

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting  
Study Session/Meeting (Convened Electronically/Hybrid)  
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland  
Monday, February 6, 2023**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a study session on **Monday, February 6, 2023**, at 6:30 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

\*This meeting was convened as both an in person and an electronic meeting. Some persons were participating remotely on a Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction between and among all of the Town Council and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. People were able to participate in person and remotely, allowing for all councilors to be simultaneously seen and heard. When the agenda item provided for public comment, this was supported as well. Councilor Toya Smith, Councilor Mark Schocke, Councilor Tom Black, Councilor Roger Sheeman all participated in person, with Councilor Zemen being absent.

The meeting was streamed live on the Town of Highland, Indiana Facebook page and participation was supported by the Zoom on-line communication platform.

**Silent Roll Call:** Councilors Toya Smith, Mark Schocke, Tom Black, Roger Sheeman, were present in person as indicated, with Councilor Zemen being absent. The Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was present to memorialize the proceedings. *A quorum was attained.*

**Officials Present:** Ed Dabrowski, IT Director, Pete Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief, Ralph Potesta, Detective Commander, Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director were in person.

**General Substance of Matters Discussed.**

- x. **Discussion:** Residency Bonus Pay for Officers residing in the Town of Highland. Proposed wording: Effective January 1, 2024, a Highland Police Officer who is a resident of the Town of Highland will receive \$200.00 a month for each complete month that they are a resident of the Town of Highland or a maximum of \$2400.00 in a calendar year. In order to qualify for this stipend, the Officer needs to provide a copy of his/her Homestead Exemption or a copy of their current lease accompanied by a sworn statement of residency. Officers will be paid in one (1) lump sum, up to \$2400.00, in January of the following year. If an Officer moves out of the Town of Highland or leaves their employment with the Town of the Highland prior to the conclusion of the calendar year they will not be entitled to any residency stipend.

Chief Hojnicky began by saying it seems pretty much cut and dry. We aren't planning on implementing the program until 2024 or the next budget cycle. Currently, we have 22 officers living in Town compared to neighboring communities that only have a handful. The purpose is to keep more police officers living in Town because a police

presence as police visibility automatically deters crime. If you see a police car and you're speeding, you're gonna automatically slow down. That is why we implemented the take home car program. There's really no getting away from it. It is the foundation of all departments around us. But we also want to have the officers live in Town and attract new hires who are currently out of Town and make Highland their home. It's nice when they're going to religious services in Town and they coach their children in town or they shop in Town. That causes a lot more visibility as people don't know if that police car is working or not. They don't know if that officer is running over to Strack's or running an errand. I hear from friends of mine that visit from Chicago, they never see a Chicago police car but when they come into Highland, they see police cars everywhere. We want to continue encouraging the officers to live in town and this Council has done a great job as we have been playing catchup with our neighboring Towns for a long time. If the Council passes this change, it will start Highland to rise above the pack as very few departments in Lake County offer this type of benefit. It is written that if an officer leaves before the year is over, they forfeit the entire amount which is why we asked that the stipend be paid in the following year.

Councilor Schocke said he didn't think it was a bad idea at all as Highland has to be competitive in trying to retain and recruit new officers.

Chief Hojnicky added that the days when an officer stays his entire career in one community is the thing of the past. It's becoming more like the private sector. With the new pension laws, police officers are very mobile as their pensions follow them to their new department.

The Clerk-Treasurer added, whereas the officer's pension transfers to other departments, the Town's portion is not recoverable from the State and the State keeps the money.

Councilor Schocke said somebody should reach out to their State Senator or State Representative and get the law changed so a portion is returned to the Town.

Councilor Smith told the Chief she really liked seeing the police department advertising on the electronic build board on Indianapolis Boulevard. She had never seen that before and it sort of jumped out at her.

Councilor Schocke said Hammond has put up a smaller sign at the entrance to Hammond off of Kennedy advertising for police officers. Maybe Highland might want to think about putting up a similar sign on the opposite side. Town Hall: Very good. Thank you.

