

**VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND HILLS, OHIO**  
**MINUTES OF A REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 16, 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 Geavona Greene, David Mills, James McManus and Robert Wright II. Also present: Law Director Thomas P. O'Donnell, Mayor's Assistant Kiara Pyles and Acting Fire Chief Jestin Grossenbaugh.

**DISCUSSION BY PUBLIC:** None.

**SWEARING IN OF FIRE FIGHTERS:** Law Director Thomas O'Donnell administered the Oath of Office to two new fire fighters, Rennlie Emij and Gary M. Engle. Everyone offered congratulations and applause.

**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: \*September 12, 2024 Council Meeting

Moved by Councilwoman Greene and seconded by Councilman Wright to accept the Consent Agenda. All voted aye and the Consent Agenda was **approved**.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. Kiara Pyles read an email from Mayor Michael Booker concerning Council Member travel (attached).
2. Letter from Councilman David Mills requesting approval of shared funds from other Council member(s) in the amount of \$3,000 to attend the NLC City Summit in Tampa, FL November 12 – 17, 2024, and for approval to attend the conference (attached).

Moved by Councilwoman Greene and seconded by Councilman Wright to approve the expenditure of Councilman Mills to attend the NLC City Summit in Tampa, FL.

All voted “nay” with Councilman Mills abstaining from the vote. **Motion fails 0 – 4.**

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATONS FROM THE MAYOR:** None.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:** None.

**REPORT FROM PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL:** Council President Cassandra Pride reported that the Mayor received a memo with questions from the County regarding the grant application to move the Council Chambers to the first floor in order to make it ADA accessible. Hopefully, his answers will help the Village receive the funding.

President Pride related that Council received a donation request from Warrensville Heights High School to help send the band to Hawaii to participate in Pearl Harbor events on December 7<sup>th</sup>. She is hopeful Council will consider a donation for this worthwhile cause, and will schedule a Special Council Meeting prior to the November 4<sup>th</sup> committee meetings for approval of the expense.

**REPORT FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES:**

Finance	Cassandra Pride – met and a report is on file
Properties/Buildings	James McManus – met and a report is on file
Public Works	Robert Wright II – met and a report is on file
Rules	David Mills – met and a report is on file
Safety	Geavona Greene – met and a report is on file. See below for updated report
Committee of Whole	Cassandra Pride – did not meet

Safety Committee Report: Chairwoman Geavona Greene reported that she met with Acting Fire Chief Jestin Grossenbaugh and she learned that he has been with the Village for some time as well as with Rootstown. He previously served as Chief in Hinkley. She likes how he is trying to save the Village money in changing our ISO rating from a 3 to a 2. They have applied for a grant through firehouse.gov. The department recently received a grant in the amount of \$284,000 and they are researching how best to spend that money on the equipment.

**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 – did not meet
Planning Commission	David Mills – just met and a report will be on file
Senior Advisory Board	Cassandra Pride – has a meeting next Tuesday
Tax Incentive Review Council	Geavona Greene – did not meet

## **ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

a. **THIRD READING CONSIDERATION: None.**

b. **SECOND READING CONSIDERATION:**

**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. **9/12/24 Moved to Second Reading**

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

Moved by Councilwoman Greene and seconded by Councilman Wright to approve Ordinance No. 2024-57. All voted aye and the ordinance was **adopted 5 – 0.**

**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. **9/12/24 Moved to Second Reading**

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

Moved by Councilwoman Greene and seconded by Councilman Wright to approve Ordinance No. 2024-58.

Discussion: Tony Ramos, Relationship Manager with NOPEC, advised that two hearings were conducted and while there were no residents who attended, he did have an opportunity to get to know some of the Council members better.

Councilwoman Greene asked when this change will take effect. Mr. Ramos related that it will be filed with the PUCO and will immediately go into effect. The call center will be updated with the information that Highland Hills has taken this action so that residents may enroll whenever they want to. A customer who is not in the gas program can now enroll immediately as opposed to waiting

for the next enrollment period. Those already enrolled do not have to do anything.

President Pride thanked Mr. Ramos for his assistance in getting this done.

There being no further discussion, all voted aye and Ordinance No. 2024-58 was **adopted 5 – 0.**

**c. FIRST READING CONSIDERATION:**

**Ordinance No. 2024-59:** An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 156 Fire Department, and Declaring an Emergency.

