

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023
VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: President Hofeld called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: President Hofeld led trustees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Clerk Marilyn Thomas called the roll. Those present were Village President Richard Hofeld, Trustee Lisa Purcell, Julie Willis, Trustee Anne Colton, Trustee Vivian Harris-Jones, Trustee Jay Heiferman and Trustee Lauren Roman.

President Hofeld introduced staff present: Village Manager Napoleon Haney, Village Attorney Chris Cummings, Assistant Village Manager Tyler Hall, Public Works Director John Schaefer, and Police Chief Denise McGrath.

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting of June 27, 2023, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Harris-Jones to approve the minutes as presented.

Roll Call: AYES—Trustees Purcell, Colton, Harris-Jones, Heiferman, and Roman. NAYS –None. ABSTAINED-Trustee Willis. Motion carried.

CLAIMS LIST: The Claims List in the amount of \$898,294.74 was presented. There were no questions from the Trustees.

A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Colton to approve the Claims List as presented.

Roll Call: AYES—Trustees Purcell, Willis, Colton, Harris-Jones, Heiferman, and Roman. NAYS –None. Motion carried.

President Hofeld said four items totaled 81 percent of the Claims List: \$307,156.05 payment to Chicago Heights for Lake Michigan water; \$258,448.15 for employee insurance for July; \$89,653.51 for ECOM; \$73,550 for fire department turnout gear.

HEAR FROM AUDIENCE: Village Clerk Thomas said she had received a written comment from resident Kris Condon regarding the use of fireworks on July 4th and the police response. Police Chief McGrath will address Condon's concerns in a private conversation.

OATH OF OFFICE: Clerk Thomas administered the oath of office to David Nelson, a new police officer. Prior to joining the Homewood Police Department, Officer Nelson was employed as a fulltime police officer in Hazel Crest and Crete. As a certified police officer, he immediately began the Homewood field training program.

Omnibus Vote: Consider a motion to pass, approve, authorize, accept, or award the following items:

- A. Agreement/Lobbying Services/Maren Ronan, Ltd.: Authorize the Village President to enter into an agreement between Maren Ronan, Ltd. (MR Ltd.) of Western Springs, IL and the Village of Homewood for lobbying services from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$3,000 per month.
- B. Bid Award/Leaf Pickup Services/Homewood Disposal, Inc.: Award the bid for Contract Leaf Pickup Services to Homewood Disposal, Inc., the sole bidder, of Homewood, IL in the amount of \$28,779 for leaf pickup on November 1st, 15th, and 29th, of 2023.
- C. Budget Amendment/Emergency Repair to Central Water Tank/Ray's Welding Co, Inc.: Waive competitive bidding due to emergency repair work; approve a budget amendment for \$28,400; and, approve the payment of \$28,400 to Ray's Welding Co, Inc. of Benton Harbor, MI for completing emergency repairs on the central water tank.
- D. Budget Amendment/Emergency Purchase/Ford F250 Pickup Truck: Approve a budget amendment allocating \$72,000.26 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to purchase a 2022 Ford F250 pickup truck; waive competitive bidding as an emergency purchase due to limited vehicle availability; and, approve the purchase of a 2022 Ford F250 pickup truck vehicle from D'Orazio Ford of Wilmington, IL for \$53,109.26, with \$18,891 for additional vehicle equipment for a total of \$72,000.26.
- E. Budget Amendment/Emergency Purchase/Ford Police Utility Vehicle: Approve a budget amendment allocating \$51,011.26 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the purchase of a 2023 Ford Police Utility vehicle; waive competitive bidding for an emergency purchase due to limited vehicle availability; and, approve the purchase of a 2023 Ford Police Utility vehicle from D'Orazio Ford for \$44,301.26, and \$6,710 for additional equipment.
- F. M-2257/Donation of Surplus Property/Bicycles: Pass an ordinance authorizing the donation of nine bicycles as abandoned, lost, or stolen property recovered by the Homewood Police Department to Restoration Ministries, Inc., of Harvey, IL.
- G. M-2258/Sale of Surplus Property/Chairs and Desk: Pass an ordinance authorizing the sale of surplus property consisting of 20 chairs and one desk to South Suburban Major Crimes Task Force for the price of one dollar.
- H. R-3150/Joint Task Force Agreement/South Suburban Emergency Response Team: Pass a resolution authorizing the Village President to enter into a Joint Task Force Agreement.