The Chief said he recently attended a seminar and what is happening in Highland, is not unique to Highland but happening throughout all of law enforcement.

Departments are not only stealing from each other but many officers are leaving the profession all together.

- x. **Discussion:** An Order Authorizing and Approving An Extension of the Agreement between The Idea Factory and the Town of Highland to perform Professional Communications and Media Design and Development services for the Municipality for a Term of two Months, with an Option to Renew and Extend.

(direction from the Council as Resolution 2022-39 expires at the end of February)

The Clerk-Treasurer began by saying that the contract extension to the Idea Factory expires at the end of February and Clerk-Treasurer was looking for direction from the Council.

Councilor Black began by stating if we can get the Idea Factory to improve the website and reduce the number of pages or the number of clip art because as per the numbers that Roger showed, that's where a lot of the cost lie each month. If we could get that cost down to a solid rate or use regular graphics versus the clip art to reduce costs and then get some kind of agreement with them, then maybe we should stay with them as they do provide the content for the newsletter. We want to keep the newsletter as it is very popular. Maybe we can go out and find someone to write it. I don't know if we can get that all done with a one-month extension.

Councilor Schocke suggested to have discussions with the Idea Factory, sort of like renegotiations. Tell them we are looking for some updates or changes or something like that. Let's see what it looks like.

The Clerk-Treasurer added, why don't I put a one-month extension on the agenda, giving the Council time to meet with the Idea Factory and the items suggested by Councilors Black and Schocke.

Councilor Sheeman said when I gave my presentation, the cost of the gazebo is one thing but then you see that their 2024 budget is \$50,000 when originally it was around \$36,000 last year and we spent closer to \$44,000. The cost keeps growing and growing when you include all the other incidentals your talking close to \$50,000. You can buy a couple of police cars or maybe pave half a street. My point was, if we restrict them to strictly, you know black and white, maybe do a color newsletter for the Fourth of July, as they did a very nice job last year. That will significantly cut down costs. They do a great job in creating the gazebo. The narrative is very good. We don't have anybody in the Town who could do it. They do really a good job but we've got to find somewhere to control costs. I suggest several options during my presentation but no one asked questions so I thought you weren't interested. One suggestion was for residents to receive the gazebo via email as it would cut down on the printing costs.

Councilor Black said that we already incur the cost of the postage to mail out our utility bills so we wouldn't be saving on postage.

Councilor Sheeman reiterated that you would be saving on printing costs but if you want to continue to mail and incur the costs of mailing that's fine. I think they deserve to continue creating the gazebo but we need to find a way to cut costs. I said that it doesn't have to be 4 pages, at least not every month.

Councilor Schocke says he receives a monthly email from the Idea Factory asking if I have anything I would like to put into the Gazebo. I appreciate the effort on their part for asking.

Councilor Sheeman said, if we're struggling to find contents, then we should be able to cut it down to 2 pages. I think they deserve to continue creating the gazebo but you guys need to decide what the parameters are. What are you going to allow them to do?

Councilor Schocke suggested that we should simply invite the Idea Factory in for a meeting and have that discussion with them.

Councilor Black said he liked that idea as the whole idea is to cut costs. I would like for them to improve the work. To let them know what the Council would like.

Councilor Schocke said he would really like to see the creating of the Gazebo be bid out. But the problem is that I would doubt that there would be a whole lot of people coming forth. They could. I don't know. I mean that would be an interesting thing to do. Open it up and say, hey, is there somebody else that would be willing to do it. Ask for them to submit a proposal. We have been using them for quite a few years.

Councilor Sheeman reminded the Council that it is a twofold process. Creating the gazebo is one thing and maintaining the Town's website is another. Your going to have to find someone who is willing to do both. If you do, what rate will they charge. The Idea Factory is unique in the fact that they are a marketing firm. They do a lot of marketing for other entities and they also do this website. I think you find it hard to find somebody to maintain a website and does marketing. I'm not saying impossible but almost 2 separate industries. He then asked if Theresa was on line. Theresa acknowledged that she was. He then asked Theresa if she could attend the next study session in person.

