Councilpersons Foster-Dublin, Kim-Chohan.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-73

WHEREAS, advertisement was made for receipt of bids on January 31, 2019, for the 2019-2020 Annual Maintenance Contract for Tree Pruning, Tree Removal, Stumps Removal and/or Root Grinding; and

WHEREAS, two (2) bids were received as follows:

- 1. Moosewood Tree Service: \$94,500.00
- 2. Rich Tree Service, Inc.: \$91,500.00

WHEREAS, following the receipt of the above-referenced bids, said bids were reviewed by the Borough Attorney’s office to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Notice to Bidders and other bid documents; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the review, it has been recommended by the Borough staff that the bid be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, Rich Tree Service, Inc. in the amount of \$91,500.00; and

WHEREAS, funds for said contract shall be made available in Account No. 9-01-26-290-237 in an amount not to exceed \$45,750.00, pending the adoption of the 2019 Municipal Budget, as reflected by the certification of funds of by the Finance Department, shown below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor and Borough Clerk are authorized and directed to execute and attest a contract on behalf of the Borough with Rich Tree Service, Inc. 325 Bergen Street, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, in an amount not to exceed \$91,500.00 without further resolution of Council for pruning, tree and stump removal as described above, said contract to cover period beginning January 1, 2019 and ending December 31, 2020. Said contract shall be in accordance with the specifications and bid documents and in a form approved by the Borough Attorney.

The following resolution, introduced by the Council as a Whole, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-19-74

WHEREAS, after proper notice and advertisement pursuant to the provisions of the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law, *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.*, four (4) bids were received for the Labor and Equipment for Water Main and/or Sanitary Sewer Repairs for 2019 and 2020 (“Contract”) on or about January 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, following the receipt of the above-referenced bids, the Department of Public Works, in consultation with the Borough Attorney’s office, has recommended that certain substantial revisions and clarifications be made to the technical specifications and other requirements of the Contract for purposes of ensuring that the Borough’s needs and expectations for the work and its quantity and cost are effectively communicated to potential bidders and described in the Contract with the successful bidder; and

WHEREAS, the Borough is authorized, under *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-13.2* to reject all bids for certain enumerated reasons, including but not limited to under d., when the Borough wants to substantially revise the specifications for the goods and services; and

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 four (4) bids received on January 31, 2019 for the Labor and Equipment for Water Main and/or Sanitary Sewer Repairs for 2019 and 2020 (“Contract”) are hereby rejected pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 40A:11-13.2d.* for the reasons more fully set forth above in the “Whereas” clauses.
- 2. Borough staff, including the Administrator, Clerk and members of the Department Public Works, and the Borough Attorney are hereby authorized and directed to take all necessary action to make the necessary revisions to the bidding documents and specifications for the Contract and to readvertise same.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Safety Committee, was duly adopted as above:
No. 2-19-75

WHEREAS, advertisement was made for receipt of bids on February 7, 2019 for a Landfill Concrete Debris Removal; and

WHEREAS, one bid was received as follows:

<u>BIDDER</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Nature’s Choice Corp.	\$194,500.00

and

WHEREAS, the Borough chooses to reject the bid due to the amount being substantially over budget;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the bid received for the above described Landfill Concrete Debris Removal on February 7, 2019 shall be and hereby is rejected.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the above referenced bidder together with the return of bid security provided with bid.

BE IT FURTHER RESEOLVED that the Borough Clerk shall be and is hereby directed to readvertise for receipt of bids for a Landfill Concrete Debris Removal, on a date and time to be determined by the Borough Clerk.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-76

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of Highland Park of the Borough of Highland Park that the Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to sign the contract agreement with Garden State Fireworks for the Fireworks Display to be held on Wednesday, July 3, 2019 with a rain date of Sunday, July 7, 2019.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-77

WHEREAS, the Borough of Highland Park desires to enter into an installation and repayment agreement with PSE&G through their Direct Install Program for Energy Upgrades to Borough Hall, Police Department, Public Works Department, Fire Department and Community Center; and

WHEREAS, PSE&G is offering an energy conservation program to customers in its electric and/or gas service territory that are government or non-profit entities located in Urban Enterprise Zones; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the agreement for aforesaid services, attached to the original of this resolution, is hereby approved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Borough Administrator, and PSE&G Direct Install Program.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-78

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the following schedule of proposed use of CDBG funds allocated to the Borough of Highland Park for the funding period 2017-2018 be and the same is hereby approved and a certified copy hereof be submitted to the Middlesex County Housing and Community Development Committee for their approval. If there is a reduction in the CDBG allocation, the reduction should be divided evenly to each project.

