



CITY OF  
DISTRICT HEIGHTS  
MARYLAND

2000 Marbury Drive  
District Heights, Maryland

## City Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 2, 2023, 7pm

HYPBRID | Limited Capacity In-Person & VIA ZOOM Audio/Visual Conference

### **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The City Meeting of the City of District Heights was held on Thursday, February 2, 2023, via a HYBRID fashion: Limited capacity in-person and ZOOM audio/visual conference. Mayor Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Vice Mayor Harcourt

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Gomez

### **QUORUM**

In attendance were Mayor Miller, Vice Mayor Harcourt, Comr. Janifer, Comr. Gomez, Comr. Tilghman, Katrina Polk - Acting City Manager, Cecelia Smith-Budd – Staff Accountant, Starr Jefferson –City Clerk, Chris Lawson – Director of HR, Nikesha Pancho – HR Manager

### **AGENDA ACCEPTANCE**

Comr. Gomez moved to amend the agenda to include an update on Legislative Affairs and a new business item to create a line item for Forced Cleanup expenses.

Vice Mayor Harcourt seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote. The amended agenda was approved.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Comr. Janifer moved to accept the City Work Session minutes from February 14, 2023.

Vice Mayor Harcourt seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote.

### **MAYORAL COMMENTARY**

Mayor Miller paid tribute to former mayor, Carol Johnson, and the impact her service made on the community. The Commissioner's each shared their thoughts and prayers for her family and personal memories of her stewardship.

A video presentation was shared, and a moment of silence was held.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

Councilwoman Krystal Oriadha – The city’s representative for Prince George’s County District 7 shared the status of legislation in support of the Council’s priorities.

Councilwoman Oriadha highlighted the Tobacco Store legislation with a hearing scheduled for March 7, 2023. The bill would block 24-hour operation, prohibit the use of advertising lights for tobacco and prohibit operation in commercial spaces. Businesses will be given 2 years to comply.

Vice Mayor Harcourt inquired about increase of Donation boxes in the county and how to mitigate the costs to the city.

Commission Janifer inquired whether a traffic study could be conducted at the intersection of Kipling Pkwy. and Ritchie Rd. citing the heavy traffic and safety issues for residents attempting to merge onto Ritchie Rd.

Councilwoman Oriadha also discussed key legislative priorities for District 7.

The full report, Prince George’s County Legislative Priorities, Council Member Krystal Oriadha, District 7, *February 2023* is attached.

Deborah Turner, the Chair of District Heights Board of Supervisors of Elections (BOSE) presented the certified candidates for the City Election on May 1, 2023.

Vice Mayor Harcourt is running for re-election as Commissioner of Ward 1 and running unopposed.

Commissioner Gomez is running for election as Commissioner of Ward 2 and running unopposed.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **Legislative & Governmental Affairs – Tony Perez, LA Perez Consulting**

Mr. Perez shared the ongoing discussion with Commissioners regarding various initiatives, including Vice Mayor Harcourts continued efforts to bring trees into the city; Commissioner Tilghman goals of helping the city gain its own zoning.

Mr. Perez informed the Commission on the status of the Mary Layman legislation to provide citizens with *standing* in their communities regarding development projects. Currently the bill is still in the Counselors General Assembly committee.

The bond bill for \$500,000 sponsored by Chairman Delegate Nick Charles is making positive progress. The bond would add supplemental funding to the city’s future City Hall on Marlboro Pike.

### **Public Works, Building and Ground Department Report – Ms. Angela Barnhill-Love, Building Coordinator**

Ms. Barnhill-Love reported the updates of work of the Public Works department. Parking lot lights have been delivered and scheduled for installation.

The work to the restrooms in the municipal building is scheduled to begin in the coming weeks.

The Jack Sims memorial sign has been reordered.

Spring cleanup is scheduled for Monday, April 17, 2023.

Vice Mayor Harcourt requested that illegal advertisements be removed from city grounds on  
Report submitted

**Code Enforcement Report- Ms. Michelle Watkins, Supervisor Code Enforcement**

2 new Code Officers are in training and have been touring the city.

Residents receiving Warning Notices from the city may call (301) 336-1400.

Citizens can communicate with Code Enforcement at [codeenforcement@districtheights.org](mailto:codeenforcement@districtheights.org)

Report submitted

**Police Department – Chief Tarpley, Chief of Police**

Chief Tarpley informed Commission of the sale of the Woodland Springs property and the communication with the new owners regarding part time security provided by the city.