She responded absolutely, that she would be happy too. She reminded the Council that technically they should have already started the March Gazebo. Typically, they start working on it the first week of February and the current contract doesn't cover that.

Councilor Sheeman asked if Theresa and Robin could come together at the Councils next study session and bring a proposal with them as we don't want to interrupt the March Gazebo. I am all willing to extend it but as you can tell from our discussion today, we would like to see some changes. After the study session, we can determine where we want to go from there.

**X. Discussion:** Council of Community Events Commission regarding the operation of the beer garden and the selection of the bands.

The Clerk-Treasurer said he is fine with whatever the Councils decides but as the HCCE has said, a decision has to be made as we are already into February and no decision has been made so no contract have been let. He said he would like to continue but it is a Council decision. Like the HCCE, I too am getting calls from bands asking what is going on.

Councilor Sheeman said he received an email from the HCCE that says they have enough volunteers to take care of the bands and beer garden. They received 3 or 4 more applications today and at this point, since the templates are already in place by Mr. Herak, going forth I believe the HCCE should be allowed to take care of everything. Plus, whatever they do has to be approved by the Council and Mr. Herak has plenty to do as Clerk-Treasurer without getting involved in this.

Councilor Black said that we are in a transition period, with a new police chief coming on board who really needs to see how the beer garden operates so I feel we should stick with Mr. Herak. Why not stick with what we know works? Maybe have Mr. Herak can do the organizational part and let the HCCE work along Mr. Herak and handle the day to day operational side. If the HCCE works along-side with Mr. Herak this year, then next year the HCCE would be ready to step up and take over the entire festival.

Councilor Schocke said he attended last weeks HCCE meeting and he was encouraged by all of the new faces. But as of right now, I don't think we have any new appointments except Mr. Rowe.

Councilor Sheeman reminded Councilor Schocke that if they got more volunteers, which they did, they would be able to run the beer garden and select the bands.

Councilor Schocke said I appreciate the new people who were there but I don't know who they are. I don't know everyone's skill set. I literally just met him last week. Maybe they're great. I don't know.

Councilor Sheeman said when you get volunteers, obviously you gotta teach them or train them a little bit and I don't think they're going to be involved in hiring bands or the beer garden people. They're just going to be help. You know they will be helping out at the festival, whether it's in a ticket booth or whatever. I don't see the big deal. They keep telling us they want to do it. Let them do it, as we still have control over them. Why not let them do it? You got an enthusiastic group. You asked for more volunteers. They went out and got more people. They are going to save money as you won't have to go out and solicit volunteer groups and pay \$10,000 like you did

last year. They said they have volunteers to fill all of those spots. The \$10,000 spent on volunteers could be used to pay for better bands or improvements to the festival.

Jack Rowe, Highland, commented that the people brought on have a lot of experience in group outings and different things. As for myself, I've been in the Casino business for a while and I sit on our engagement committee for the whole property. We plan everything from picnics to private parties to Oktoberfest. We do it as a group. Michelle Coon recently joined the HCCE. Her son plays in the group Casa Casa and she does the bookings for them. She's familiar with booking of bands and is able to organize and to put the HCCE's best foot forward. One of the biggest things last time we spoke was everybody wanted to see more people come together to do it and we put those people there and we put good people in place. I think we have 9 now, so we have 9 as opposed to, I think, 3. I was very pleased with the attendance last week. It was really awesome to see people that were interested.

Councilor Schocke said he has no familiarity with most of them and so I just don't have enough information to know whether they're great or whether they're not. That's my only hiccup to be honest.