Main Street Highland Park – Façade Improvement Program	\$10,000.00
Dept. of Recreation & Arts: Senior Transportation	\$15,500.00
Dept. of Recreation & Arts: Senior Outreach Program	\$13,000.00
Dept. of Recreation & Arts: Summer Camp Program	\$14,500.00
Dept. of Recreation & Arts: Teen Youth Programming/Outreach	\$22,500.00
Food Pantry	\$ 3,000.00
TOTAL	\$78,500.00

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-79

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Finance Director be and is hereby authorized and directed to remit to the following the amount set opposite, the same being the amount of overpayment of 2018 4th quarter taxes for the properties indicated:

<u>BLOCK</u>	<u>LOT</u>	<u>REMITTEE</u>	<u>AMOUNT TO BE REMITTED</u>
51	15	Black River Title & Settlement LLC 6 Canterbury Lane Hackettstown NJ 07840 (102 South 8 th Avenue)	\$1,870.06

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Finance Department and Tax Collector forthwith.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-80

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, 2019 through December 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, such insurance coverage and support services have been determined to be "Extraordinary Unspecified Services", as defined in the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq., and may be negotiated and/or awarded without public advertising for bids and bidding; and

WHEREAS, funds shall be available for this purpose in Account No. 9-01-25-240-235 in the 2019 Municipal Budget upon adoption in the amount of \$8,580.00, 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 Borough Administrator 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 \$8,580.00 for the period January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, 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. 2-19-81

WHEREAS, the Highland Park Police Department has a need to purchase computer equipment for their Police vehicles; and

WHEREAS, quotes for said purchase were requested and only one quote was received from the following, to wit:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
Computer Systems and Methods	\$6,998.00

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police has recommended the purchase of said computer equipment in consultation with IT Consultant, from Computer Systems and Methods, at the above quoted price under State Contract No. 89980; and

WHEREAS, funds will be available for this purpose in Account No. 9-01-25-240-243 as reflected by the certification of funds available by the Chief Financial Officer, shown below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that the Chief of Police is hereby authorized and directed to purchase said computer equipment for a total not to exceed \$6,998.00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Chief of Police and the Finance Department forthwith.

The following resolution, introduced by the Public Works and Public Utilities Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-82

WHEREAS, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee would like to institute a tree planting program for the spring of 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee has a list of interested residents; and

WHEREAS, the Shade Tree Advisory Committee would like to purchase said shade trees utilizing funds from the Tree Replacement Fund;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that Shade Tree Advisory Committee is hereby authorized to purchase said trees utilizing funds from the Tree Replacement Fund.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer and the Shade Tree Advisory Committee forthwith.

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-83

BE IT RESOLVED by the Borough Council of the Borough of Highland Park that transfers of 2018 budget appropriation balances shall be made as follows:

Budget Transfer #6

Description	From	To
Unemployment		3,661.00
Telephones	3,661.00	
	<u>3,661.00</u>	<u>3,661.00</u>

The following resolution, introduced by the Finance Committee, was duly adopted as above:

No. 2-19-84

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 1/19/2019 can be found in the Bills List Journal Book No. 39.

Mayor Brill Mittler opened the meeting for public discussion and called upon all those wishing to speak to identify themselves.

Abby Stern Cardinale, Harper Street, commented that from meetings she has attended she is hearing a lot of frustration from everyone up there that the public is pushing. At the same time, she is hearing that they are patting themselves on the back for all of the transparency and the creation of the Equity Commission. That was done because of all of the pushing by the community. Instead of being taken aback when there is pushing by the community, they would appreciate it if there was more listening and more trying to be on their side because she truly believes that all of the Governing Body wants the same things. She thinks it is a concern when instead of hearing the group that is expressing concerns about the Police hiring, you are saying no, we are better than everyone else and are doing a really good job. Seeing what is happening is very concerning to her. She understands that the Borough Attorney gave a recommendation and she doesn't think the Governing Body has to take that recommendation. She wondered what the Council thought about that recommendation and what they are going to do to make it more transparent, or are they following the recommendation or trying to think outside of the box to find a way that we can all work together for the transparency the Borough wants and what the community is looking for. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that they are still working through these things. As Councilman Hale mentioned, the best way they can work with the community on this and get to have one of the commission members participate in the process, is with the mentor. They will be working very closely with whomever is selected as Chief and Captain to help guide them in the direction that the community wants them to go in. She spent a lot of her time today working on the response to Sophia's email and an article she wants to do in the Highland Park High School newspaper. It has given her the opportunity to really think through a lot of the things that they have been hearing and how they can react to it. She appreciates the opportunity to do that and she hopes to get all of her answers back to her tomorrow. She and Councilman Hale have been talking daily about what they can do and how to make this work best for us, the community and the Police Department. Besides the statute that the Borough Attorney mentioned before, there are some issues that will come up. She intends to look through the personnel jackets of each of the applicants to see what is in their folders. She intends to ask questions about things she finds

