

**VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND HILLS, OHIO**  
**MINUTES OF A REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
**September 12, 2024**  
**6:00 p.m.**

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The Regular Council Meeting of the Village of Highland Hills, Ohio was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Council President Cassandra Pride in Room No. 14 of Village Hall. It was also broadcast via Zoom Video Communications.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance, which was recited by all.

**ROLL CALL:** Present were Council President Cassandra Pride and Councilpersons David Mills, James McManus and Robert Wright. Also present: Mayor Michael L. Booker, Law Director Thomas P. O'Donnell, Economic Director Larry Finch and Senior Administrator Adrienne Goodson. Absent was Councilwoman Geavona Greene, who was out of town.

Moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman Wright to excuse Councilwoman Greene from the meeting. All voted aye and the **motion carried**.

**DISCUSSION BY PUBLIC:** None.

1. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:** Items listed under the Consent Agenda are considered routine. Each item will be read individually into the record and the Consent Agenda will then be enacted as a whole by one motion and one roll call. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion by Council is desired on any item on the Consent Agenda, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda by Council motion and considered in its normal sequence under the Regular Order of Business.

- a. Approval of minutes:
  - \*July 10, 2024 Regular Council Meeting
  - \*September 3, 2024 Special Council Meeting

- b. First Reading Consideration:

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-47:** An Ordinance Authorizing All Actions Necessary to Apply for and Accept the 2023-2024 Ohio Law Enforcement Bulletproof Vest Program Grant Administered through the Ohio Attorney General's Office, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-48:** An Ordinance Authorizing All Actions Necessary to Apply for and Accept the 2024 Home Depot Grant for Renovation and Modernizing the Police Department Facilities to Improve Efficiencies, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-49:** An Ordinance Authorizing an Amendment to the Agreement with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission to Revise the Village Comprehensive Plan, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-50:** An Ordinance Recommending Acceptance of the Bid of Kimble Company and Authorizing the Mayor to Enter and Execute an Agreement for Transfer and Disposal of Solid Waste Services, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-51:** An Ordinance Recommending Acceptance of the Bid of Waste Management of Ohio, Inc. and Authorizing the Mayor to Enter and Execute an Agreement for Recycling Processing Services, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-52:** An Ordinance Declaring Surplus Property and Authorizing the Mayor to Dispose of the Surplus Property, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-53:** An Ordinance Requesting that the Ohio Department of Transportation Reduce the Speed Limit on Northfield Road (State Route 8) for All Areas Applicable within the Village of Highland Hills Municipal Boundaries, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-54:** An Ordinance to Approve Current Replacement Pages to the Codified Ordinances, and Declaring an Emergency.

**\*Ordinance No. 2024-55:** An Ordinance Authorizing All Actions Necessary to Accept the 2023 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Amount of \$284,571.42 and Authorizing the Village to Contribute Non-Federal Funds of \$14,228.58 for a Total Approved Budget of \$298,800.00, and Declaring an Emergency.

Moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman Wright to waive the three reading rule and referral to committee. All voted aye and the **motion carried.**

Moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman Wright to accept the Consent Agenda. All voted aye and the Consent Agenda was **adopted 4 – 0.**

**COMMUNICATIONS:** None.

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR:** Mayor Michael Booker advised that the Acting Chief and Deputy Chief will be handling day-today activities in the Fire Department as a result of Chief Namy's departure. He related that the fire fighters received a

\$10,000 pay stipend from the State for the work they did during Covid. The amount will be divided among the employees.

Mayor Booker then introduced two candidates for the Fire Department: Vincent Wright and Josh Van Buren. He asked them to say a few words about their background and administered the Oath of Office.

The Mayor then read prepared remarks to Council (attached).

**DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:** Economic Development Director Larry Finch addressed the Community Development grant programs for this year. Council already passed legislation for the CDSG in the amount of \$40,000+, requesting grant money for a new roof for the fire station. On this evening's agenda is the CDBG application for \$150,000, for the relocation of the Council Chambers and Mayor's Court from downstairs to the first level, to make them ADA accessible.

Director Finch indicated there has been some difficulty in obtaining information from the contractors, but someone is coming out tomorrow for an estimate. The application has to be submitted by Monday.

The director noted a current issue with juvenile detention facilities pulling out, and what will happen to the vacant land and existing buildings once they are vacated. This all needs to be researched.

President Pride questioned what the new Council Chambers will look like. Mayor Booker answered that there are actually three contractors who will be out tomorrow. An architect will need to determine whether a wall is loadbearing, and that will decide whether the room can be bigger. The chambers will already be larger than the current room, and the plan is to make it ADA accessible and multi-purpose in use. The President noted that the relocation of the Council Chambers was well received at the public hearing.