Councilor Black said to let them come on board and then learn the festival and parade. We haven't had a hiccup in the 2 years Mr. Herak was in charge of the bands and the beer garden. Let Mr. Herak continue to do it this year and let this year serve as a training year for the HCCE. Have them work with Mr. Herak as I think it will be a good opportunity for them.

Councilor Schocke said he doesn't know why we can't all work together. I think that we as a Town should do more of that.

Councilor Sheeman said that if any other board or commission offered to take on all the responsibilities, would we not allow them. I think you are disrespecting these people. They deserve to do this. Let's see how they do. We have the final word here on anything they want to do. If you remember, the template is already there, all they got to do is the same.

The Clerk-Treasurer asked Councilor Sheeman if he recalls when he was president and the HCCE was going to run the beer garden. Several weeks prior to the festival, the HCCE approached the Council to say that they didn't have enough staff to run the beer garden and were not going to be able to run it. You supported their decision and when I said I would run it and you opposed it, you were very critical of myself and Councilor Schocke, wanting all these figures. .

Councilor Sheeman acknowledged he was wrong. It was successful and I admit it.

Councilor Smith said the beer garden has been successful and why not continue with success. I'm not trying to be disrespectful to anyone. The HCCE came to us and said they needed help. They came to the council. They came to us..

Councilor Sheeman said the Council needs to make-a-decision as vendors are calling them.

Councilor Schocke said the HCCE has always been in charge of vendors, that hasn't changed.

Councilor Sheeman said he was referring to the beer garden and bands. We haven't given them direction on who is going to handle what. They keep asking for this and we keep putting them off. So, it's another 2 weeks. It's been another 3 weeks because we didn't have a Council meeting last week. When are we going to finally decide to do what we're going to do? That's what we got to make up our mind. I would prefer to give it all to them. They have enough volunteers. Let's see what they do. And again, we have to final word on whatever they want to do? They have to report to us.

Councilor Schocke said he's all for giving people an opportunity. I'm all for that and I want them to succeed. Really, I think that people that that want to succeed but here's what I think we should do it. I think we should give them that fair opportunity but we should also have them work with Mr. Herak and we should work as a team. It may not be the most fun but I think everybody can come out looking great and having a good time and having a successful event. I think we all should be able to work together. Let them do it and let them use Mr. Herak as a sounding board. What's wrong with that?

The Clerk-Treasurer said he would prefer to be in charge.

Councilor Sheeman said there's your answer. Mr. Herak would rather be in charge than work with somebody. How many times have I asked Mr. Herak for an accounting of the festival. At least 8 times and I haven't gotten it and you want to put him charge.

The Clerk-Treasurer asked Councilor Sheeman if he worked the ticket booth or walked in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and Councilor Sheeman answered no.

Councilor Schocke said it is no secret. I've seen a copy or knew about it. it

Councilor Black said we can't make-a-decision tonight but let's talk about it during the week and make-a-decision at our next meeting.

Councilor Schocke added I think we are all in consensus that they need to work together but we need to be specific on who handles what.

Councilor Black said he still believes the HCCE should handle the day to day operations and let Mr. Herak handle the organizing of the bands and beer garden. If they have questions, they can come back to Mr. Herak. I'm sure, knowing Mr.

Herak, he'll be there every night to make sure everything goes smoothly. I'm sure it will be hard time keeping him away.

Councilor Sheeman that if the HCCE took over, they said they have enough volunteers and will not have to utilize outside organizations.

Councilor Schocke said it makes sense to have more defined terms. But over the last 2 years, we've relied on outside organizations like the wrestling club or adult booster club to man the beer garden which serves as a fund raiser to the different organizations. I still feel that we should reward those organizations.

Jack Rowe said that he thought that the big thing for these guys and in the short amount of time that I've been a part of the HCCE, that the HCCE enjoy what they are doing. It means a lot to them. It touches home for those guys. The planning is what makes it fun for them and when you chip away the portion that makes it fun for them and leave the portion that is the tedious side of it. The bands are the fun part.