in those personnel jackets. We cannot have the public involved in hearing any of that stuff. She will continue her talks with Councilman Hale and they will listen to what the commission is suggesting as they work on the questions they plan to submit. It is hurtful to hear people saying that they don't trust them. They want the same thing and we have to find a way to get to it legally and efficiently. Ms. Cardinale commented that part of the reason for that lack of trust is coming from using words cannot and impossible. She understands that they really are trying, but speaking as a member of the public, they are hearing cannot and impossible a lot. She thinks they could have a lot of buy in and supporters if they try to think outside of the box and there have been some suggestions to make it possible for a public session where a representative of the Equity Commission can be part of it and a part where you can open up that personnel jacket. There have been those suggestions and when the immediate response is negative, it feels to the public that you are looking for reasons why not to instead of let's look outside the box and look for reasons that we can. You have some potential for really great support because we do want the same things. There are some really educated people in this community and we should be listening to them and have them be part of this process.

Sophia McDermott Hughes, South 3rd Avenue, commented that she agreed with Ms. Cardinale. She wants to hear from the Council and the potential Police Chief is a respect and an understanding of the law, but also an ability to work with it to come up with creative solutions when there is a problem, as we clearly see in this instance. She believes that the Attorney said before that a split session wouldn't be contrary to the statute and would be allowed. She addressed Mayor Mittler's comment about trust and understands how that could be viewed hurtful. Trust is earned. It took a year from the incident with Imiri for the Council to even admit that there was a racial profiling problem. It is totally understandable for the community to not trust that Council that took so long to admit to a problem to be the ones interpreting the answers to these questions and addressing this problem in a new Police Chief. The people she does trust are the people on the Equity Commission who have been fighting for the last year to have that admission, to have this process of transparency. These are the people she trusts to judge a candidate about these issues that were brought up in that session. She thinks the idea that the Attorney brought forth that we elect Council and we should just trust them, it's a democracy. That's not how democracy works, you have to earn our trust and transparency isn't every election cycle, you're not beholden to your constituent's every time you're elected, it's a continual process and that is how democracy functions if you have transparency throughout. We trusted you when we elected you and we continue to show our faith in you by coming to these meetings and by demanding transparency, and by trying to push you to do what we believe is right.

Mike Noss, So. Adelaide Avenue, thanked the Council and the Administrator for their efforts with PSE&G to make all the renovations for the energy conservation to happen. He understands that it might be too late on the current process for hiring a new Chief of Police. There are certain statutes in place, and he wanted to know what it would take to get certain statutes changed or updated to reflect what this community is asking for. Councilman George noted that the legislature would have to change the statutes. It would have to go through at least 6 committees to get to the judiciary and then released to the floor for a vote. Mr. Noss asked whether there is anything that can be done on the local level for local ordinances to go around State statutes. Councilman George noted that State law supersedes a local ordinance.

