



Village of Highland Park, Florida
Regular Meeting
March 26, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
VHP Administration Building, 1650 Highland Park Drive North

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK**

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK, FLORIDA MET IN REGULAR SESSION AT THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1650 NORTH HIGHLAND PARK DRIVE, ON TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024, AT 6:00 P.M. WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF PERSONS PRESENT:

Derek Camann, Commissionssioner (Seat 1)
Brandon McWhorter, Mayor-Commissioner (Seat 2)
Amanda Updike, Commissioner (Seat 3)
Ric Busbee, City Manager
Andrew Hand, City Attorney (via telephone)
Mary Bradley, Village Treasurer
Lita O’Neill, Village Clerk
April Cooper, CPA, Wicks, Brown, Williams, & Co., CPA's, LLP
Paul O’Neill, Resident

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Village Clerk called the roll. The following commissioners were present: Commissioner Derek Camann, Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter, Commissioner Amanda Updike

OATH OF OFFICE

The Village Clerk administered the oath of office to Commissioner Amanda Updike. The Clerk noted that Commissioner Updike was the sole qualifier during the qualifying period Feb. 12-16.

**PRESENTATION OF FY 2022-2023 AUDIT, WICKS, BROWN, WILLIAMS, AND CO., MS.
APRIL COOPER**

Ms. Cooper distributed copies of the FY 2022-23 audit and presented to the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Cooper presented the audit page by page to the Commission. Ms. Cooper noted that the report on internal controls showed no deficiencies. This year, as last year, the audit is clean and shows no findings regarding deficiencies or internal controls. The management letter being sent to the State of

Florida states a clean opinion with no findings.

Discussion during the audit presentation included a few items the Commission will look at internally, including the fact that the Enterprise Fund owes the General Fund from several years ago. This year the pay back occurred in FY 2023-24 in November rather than FY 2022-23 budget, so \$12,498 is the current balance. Also, General Government costs were higher than the previous year due to legal and consulting relating to plastic plant coming to Lake Wales. Ms. Cooper noted that when the budget is adopted, it is done by line item so at the end of each fiscal year, budget amendments need to be completed if any changes occur. Budget amendments may occur 60 days past the fiscal year end, which is September 30th. The Commission may wish to discuss an increase in water rates to meet the demands of inflation. The Commission may also wish to discuss whether the Enterprise Fund and the General Fund will share employee costs equally. The Commission may determine a reasonable allocation of funds and make changes.

Mayor McWhorter noted that the Village of Highland Park is in a better financial position with \$148,000 more than last year.

Ms. Cooper invited the Commission and staff to contact her office by phone or email throughout the year and reminded staff that any budget amendments for the fiscal year would need to be completed no later than November 30, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Mayor opened the floor for public comment. The Village Clerk read an email that Mr. and Mrs. John and Pam Beasley, 1233 South Highland Park Drive, sent prior to the meeting stating thanks to the City Manager for cleaning up the grounds. The Mayor noted Mr. Ric Busbee's proactive approach.

Mr. Paul O'Neill, 1351 South Highland Park Drive, noted that he was impressed with the amount of work that is being done by the City Manager. He specifically noted how nice the road looks at the base of the water tower.

ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Camann made a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from the following meetings, which include the November 28, 2023 regular commission meeting, the January 23, 2024 regular commission meeting, and the February 28, 2024 commission work session.

A roll call vote was taken. Commissioner Camann – yes. Commissioner McWhorter – yes. Commissioner Updike – yes. The minutes were adopted as written.

VILLAGE TREASURER'S REPORT (BUDGET-TO-ACTUAL)

The Treasurer presented the Budget-to-Actual Report. Ms. Bradley noted that the auditor looked over the report and stated the Village is on track with the budget. There were no questions. The Mayor thanked Ms. Bradley for doing a great job during the staff transition.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

The power poles and the speed bumps have been completed. Pavers for the three parking area at the play park will be done this week. The sand base is on order. Sod around the new parking areas will be finished this week.

The City Manager told the Commissioners that he is studying the water expenses and the water rates. During budget season the Commission will be able to look at General Fund and Enterprise Fund as a team.

OLD BUSINESS

VHP Historical Marker – The Clerk updated the Commission. There was nothing new to present, as we have not yet received anything back from the Polk Historical Museum. The Clerk asked the Mayor if he would sign the application even without the text being decided to ensure the application gets approved. Mayor McWhorter signed the application, and the Clerk will forward to the Polk County Historical Museum staff.

Improvements to Play Park – Commissioner Camann asked about a possible water fountain. The City Manager mentioned the cost to install would be about \$4,000-\$5,000. Mr. Busbee noted concerns about low demand and lack of use. He expressed concern about the chlorine dissipating and having the water sit in the lines. Discussion ensued.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Mayor McWhorter read Resolution #2024-01, A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE COMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK DIRECTING THE VILLAGE MANAGER TO POST ‘NO FISHING’ SIGNAGE WITHIN AMORET NATURE PARK; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The Mayor mentioned that there is already an ordinance on the books that allows the Commission to restrict certain uses in the public park. The City Attorney, Mr. Hand, noted that this was correct. The Mayor noted that the Village is a wildlife sanctuary and that Lake Easy has a public access boat ramp and is much easier to access. Mayor McWhorter asked the City Manager to report his observations concerning the issue. Mr. Busbee noted that there is trash and fishing line left behind by some fishermen. Also, there are birds that have been harmed due to the trash and fishing line. Mr. Busbee also stated that the school bus turnaround has been used as a parking spot in the afternoons, which prevents the school bus from being able to come into drop off kids in the afternoon. Commissioner Camann noted that his concern is about safety because a fishing app has Highland Park listed as a fishing spot, and many of those who are fishing are not local residents. Problems include loud music, cussing, drinking, and smoking. Commissioner Updike stated she understood the issues with trash, but she asked about fishing by permit so that

residents would be able to fish in Lake Amoret. Resident, Mr. O’Neill, shared a situation when two fishermen last year got into a disagreement and one of them was carrying a pistol, which is legal, but it was disconcerting having this happen in his backyard.

Mr. Hand noted that there is an ordinance that states fishing is allowed in the public area, unless no fishing has been determined and posted. He stated that the resolution is giving the City Manager clear authority to take action today by posting signage that states fishing is not allowed. He noted that the resolution is a good first step without incurring the cost of adopting an ordinance.

Mayor McWhorter mentioned that the Village could work to revise the existing ordinance later as needed. Mr. Hand agreed.

Mayor McWhorter made a motion to approve Resolution #2024-01. Commissioner Updike seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken:

- Commissioner Derek Camann – yes
- Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter – yes
- Commissioner Amanda Updike - yes

- 2) **Review of Scope of Services for Fire Services Assessment Program (Anser Advisory Group, formerly GSG, Government Services Group)** - The Village Clerk presented the Mayor with an agreement from Anser Advisory Group. They have done this work for several years, but under a different name, the Government Services Group. The Mayor approved the agreement and executed it with his signature.

QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor McWhorter opened the floor for questions or announcements. Commissioner Updike commented that she followed up about the concerns about the placement of the new speed bump. None of the residents that she talked to had any concerns. Commissioner Camann mentioned that he went to look at the speed bump in question. He noted that it seems that cars would need to stop to turn into the property near the speed bump.

Commissioner Camann commented that the Easter Egg Hunt was a great event. Thanks to everyone involved.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lita O’Neill, Village Clerk