Councilor Schocke asked how many days is the festival. He suggested that they split it between the HCCE and Mr. Herak. Let one handle it for 3 days and the other 2 days. We're literally parting everything. Nobody's happy. I'm not happy because we're talking about this still and I'm dealing with a group of people who can't work together, which sounds like my kids in my own house. It's absurd to me that we can't agree on something as simple and as the festival.

Councilors Black and Smith said Councilor Schocke's plan would spell disaster. We don't want to gamble on success because we need to be a success.

Councilor Sheeman concluded that these ladies have done it several times over the year and done a good job and they have reputation of doing a good job with it. They were asked to bring out more people to help and they have fulfilled that.

**X. Discussion:** Redevelopment Property, Maria Becerra is asking for \$200,000 in additional appropriations. \$100,000 to be used for providing a homeownership program for Police Officers and \$100,000 in façade improvements.

Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra began explaining her request for the \$100,000 in additional appropriations in the façade improvement.

Councilor Schocke asked if the additional appropriations being advertised for next Monday's meet was part of the \$100,000 request.

Maria answered no. The \$100,000 number was the amount that was annually budgeted into that line item of the Capital Fund. Any money not expended would lapse at the end of the year. She wanted to have that amount reallocated so they could promote the program and get more people to improve their properties. I mean



it's what you see right now on Highway Avenue and it's beautiful. The money would just be sitting there and we would follow all protocol in spending the money. By allocating the \$100,000 we would not have to keep coming back and advertising as we are paying every time to do the legal advertising. Historically it's been \$100,000 and that \$100,000 would be in that fund alone, to be used only for the façade improvement program and none others.

The Clerk-Treasurer reminded the Council that once the money is allocated into a line item, the Redevelopment Commission can transfer that money into any account. He further explained that last year the line item was budgeted and the amount was \$100,000. The Council, reduced the line item to \$30,000 to cover the façade improvement grant on 45<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of the money was moved into the cash account which required an additional from the Council to spend.

Councilor Schocke said the Council can certainly appropriate the money as the need becomes necessary so you are saying you want the money appropriate so you could basically market this to businesses and say, hey, look we have this money available to guarantee the money is available. So, what is preventing you from doing that now even though the money is not appropriated by there is a willingness on the part of the Council to allocate when the need arises.

Maria said we had two grants last year and both allocations lapsed. The line item is \$0. By not having the money in the line item it takes time to come before the Council, get permission to legally advertise and then to actually award the grant which could take several months. Every time we do a legal advertisement it is roughly \$138. We are not going to award a grant unless the petitioner follows the program guidelines. We have Councilman Black who is sitting on our Commission as a voting member. We are not going to move ahead with a project without permission from the Council, Commission and the Clerk-Treasurer who is our finance person.

Councilor Black said they are just asking to put the money back into the line item of their budget so they can move forward with the project without having to go through all these steps as we are doing.

Councilor Sheeman said they may spend it or they may not but at least the money is in the proper line item and available to spend. Its part of their budget as they originally asked for it. So, when somebody inquires as to funding, she can say that she has money available and doesn't have to go before the Council to get approval which adds another month to the process. . , or saying, I can't promise you. I got to get Council approval, and it goes through another month another month.

Councilor Schocke said that when somebody comes in for a façade improvement grant it's not like they can just do it in a day. I mean, they have to apply. They have to have several bids. They have to go through an entire process. So, I mean, if you're suggesting that there's a delay on our end we could work in tandem with the

business. If they apply and go through all of these items, then why can't just wait for us to appropriate the money.

Councilor Sheeman said that waiting is what broke the dam as they say. So, if here's a business and they say, I'd like to get my façade remodeled, so if I know I can \$40,000 now, then I can plan maybe on a nicer facade or something different. With the money not be allocated up front and I'm not certain I am going to get the funding as I have to go through several different loops. It's hard to get contractors. It's hard to bid a project. Think how long it takes us to get something approved. It took us years to get some things done here. So, when a business wants to do something, I think we just need to eliminate some of the red tape. I mean, let's be business friendly. I just don't know why we wanna put another delay on certain things.