Dan Stern Cardinale, Harper Street, commented that they expressed that the Governing Body wants the public to trust them that the process will reflect the concerns that people are bringing up repeatedly over the last year. Nobody in this room thinks that you are going to pick somebody that is going to allow the same practices to continue. The problem is that everybody in this room has blind spots and they are trying to point them out to each other so they don't end up driving how the process proceeds when we are not in the room, because we apparently will not be in the room. He commented about the mentor and the fact that they will have input into the mentor and they will be picked from the Police Chief's Association. That is the problem. They are not asking for a Police Department that works more efficiently and does a better job at policing, they are looking for something that operates differently from that and selecting from the pool of people that over the last two or three decades established how policing works, to train the next person, that is the problem. Have you into any criminal justice reform groups that could provide recommendations for who could be a mentor? Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the mentor is something that we need to have for the Chief in terms of the policing end of things and the community relations part. She is hearing him talk about something different from that position and more of a consultant/advisor. Mr. Cardinale asked why the mentor has to be a former Police Chief. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that it is a title within the State Police Chief's Association. Mr. Cardinale asked if it is statutory that that position is filled from that organization. Mayor Brill Mittler commented that the mentor position is someone to help guide a new Police Chief in the day to day police requirements. The Council cannot advise a new Police Chief in what the Attorney General's is going to be looking for. We need to have the mentor, but it doesn't mean that they can't get someone involved that could be more of a training person to work with the Police Department. Mr. Cardinale asked if that is an idea she is throwing out right now, or is it a plan to have a civil rights attorney on staff as a consultant. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that it is something she is thinking about now as he is talking and it is different from the mentor, but it is possibly someone we could hire. Mr. Cardinale commented about how this exchange is problematic for the people that have concerns here. We are talking about there being input into this process and not being constrained by the narrow set of rules for that side of the process. He believes the Police Chief should be mentored by someone who's primary focus is training. He asked how will we, the public, know which if any questions from that meeting are asked at the interviews and what the responses are to those questions. Councilman Hale noted that he will tell the Highland Park Equity Commission what questions are asked and what the responses were. Mr. Cardinale commented that what he is hearing is that they have established a process that is laid out by the Governing Body for the municipality and part of that process is statutory and part of that process is established by the Governing Body. You are deciding what the process looks like and that is it. It seems that rather than trying to change the process, it might be more productive in the future to change the members of the Governing Body. That is the solution to the problem if the Governing Body is not responsive to these concerns. We can redirect our focus in a different direction if that would be a better way to approach the problem.

Ms. Craft, Cedar Lane, commented that the laws that are in place do not explicitly say that we cannot do a split interview where the Equity Commission is able to ask the questions that were created and hear the answers themselves and then a private session with the Governing Body where you are able to ask questions particularly related to what is in their files. There is nothing explicit that says we can't do that; it is just the advice given that we shouldn't. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that the advice he gave is based on the law and it relates to the employment of an individual and the confidentiality that goes with that and it also has to do with what the statute says. The statute assigns the responsibility for the process, and however that process is designed at the local level, to be implemented by the Governing Body, not by individual residents of the community. He has advised the Council that that process does not permit or does not encourage or allow individual members of the community to attend the interview process. Ms. Craft asked if the Commission, elected by the Governing Body, be able to do a split session. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that the Commission's liaison, who is a member of the Council, would carry that information in to keep it at the Governing Body level. Ms. Craft commented that they would take the information and ask the questions and report back on the answers. She asked if that would happen before the final recommendation is made. Councilman Hale noted that it would. Ms. Craft asked if anyone has had a conversation with the candidates about the opportunity to actually engage with the public or just the Equity Commission. She thinks that a community police oriented candidate would actually really embrace the opportunity to be able to start building those relationships early with the community. Have they had the conversation with the candidates about what is going on in these meetings? Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the candidates have seen videos of the meetings, but they have not sat down with them and asked that questions. Ms. Craft commented that if you are thinking about community based policing and a candidate coming into this position knowing what is going on in town, they might actually really be open to this and then we don't have to tap dance around everything we are doing. She appreciated the meeting on the 6th and thought it was really great. It was great to get together and develop those 100 questions. There is no way we are going to get answers to all 100 questions. She thinks having the follow through and helping them to understand what the community is feeling might actually solve this problem on its own.