A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Roman to approve the Omnibus Report as presented.

Trustee Roman asked if, in the future, it is possible for the bicycles to be given to Homewood residents rather than donated to a charity outside of the village. Attorney Cummings said he would check on whether that can be an option.

Roll Call: AYES—Trustees Purcell, Willis, Colton, Harris-Jones, Heiferman, and Roman. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

GENERAL BOARD DISCUSSION: Trustee Colton suggested the board's agenda be amended to allow for greater discussion of issues that do not necessarily require immediate board action. She pointed to the future of businesses, especially along Halsted Street, as online purchasing increases. She believes issues such as that deserve discussion.

Trustee Heiferman said he appreciates the idea, but the board should meet for a workshop on the issue and other topics.

President Hofeld said he would be willing to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting to review and discuss the village's economic development efforts.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Roman to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Roll Call: AYES—Trustees Purcell, Willis, Colton, Harris-Jones, Heiferman, and Roman. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thomas

Village Clerk

From: Kris Condon

Date: July 11, 2023 at 02:23:52 CDT

To: mthomas@homewoodil.gov

Subject: For public comment at 7/11 Village Board meeting; confirmation receipt requested

Dear Clerk Thomas:

I respectfully request the following public comment be shared with President Hofeld and members of the Board of Trustees. Please confirm receipt.

With appreciation, Kris Condon

Dr. Kristine M. (Kris) Condon

Homewood, IL 60430

July 11, 2023

To President Hofeld and Members of the Village of Homewood Board of Trustees:

Let me preface my public comment this evening with apologies for a schedule conflict that precludes me from making my remarks in person. Let me also share that I have resided in the village for 35 years, have long been engaged in community and volunteer activities, and have always felt the best choice I could make was to create a home in the home my grandparents built 71 years ago. In all of that time, I have never, ever been fearful for my personal safety or for the security of that home.

Until Tuesday, July 4, 2023, that is.

Between the complete Wild West atmosphere of bottle rockets, Roman candles, and other fireworks being openly lit in the middle of Evergreen Road and Homewood Avenue and the virtually nonexistent response to three nonemergency contacts to local law enforcement, I am seriously considering leaving this village for the first time.

I note Trustee Heiferman's comments in the June 27, 2023, "GENERAL [sic] BOARD DISCUSSION: Trustee Heiferman asked residents to be cautious and considerate when using fireworks to celebrate the 4th of July. He reminded residents that they are illegal in Illinois, and fireworks can do harm to pets and persons sensitive to the sounds." Now, the reality is that while fireworks are indeed illegal in Illinois, no village has the law enforcement power to stop every household from discharging them, regardless of our Police Department's admonitions on social media. And my three contacts to HPD's nonemergency number were not the ravings of a cranky lady who thought someone had littered a gum wrapper in her yard. For a period of almost four hours on the evening of July 4, I witnessed:

1. Bottle rockets openly discharged by a group of five teenagers and one parent at the intersection of Evergreen Road and Homewood Avenue. On several occasions, these fireworks were stacked in an orange, five-gallon Home Depot bucket, with debris scattering almost one-half block north

on Homewood Avenue onto my front porch. Additional debris was found below my windowsills—windows I had installed two weeks prior. On one occasion, the female parent (who lives across the street from me) set off a series of bottle rockets **on the village parkway** intersecting Evergreen Road and Homewood Avenue, ostensibly to keep the debris from damaging her two Mercedes parked on Evergreen with no overnight parking stickers;