The Clerk-Treasurer reminded the Council that at the end of 2022, the Council did appropriate \$20,000 for the façade improvement on 45<sup>th</sup>, \$40,000 to the tattoo parlor and another \$8,500 to the NWI Parkinson. The petitioners were here at the meeting. Only the project on 45<sup>th</sup> had a façade program already approved. The other 2 projects had no projects ready to go and at the end of 2022, the appropriations lapsed.

Councilor Schocke said there doesn't seem to be an urgency right now in appropriating the money. If they actually have to get the bids, apply for the grant, go through the procedure, get the work done. In the amount of time that it takes to actually get off the ground and do that, we could easily have a meeting and appropriate whatever money that they're looking for. Certainly, you could pitch this to petitioners as saying, look the council's willing to do it right. It's just it's a matter of coming before us and bringing the project and we're willing to do it. I mean, I think generally, I'm pretty in favor of giving these facade grants when they're warranted and when they're nice. I just think that you just can't write a blank approval without having something in front of me. That's where I am with it. It's not a blanket approval.

Maria said historically the \$100,000 has been allocated to Redevelopment for that line item and if it doesn't get used it lapses. If the money is allocated, then the Commission can meet with the individuals and award them the grant. Otherwise they really don't have a guarantee of what the votes will be there when they come before the Council. I'm not saying that it wouldn't be but it's a question. We need to know what the money is in the budget in order to operate. How can we commit to something if we don't have an allocation in our budget? How can the Commission say yes, you're awarded this grant, when we don't have the money in our budget?

Councilor Schocke said I am willing to fund it if we have the appropriate project. I saying this while be recorded.

Maria said the 2 projects that were approved in December but the appropriations lapsed need to be re-appropriated, Parkinson's and the tattoo parlor.

The Clerk-Treasurer said the Building Commissioner has seen no final plans to approve or per the guidelines two quotes as he reviews the quotes.

Maria said they did meet with both property owners so they are back in the works.

The Clerk-Treasurer said that the façade improvement of the tattoo parlor was already completed so that wouldn't qualify and he said the Parkinson's was inquiring as to a back stairwell and a HVAC unit. He said the back stairwell would not qualify.

Maria said the back stairwell was only a question and we're going to follow the rules. She said we are not going to rewrite the rules but use those already established. Again, that is why we are looking for the additional appropriations. We need a budget that we can work with and bank on.

Councilor Black said it sounds like you have \$70,000 outstanding already.

Maria thought the tattoo parlor had invested \$500,000 into the building and were looking for \$40,000 but Parkinson's was looking at a much lower number.

Maria was questioned by the Council on whether a HVAC unit qualifies. She advised the Council that it is in fact covered. It was part of the expanded grant program to cover interior work as well. The tattoo parlor realized they didn't qualify for the façade grant but were coming back to apply for an interior grant.

Councilor Schocke said he thought the whole idea was to improve the curb appeal and to create like a nicer looking downtown business and all that stuff. Replacing a hvac unit or back stairwell isn't that. I'm sure your research is correct and its legal but I have a problem when I'm starting to fund a private business hvac unit. To me, that doesn't really help their curb appeal. To me, that's kind of going against the whole theory of the program.

Maria responded that if you pass by the Parkinson building, you will see how deteriorated their signs are and that is what is basically being replaced and they asked for \$3,000. Whereas, the hvac does apply and is in the grant, the majority of the grant is for the replacement of the of the signs.

Councilor Sheeman said to the Council I don't think you guys remember we did pay for some interior flooring and other interior for one of the businesses a couple of year ago. It was the business next to the theater or it might have been for the Child Care place on 5<sup>th</sup>. I think they asked for new flooring or something else for the interior. It was maybe 2 or 3 years ago. He also reminded the Council that the guidelines for the façade improvement only apply to the downtown business district and the Brums building was granted a

\$20,000 façade improvement. Basically, I think that opens the door for any business who wants to apply for a façade improvement.