Matt Hersh, 333 Felton Avenue, spoke as a member of the Equity Commission and in the name of transparency, there is a meeting Friday morning at 8:30 a.m. at the Community Center. The Equity Commission has been meeting weekly to address a lot of the concerns that are being raised here. All of those meetings are open to the public. Several members of the Equity Commission were members of the public organizing group, Bias Free HP. It is not so adversarial as some of these comments have made it out to be. The Council is leaving out an important thing that the candidates statutorily have to be Borough Employees and that is why the public can't be involved in the interview process. They are existing Borough employees by statute and the Chief has to be an existing officer. He has an idea of who those candidates would be and that they are admirable officers who would be receptive to community input. Because the Borough's options are limited, he suggested that the Borough continue doing its public engagement campaign during this one-year mentorship period to make sure that the new Chief is reflecting the ideals of the entire Borough of Highland Park and those interested in promoting a more equitable law enforcement landscape. He thinks that is an area where the public can really be involved during the first year of advocacy when the new Chief is in place. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that when she first became Mayor they had open public meetings with the Police Department on different topics and some really good things came out of those meetings like the Zone 6 Teen Center. As we started having more of those meetings, the number of people showing up became less and less, so the meetings stopped. It would be a good thing, given that there is this new enthusiasm and interest in policing here in Highland Park, that they start talking about having those open public meetings again. Mr. Hersh pointed out that we are not going to get to the Police force we want to have if there continues to be this adversarial viewpoint of our local Police. Between the PBA, the Council and the public, all these forces that are coming together, nobody is going to arrive at the place where they need to be and want to be, where they can thrive and be happy and prosperous and safe unless we are all on the same page. Dan, you can come up here and threaten to run against the Council, but that may not be the best way to get what you want.

Abby Stern Cardinale, Harper Street, asked if it is too late or is it not too late to continue the discussion about having a split session. She understands that there are personnel issues, as they are current employees, but she thinks the suggestion that has come up several times was a split session. Borough Attorney Schmierer asked if she meant a split session for interviews with the public in one session and the Governing Body in another session. Ms. Cardinale noted that she meant a representative from the Equity Commission. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that it is not permitted and not specifically provided for in the statute. We cannot run a dual interview period as part of the process. The process is parked right here with the Governing Body and with input, the Governing body will implement the process. There is not an ability in his opinion to have a dual interview process involving a member of the public. Ms. Cardinale responded to a comment by Mr. Hersh. She agrees that we all need to work together, the Council, Police and the community, but she thinks that there is a lot of expressed distrust of the Police and the Police get a lot of positive promotional things in the community and are very respected and appreciated. She thinks that since there concerns from the community, the community can't just keep saying we respect you, we need the Police to come to the community and she thinks that is what the community is asking for. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that one of the things they have talked about when interviewing the candidates is getting a better understanding of what they think of community policing and what that means. The answers to that will tell them a lot about each of the candidates.

Susan Gutwill, Valentine Street, commented that this is not personal that people distrust you. It exists inside of the country in which we are just coming to understand white consciousness and how much white consciousness is taken for granted. In the context of that, we are also coming to understand that police violence is endemic, hence the use of force report, where Highland Park comes out in the lower 20%. This is not a personal issue about what your beliefs are or anybody else's. It is patronizing, basically, and that creates distrust, to take it in personally that way. This is a very serious conversation.

This is not about just the rules and the regulations. It is about something we are dealing with that has come up here in Highland Park that is about prejudice and has come up around the country with police murders and killings. These are big issues. We are not just talking about a mentor. The word that nobody is using is oversight, and that is a word that has come up throughout the country about police oversight, not just mentorship. Mayor Brill Mittler commented that in the State of New Jersey, the oversight of the Police Department comes through the State Attorney General's Office and the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office. These are big issues and they are issues that are national issues that are more today than they ever felt like they were in the past. The use of force report comes up often and they have talked about it in great detail. Lt. Abrams worked with Councilman Hale on going through detailed backup to understand what those numbers meant for Highland Park. Councilman Hale noted that he gave a report to the Equity Commission that he urged them to share as widely as they want about the use of force report. He is happy to talk about it at any time, but he does not have his notes in front of him. We have gone through the report in excruciating detail, down to the level of a single incident, trying to understand what are the specific places where there may be a problem, and they are still working on that. Ms. Gutwill noted that that doesn't inspire trust and it is not about them personally.