2. Bottle rockets openly discharged in the middle of Homewood Avenue between Evergreen Road and 183rd Street by one family. These fireworks were set off between transformer power lines that run east to west through the alley between Homewood and Highland Avenues. In this situation, these fireworks were discharged in the direction of my neighbors immediately to the north, who have just had a wooden deck installed, and in the direction of my garage, again so their vehicles were not damaged. Fortunately, their freestanding basketball hoop, which is positioned on the right-of-way sidewalk in direct violation of village ordinance, also did not have to be moved and sustained no damage;
3. Property damage to my garage to the tune of \$200, which occurred when one neighbor's bottle rockets made contact with my garage exterior light fixture, created an arc flash, and then shorted the dusk/dawn light sensor. This wooden frame garage housed two vehicles, both with fully-fueled gas tanks. My electrician (who, incidentally, is licensed to do business in the Village of Homewood so that we can alleviate any concern you may have about his credentials) advised me that I had "dodged a bullet" by this minimal \$200 repair job, as there was enough damage to the wiring that could have triggered a garage fire—or worse.

As for my three contacts to nonemergency law enforcement, I make room for the fact that I may not have seen all that transpired, primarily because I was afraid to venture outside and did not think it appropriate to take matters into my own hands. However, my understanding is that no action occurred after the first call. After my second call, it appeared that a squad car traveled north on Homewood Avenue to Evergreen Road, blew the horn at the offenders, and then turned east onto Evergreen Road without stopping. During my third call, I received among the most condescending encounters of constituent service when I recapped my two prior calls and was told to "take a breath." I did witness a squad car travel westbound on Evergreen Road, directly over the bottle rockets and other debris dumped in the middle of the road. Respectfully, dismantling that situation two calls prior could have assured the dispatcher that I was indeed able to breathe appropriately and would likely have saved me \$200. This interaction with law enforcement was particularly disappointing as a 40-year veteran of the legal system, where working with all three branches of government was my job. Just as I was expected then to provide more to government constituents with whom I came into contact, I expected more from three legitimate requests for help on July 4.

Now, because I don't wish to come to the table with a problem and then not proffer a solution, I again acknowledge our local law enforcement doesn't have the resources or the manpower to police every situation. However, the personal injuries and property damage in Illinois from uncontrolled fireworks discharged, where enforcement was minimal to nonexistent and where residents assumed there would be no consequences for their actions, was entirely too well-documented in the media. Therefore, I would like to respectfully suggest the following preemptive measures before another holiday weekend:

1. First, this Board needs to adopt an ordinance that specifically addresses the use of fireworks on **public roadways and parkways**. Surely such an ordinance can be drafted without conflict with existing or proposed Illinois law.
2. Next, it's insufficient to simply adopt an ordinance; law enforcement needs to, well, **enforce it**. I'm not sure law enforcement is fully aware of how admonitions on social media were ignored and, yes, mocked with the "logic" that there would be no consequences anyway.
3. As to your anticipated response that no funding exists for enforcement, there are many public safety grants that can be used for community policing, public education, deterrence, and equipment (such as drones) that can be used to address non-emergency enforcement and evidence-gathering. The money is there, and the training exists.
4. As to consequences, it would seem that an ordinance violation would result in an appearance before a village ordinance court with appropriate financial penalties.

I came to this village for the quality of life and for the people who live here. My family and I pride ourselves on the condition of our property (which was a 2022 Beautification Award winner) and the relationships we have cultivated with most of our neighbors. But I have never, ever felt heard less or dismissed more than I was on July 4, both by the flagrant disregard from neighbors and the complete lack of enforcement I witnessed. I'd be grateful for someone to address my concerns—but I'm not optimistic. Things seem to have changed in our community—starting with our municipal buildings. The best I can say is that a response from one of you, or lack thereof, will likely inform whether I stay or whether I go. I hope you will help me decide to stay.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Respectfully,
Kristine M. Condon

Dr. Kristine M. (Kris) Condon
Homewood, IL 60430