Mayor Booker concluded his remarks by saying that over the last two years, the Village has received over \$1 million in grant money. Larry Finch has done a phenomenal job over the last 34+ years, and the Mayor said he has no plan to let up.

**REPORT FROM PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL:** President Cassandra Pride thanked Council members for their support in attendance of special meetings during the August recess.

Finance  
Properties/Buildings  
Public Works  
Rules  
Safety

Committee of Whole

Cassandra Pride – met and a report is on file  
James McManus – met and a report is on file  
Robert Wright – met and a report is on file  
David Mills – met and a report is on file  
Geavona Greene – President Pride advised the committee met and a report is on file  
Cassandra Pride – did not meet

**REPORT FROM COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO REGULATORY OR OTHER BOARDS:**

Audit	David Mills – met and a report is on file
Board of Control	Cassandra Pride – did not meet
Board of Zoning Appeals	James McManus – did not meet
Fair Housing Commission	Robert Wright – did not meet
Human Resources Committee	Geavona Greene - President Pride advised a meeting is scheduled on September 26th
Planning Commission	David Mills – did not meet
Senior Advisory Board	Cassandra Pride – met and a report is on file
Tax Incentive Review Council	Geavona Greene – did not meet

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

- a. **THIRD READING CONSIDERATION: None.**
- b. **SECOND READING CONSIDERATION: None.**
- c. **FIRST READING CONSIDERATION:**

**Resolution No. 2024-56:** A Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Apply for the 2025 Community Development Block Grant through Cuyahoga County.

Moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman McManus to waive the three reading rule and referral to committee. All voted aye and **the motion carried.**

Moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman McManus to approve Resolution No. 2024-56. All voted aye and the resolution was **adopted 4 – 0.**

**Ordinance No. 2024-57:** An Ordinance Approving the Plan of Operation and Governance for the NOPEC Opt-In Gas Aggregation Program for the Purpose of Jointly Establishing and Implementing an Opt-In Gas Aggregation Program as a NOPEC Member, and Declaring an Emergency.


**Ordinance No. 2024-58:** An Ordinance Approving the Plan of Operation and Governance for the NOPEC Opt-In Gas Aggregation Program for the Purpose of Jointly Establishing and Implementing an Opt-In Gas Aggregation Program as a NOPEC Member, and Declaring an Emergency.


Law Director Thomas O'Donnell advised both ordinances should go to Second Reading. Two public hearings will be held in October, and then Council may adopt at the October 16th Council meeting.

President Pride announced that Ordinance Nos. 2024-57 and 2024-58 will **proceed to Second Reading.**

**MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, it was moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman McManus to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye and the meeting concluded at 6:29 p.m.

  
Cassandra Pride, President of Council

  
Margaret Sikon, Clerk of Council

Attachment:

Mayor Booker remarks

Good Evening Council,

Although great things are happening here in the Village, the 30 days have been rough and has caused me to reflect. At my last count, we mourn the loss of 5 residents during that time period. Jackie Wallace, James Leatherwood, Wendell Williams, Mr. Frazier, and Annie Todd. Most of you don't know all 5 and you should as an elected official in a small community like this. Each touched me and many others here in the Village daily. I could share stories about every one of them. Like, Mr. Leatherwood saving five baby ducks that fell down a sewer pipe in front of the building or my daily interactions with Jackie Wallace, because of his security guard background was the eyes and ears of the Shaker house. However, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about Ms. Annie Todd who was my neighbor on Alameda and probably the reason I am Mayor today. You see way before Michelle Obama gave the amazing speech at the DNC telling us all to "Do Something" Ms. Todd told me to DO SOMETHING back in 2015. As one of the youngest people on my street at the time, She told me to get involved. Although I had no interest in politics (still don't), I've always had an interest in helping people. She told me to follow and learn as much as I could from Mayor Nash. I did just that. She told me to learn the history of the community. I did that also. She and many others (but she was the 1<sup>st</sup>) encourage me every day to "DO SOMETHING." She participated in everything we did here in the Village until she could no longer do so. I tell people this is the toughest part of this job if you're doing it right, the people become your family. I mourn and continue to push because of them and for them. My life has been about accountability. Being accountable for my actions and holding people accountable for theirs. This is who I am and what I do. I'm sorry but that won't change. With all that being said I am encouraging you, "TO DO SOMETHING." Telling me about every problem is not "doing something." That's passing the buck, so you can say, I told the Mayor" Yes, but what actions did you take as a public servant? Who did you call? What resource did you research?

I took a week off for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 6 years because of the demands of this job. Right now I'm in discussions with Chagrin Valley Dispatch(**why**), the State of Ohio (**why**), 3 different departments of Cuyahoga County, 6 different projects going on at the same time. That's a lot for one person and this list goes on and on.