Mike Noss, So. Adelaide Avenue, commented that this is only the 2nd Council meeting he has attended as a new resident of Highland Park. He is happy to see Lt. Abrams at the meeting. He asked if there are any policies in place that prohibit or require presence from the Police Department at these meetings. Is there any way to have off-duty officers here to be actively involved in these meetings where we are talking about them and trying to have more of an interaction with beyond they are just in uniform and that is all that we will know them as uniforms, badges and guns? Can we interact with them in a venue such as this where there are clearly strong emotions about their role? Mayor Brill Mittler noted that the open public meetings they used to have was a place where the community came in and asked questions. One of the discussions was working with young African American men on what to do if you get pulled over. The NAACP was involved in those discussions and they have a program on what to do when you get pulled over for all individuals. The Police Department was involved in those meetings and out of that meeting, they created the Zone 6 Teen Center. Some of the parents of the young men that were at that meeting were asking them to find a way to have their kids interact with the Police in a less formal kind of setting. The whole idea was to have a place where teens could hang out and the Police could stop by, in or out of uniform, to say hi and get to know them. Out of some of those meetings, we created a Community Policing position that Officer Joe holds right now, where he goes around town. Last week, several Officers hung out at Penstock for the Coffee with a Cop program. These are the kind of things that we can make happen again. Mr. Noss noted that he is thrilled to hear about these things and would like to see them continued or be picked back up. In this specific venue, he has seen various debates with the Police Department as the subject and they are not here, except the one representative, to hear the comments and report back. It would be nice if there were more of them here to hear this first hand and be engaged in the conversation, whether it is on duty or off duty as members of this community. Councilwoman Welkovits commented that she does not think this is the right format. We have a certain agenda. She thinks what he is asking might be better handled through one of these more informal meetings and they could do it on a certain topic that might help focus the meeting. This is not a question and answer type of meeting. Mr. Noss commented that he was not suggesting a question and answer session between the public and the Police. He asked if the Police Officers are residents of the Borough and if there is a policy requiring them to live in Highland Park. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that there is no policy that says they have to live in Highland Park. Mr. Noss asked if there is a number about how many Officers do live in Highland Park. Councilwoman Welkovits noted that two of the most senior Officers grew up in Highland Park. Mr. Noss commented that it would be nice if there are Officers who live in Highland Park could attend these meetings.

Lt. Rick Abrams, Highland Park Police Department, noted that he has been with the department for 16 years and most people probably don't know him. He has worked the majority of his career on the midnight shift. He noted that the reason they come to these meetings is to answer technical questions. He personally does not feel it is their place to go back and forth with anyone at the microphone who has anything they might want to say for fear that we might be stepping on their toes, intimidating them, or anything like that. We generally are quiet and sit here and listen and take notes and bring it back to Administration and they talk about these things and watch the meetings and try to figure out how they can change things. The Police Department is open 24 hours a day. If you want to talk to a cop, walk in. He guarantees that someone would be happy to sit down and talk with you. There are certain things they can and can't get into and might not be as fulfilling as you want all the time. They are good cops and good people and he encouraged residents to walk in and say hi and ask the Dispatcher if there is anyone available to speak with. They might be busy, as they run with just a couple of cops on the road, but stop in and say hi. He gets stopped now that he is working days and is asked who he is as people haven't seen him before. The fact that someone comes in here and says that they are afraid of him, is horrible. He doesn't do this job for anyone to be afraid of him. He does this job because he is good at it. He does this job to help the community. Generally, there will be one or two of them at these meetings.

Matt Hersh, 333 Felton Avenue, commented about residency requirements and is ambivalent about it because we could get the wrong government and Dan would like to come in and hire his cousin to be the Chief. Justin Burton, Chair of the Equity Commission, is doing a phenomenal job running the meetings. One of the things that struck him the most at the February 6th meeting was that they all broke out into breakout sessions. At this table, there were 15-20 people, and they were talking about new methods in policing. At the end, just out of curiosity, he asked for a show of hands on how many people actually knew who our Chief was and three people raised their hand. The force report is real and the numbers don't lie. There are members of the population that are being disproportionately affected by law enforcement interactions and that is real and it is troubling and we need to find out why. One of the things he would be interested in looking at is an independent oversight body and speaking with the ACLU and seeing what towns can do in order to provide some level of independent oversight. He thinks there are issues with the Prosecutor's Office and there are issues with any kind of internal investigation, not out of distrust for anybody, it is just another layer of support for the Police. Mayor Brill Mittler noted that she has a lot more faith in the current Attorney General than in people from the past and he is very much in

tune with some of the things you are talking about. Mr. Hersh commented that politically he agrees completely, but he is not going to be the Attorney General forever. There are things that the Equity Commission can look into looking forward to ensure that these things are actually being addressed. For a large part of the community, it is removing the abstract perceptions of law enforcement. He thinks that is a good thing that the Police are not physical 24/7, there are definitely upsides to having more casual interactions with law enforcement. If you are having an interaction with an officer, it's not going to be a good day for you. He attended the Coffee with a Cop program at Penstock. It was a good event, but everyone was in uniform and if you didn't know what was going on, you see all these uniformed officers and you think something is happening. Mayor Brill Mittler asked if a Police Officer has to be in uniform if he is on duty. Lt. Abrams noted that the Chief can designate the uniform and can assign Officers to plain clothes duties.