Maria added that its 30% of the façade improvement or a maximum of \$40,000. It's 30 cents on every dollar the owner puts into reinvesting in their building, especially if it is an older building. The grant doesn't apply to new buildings and nothing can be removed. It has to be part of the building and improves the building so that the building doesn't deteriorate. She said she emailed to the Council, probably around mid-October the guidelines to the program. If the Council will check their emails you will be able to see the guidelines.

Councilor Schocke reiterated that he thought the program was to improve curb appeal and I don't think we should be subsidizing hvac systems. I have nothing against these businesses or organizations but at what point do we draw the line. I don't think new flooring applies either.

Councilor Sheeman agreed with Councilor Schocke stating that he too believes that hvac units shouldn't be covered under the façade grant. He felt that the grant should be used to improve the front of your building, to make it look nice. He gave examples of Les Brothers Café which totally changed the appearance of the front of their building.

The Clerk-Treasurer asked for clarification if he was to proceed and place it on the agenda to as for the proper officer to advertise. He was advised to hold off.

Maria began to discuss the home ownership program for police officers. She said the Redevelopment Commission is starting to work on a program following other guidelines from other cities and towns that offer a down payment assistance. Redevelopment Commission Chairman Sean Conley and herself will be attending the Police Commission meeting this week. It is a program that encourages a new police officer who hires with Highland and currently lives out of Highland to relocate to Highland with down payment assistance to purchase a home in Highland. Nothing is set in stone but something the Redevelopment Commission wants to explore. The Commission is proposing a maximum of \$10,000 to each officer who relocates to Highland. She thought the new officer must remain of the force for 5 years after which time they could leave. If they leave before the 5 years, the officer has to reimburse the Redevelopment Commission. The Redevelopment Commission is working on the guidelines.

Councilor Schocke asked to see where the Redevelopment Commission has the authority to offer such a program? Where does it say the Redevelopment Commission can do that? To me, it doesn't make sense that the Redevelopment Commission is offering their money for somebody to move into Highland.

Maria responded that it's in the Municipal Code that the Redevelopment Commission can offer programs to The Municipal Code is a direct copy of the State Statute.

Councilor Schocke said he would love to read that section of the Municipal Code. This may be an admirable program. I'm just having problems wondering why, the Redevelopment Commission is venturing out of their lanes and they need to remain in their lanes because it seems that they are kind of going far from their purpose. I thought there were to promote development but are they to promote people to move and live in Highland. He then asked what section was it found in.

Maria said it was under title 14.10.08 paragraph 23 whereby the Redevelopment Commission may provide financial assistance, including grants and loans to enable individuals and their families to purchase or lease residential units within the district. However, financial assistance maybe provided to individuals and families whose income is or at below the units median income for individuals and families, which for Highland is like \$72,000.

Councilor Schocke said he doubted that the median household income was that high.

Councilor Sheeman thought it was closer to the mid \$50's and what is the salary of a police officer?

Chief Hojnicky said the starting pay is around \$54,000.

Councilor Schocke found the section and said he was surprised because he had not seen that section before as it says individuals and families whose income is at or below the unit's median income. He assumed the median income would be higher and the individual would be lower.

Councilor Smith had a brochure from the Lake County Economic Development Department that talked about the assistance provided by the County under the HUD program.

Councilor Schocke said that's my point. Redevelopment should not be offering assistance for police officers to move into Highland.

Maria responded that the program is just in the initial stages but that's what they are considering, offering the program to new hire police officers. She said Hammond offers a similar program.

Councilor Sheeman commented that the City of Hammond has a lot more money than the Town of Highland.

The Clerk-Treasurer recommended that the Redevelopment Commission attorney Reed reach out to Tom Pitman who is an expert in the field of TIFF districts.