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

Moved by Councilman Wright and seconded by Councilman McManus to approve Ordinance No. 2024-59. All voted aye and the ordinance was **adopted 5 – 0.**

**Ordinance No. 2024-60:** An Ordinance Amending Section 105.06(h) Entitled Fees in the Streets, Utilities and Public Service Code, and Declaring an Emergency.

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

Moved by Councilwoman Greene and seconded by Councilman Wright to approve Ordinance No. 2024-60. All voted aye and the ordinance was **adopted 5 – 0.**

**Ordinance No. 2024-61:** An Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor and President of Council to Enter and Execute an Amendment to the Contract with Cuyahoga County for Housing and Handling of Village Prisoners, and Declaring an Emergency.

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

Moved by Councilwoman Greene and seconded by Councilman McManus to approve Ordinance No. 2024-61. All voted aye and the ordinance was **adopted 5 – 0.**

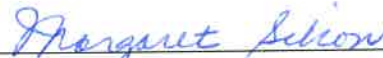
**MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENT:** Councilwoman Geavona Greene related that she received a call from a resident on Alameda regarding vandalism. The councilwoman spoke with the Police Chief, who said that his officers did go out and check, and believe it may have been animals who caused the destruction to decorations. The resident has cameras around the house, but there was no footage of anything. Councilwoman Greene stated that the best thing to do is to make sure the cameras are working, and she will follow up with the resident.

Councilman Robert Wright II advised there is grant writing training in Erie, PA November 14 and 15 if anyone is interested in attending. President Pride commented that she had participated in an online grant writing course.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, it was moved by Councilman Mills and seconded by Councilman Wright to adjourn the meeting. All voted aye and the meeting concluded at 6:24 p.m.



Cassandra Pride, President of Council



Margaret Sikon, Clerk of Council

Attachments:

Councilman Mills letter

Mayor Booker email



# Village of Highland Hills

Village Council

DATE: October 4, 2024  
TO: Council President Cassandra Pride  
President Pro Tem Geavona Greene  
Councilman James McManus  
FROM: Councilman David Mills  
RE: Attendance at NLC City Summit

Dear Fellow Council Members,

The National League of Cities will hold its annual City Summit in Tampa, Florida, from November 13 – 16, 2024. I am respectfully requesting your approval to attend this conference in order to further my training and education, and to bring this information back to the Council.

Additionally, I am requesting that, per section 131.11(c) of the Council Rules, one or more of my fellow Council Members will share their unused travel funds so that I may attend this conference.

Attached is Pre-Travel Expense Report and Section 131.11(c) for your review. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Mills  
Councilman

Attachments:

Pre-Travel Expense Report  
Section 131.11(c) of the Council Rules

## Kiara Pyles

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**From:** Michael Booker  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2024 1:01 PM  
**Subject:** Travel and Training

Council,

Council I cannot be in attendance tonight because the Mayor and Managers of Cuyahoga County will be celebrating former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development the Honorable Marcia L. Fudge. However, must address this issue of travel again.

You know I have never been against training; however, I am against misuse and abuse of taxpayers' dollars. And I believe a Council person in a community this small averaging about \$6000.00 a year in travel is an issue that must be addressed to you and the people of this community that are depending on you to do the right thing. It is a known fact that some people were not re-elected for this very reason. The residents of our community did not like the fact that Council members did that much traveling and those same members did not produce any tangible results or benefits for this community. Tax dollars are not ours to barter with, every dime we save by coming under a budget that is not fully understood and embraced by all is a win for the Village.

There are more than 20 conferences I could attend each year, from NLC, Mayors and Managers, African American Mayors, and Ohio Mayors Association. Many I want to attend; however, I tried to set a good example by being very selective and purposeful in my attendance. Do I want you involved? YES! Do I want you to get ideas that will help grow the Village? YES! But you know and I know the results we have produced have come from building relationships and sharing ideas locally.

In this meeting, I know you will do the right thing and say NO to this Council person's request to attend a 3rd conference in less than a year. However, if I did not address this in writing then I wouldn't be doing the job you and the residents of this community expected me to do.

Kind Regards,



*Michael L. Booker, Mayor*

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"It is easy to sit and take notice, what  
is difficult is getting up and taking action"