Chief Tarpley updated the Commission about the partnership with Homeland Security and their assistance supporting the cities gun related crimes.

Chief Tarpley also highlighted the relationship with neighboring Capitol Heights Police Dept and the reciprocal support the departments provide.

Chief Tarpley shared the new schedule for the CODH Police Department. With the recent addition of officers, the department now provides service 7 days / 10 hours per day. His goal is to increase coverage to 24 hours 7 days week with additional offices slated for hiring.

Report submitted

**Youth Services Bureau “YSB Report”- Ms. Katrina Emerson, Director of YSB**

Ms. Emerson shared the opening for the position of Executive Assistant along with the ongoing need for a licensed Clinical Therapist to support the bureau.

The YSB has a college tour scheduled for Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. The students will be visiting the campus of Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Report submitted

**Recreation – Mr. Jefferey Taylor, Director of Recreation**

Mr. Taylor announced the current Saturday hours for the Recreation Department are 9am to 2pm.

Mr. Taylor announced the bittersweet farewell to longtime Recreation Assistant Director, Charles Hall. After 16 years of dedicated service with the City of District Heights, Mr. Hall will be moving to new opportunities. The city wishes ‘Chuck’ all the very best in his new endeavors.

Report submitted

**Treasury- Ms. Cecelia Smith-Budd, Treasurer**

Ms. Smith-Budd reported on the revenues through January 31, 2023 detailing the cities annual budget of \$15,378,000, of which \$5,209,000 had been spent to date, representing 34% of budgeted expenses. The under budget condition in revenue was caused by the underspending of ARPA funds, which are not recognized as revenue until they are expended. Ms. Smith-Budd also noted that 90% of local taxes, mainly real property tax have been collected.

Vice Mayor Harcourt raised the idea of hiring a project manager for assistance in ARPA fund management.

Report submitted

## **General Government – Katrina Polk, Director Senior Services & Acting City Manager**

Dr. Polk shared the accomplishments of the Mission and Vision statements produced by department supervisors and directors.

The city's social media accounts have received significant growth in the last 2 months with engaging content.

Report submitted

## **Human Resources – Chris Lawson, Director HR**

Mr. Lawson announced the upcoming interviews for the Executive Assistant position available within YSB would begin next week. He also addressed the ongoing challenges of hiring a Clinical Therapist for the bureau. He suggests that a recruiter or headhunter might be employed to support the vacant position.

Mr. Lawson announced upcoming training for the Paylocity time and attendance software.

Mr. Lawson reminded the Commission of upcoming customer service staff training.

Report submitted

## **PRESENTATIONS**

The Commission was greeted by the Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of District Heights, Dr. Bobby Manning. Pastor Manning reminded the residents of the ongoing food pantry available every Friday at 12pm. All residents are welcome to receive food bags. FBCDH is located at the corner of Kipling Pkwy and Marbury Dr.

On Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> (the day before Easter) FBCDH will host a large block party for kids. Everyone is welcome. Please contact the First Baptist Church website for additional details (301)-736-7872.

The city congratulates on the Pastor Manning's recent 12-year anniversary.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Forced Clean-up & Removal Line Item – Chief Tarpley

Chief Tarpley presented a request to the Commission to create a new line item to facilitate the clean up and maintenance of vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties within the city. The Chief explained the city would pay for the services and subsequently place a lien on the property to recoup the expenses paid by the city.

Comr. Gomez moved to create a new line item with the Police Department budget for contractual services.

Vice Mayor Harcourt seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote.

Vice Mayor Harcourt moved to transfer \$20,000 from the Unreserved Funds line item to fund the contractual services line item.

Comr. Janifer seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote.

Commissioner Janifer moved that the Commission go into closed session to discuss Personnel Matters.

Vice Mayor Harcourt seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote.

The Mayor and Commission went into closed session at 9:29pm

Mayor Miller announced the hiring of a new city Police Officer and an additional city employee that would be announced soon.

#### **COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Tilghman announced a Sickle Cell Blood Drive hosted by the Recreation Department in conjunction with the Red Cross on Monday, March 17, 2023 from 1pm to 6pm.

Discussion ensued regarding the logistics of the event due to the reduced capacity of the gymnasium.

Commissioner Tilghman moved to approve the Sickle Cell Blood Drive hosted by the Recreation Department scheduled for March 17, 2023.

Vice Mayor Harcourt seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Mayor Harcourt moved to adjourn the City Meeting.

Commissioner Janifer seconded the motion which carried a 4-0 vote.

The City Meeting adjourned at 10:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Starr Jefferson  
City Clerk