Jeff Vardaro, Wayne Street, commented that he understood that Councilman Hale is going to take the questions from the Equity Commission that are decided on and whichever ones are asked, you are going to report them back to the Equity Commission with the answers. Councilman Hale agreed. Mr. Vardaro asked the Borough Attorney if that is okay. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that it is okay because it is going through the Council Liaison. Mr. Vardaro asked if there is any legal prohibition on interviews being recorded and transcribed and then shared with the public. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that they could record the interviews and transcribe them, but it would not be shared with the public. The summary of what you heard would be the questioning would come back, but again, if a question delved into an Officer's personal history file, that could not be released to the public, that would be a violation of law. Mr. Vardaro asked if the whole interview was recorded and transcribed, could it be shared with the public in a redacted form. Borough Attorney Schmierer noted that they would have to take a look at that legal point of view. The interview has to be conducted and overseen by the appointing authority, the Governing Body, and they can't allow any of that material come and go, basically a redacted version. He does not believe that is material that should be shared with the public. The questions that are going to be presented and reported on by Councilman Hale are permissible, but he is not sure that a transcript of the actual questions and then redacting information that might relate to a person's personnel file.

Ms. Craft, Cedar Lane, commented about the focus being on hiring the new Police chief and bias training. She can't help but note that every story that has been shared since she has been coming to these meetings are based in the community. Somebody called the Police on someone who looked suspicious. She commented that she and her wife are both people of color and that they knew moving here to really be careful in this town. They do not recommend this town to other people of color who are moving into this area or starting to work where they work. They do not plan on having kids in this town and that is based on their experiences here. This issue is bigger than the Police Department. She is wondering if this is a menu potentially to look at town wide education and not just focusing on the Police force. Mayor Brill Mittler commented that she is glad she brought that up. When they first started discussing all of this, there were two directions they were looking at in terms of training. One was for the Police Department and they hired an outside company to analyze the data and work with them going forward for the Police Department. She is absolutely right about some of the things she just said. Police respond to reports that are called in. The direction that they discussed going in involves the Human Relations Commission. They want to do bias-free training for the entire community and they have reached out to an organization in New Brunswick. Someone who did a presentation at one of the Martin Luther King events did a phenomenal job and they plan to include funding in the 2019 budget.

Sophia McDermott Hughes, South 3rd Avenue, commented about transparency with the Highland Park Police Department. She likes to think she is a reasonably, civically engaged person coming to these meetings and covering the Council and Police Department as a journalist. Yet the only Police person she has been permitted when doing interviews to talk to is Officer Joe. She vaguely knows Chief Rizco from these meetings and has now met Lt. Abrams. In such a small town with only 27 Officers, the fact that she can only name 3, is a huge problem. There needs to be an ongoing conversation about opening up venues with the press and the community to have interactions with the Police without guns. When Officer Joe comes to the school in plain clothes, but he still has a gun. Mayor Brill Mittler specifically asked the Chief about that and was told that when they are on duty, they must have their gun on them. Her not knowing a lot of the Police Officers is shocking and that is part of the community policing that they need to address. Ms. McDermott Hughes commented on the fact that a lot of agencies and people have said that there is a problem with Office Joe carrying a gun at school. The kids are uncomfortable, and it categorizes from the beginning a relationship between the youth and Police as one of violence where you are trying to build a relationship of understanding. When you are introduced to this Officer, he has a gun on him. She wants them to look at the law in detail and see if there is a way to work around it. We are not going to get anywhere if there is a law against and we just give up. Need to recognize the law and be creative in finding ways to work around it when everyone agrees it is a problem. Councilwoman Welkovits asked if the Council could take a serious look at this issue. She remembers when Officer Joe first showed up at the schools and was shocked that he had a gun.

Matt Hersh, 333 Felton Avenue, commented that he has also heard that Officers can be detailed without a firearm for special events

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

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

Ayes: Councilpersons Fine, George, Hale, Welkovits.

Opposed: None.

Absent: Councilpersons Foster-Dublin, Kim-Chohan.

Abstained: None.

No. 2-19-85

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: JSM at Highland Park v. Borough of Highland Park update)
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 Councilwoman Welkovits, seconded by Councilman George, and carried by affirmative voice vote of all Councilpersons present, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Hullings
Borough Clerk