



TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH

(INCORPORATED 1922)

3243 WALNUT DRIVE

Highland Beach, Maryland 21403

Telephone (443) 837-5184

MAYOR

Crystal Chissell

COMMISSIONER

Michele Fuller

G. William Hunter

Sheila Jeanne Murchison

Linda Holmes Newton

TREASURER

Ronald L. Stokes, Sr.

Board of Commissioners Meeting January 13, 2025

In attendance: Mayor Chissell, Vice Mayor Fuller, Commissioners Murchison and Newton, Treasurer Stokes.

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 pm.

Review Agenda - The Commissioners reviewed the agenda and there were no changes.

Public Comment – The Mayor opened the floor for public comment and there were no comments.

Review Journal - Motion to approve the December 29, 2024 Journal made by Commissioner Newton, seconded by Commissioner Fuller. Approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report - Treasurer Ronald Stokes presented the Treasurer's Report for December 2024 for the period from December 1 through December 31, 2024. Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Murchison. Approved unanimously.

Old Business

Grant for museum repairs – Mayor Chissell reported that the town has been awarded a grant from the Maryland Historical Trust, African American Heritage Preservation Program in the amount of \$106,000. This grant will fund structural repairs to the Frederick Douglass Summer House.

Shoreline – Mayor Chissell gave an update on the status of efforts to address concerns related to the Highland Beach shoreline. The town is participating in the following programs for technical guidance, community engagement, and funding:

- Nature Conservancy Community Resilience Building program

- University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, Resilience Action Planning for Maryland’s Coastal Communities program
- State of Maryland Department of Budget and Management MTAP Fund Mapping program
- Anne Arundel County Hazard Mitigation Plan 2025 Update planning

New Business

Geese - Commissioner Newton reported that she has investigated options for deterring geese on the beach. One option is a spray that deters geese. She does not recommend this option because the spray has to be re-applied each time it rains.

FY25 budget v actual expenditures

Mayor Chissell gave a summary of the current status of spending for operating expenses:

Status of FY25 Budget – Operating Expenses

	Budget	Actual
Common Areas	\$ 16,600	\$ 20,216 *
Traffic Control	\$ 19,700	\$ 12,238
Roads & Infrastructure	\$ 17,596	\$ 3,705
Building Maintenance	\$ 25,724	\$ 15,329
Administrative	\$ 54,055	\$ 8,526
TOTAL OPERATING	\$ 133,675	\$ 60,014

Major project planning for 2025 – the Mayor and Commissioners discussed mayor projects for 2025. The town had approximately \$150,000 in cash reserved for capital projects and unexpected expenses at end of FY24.

Priority projects for the upcoming year are:

- Town Hall repairs – Roof, green roof, rain garden, back railing. Projected costs are approximately \$20,000 - \$30,000.
- Bruce Avenue pier replacement and bulkhead repair – Projected cost is approximately \$75,000.
- Douglass Summer House – phase one structural repairs. Projected cost is approximately \$100,000.

Groundskeeping contract – The town’s current contract with Marvin’s Construction and Landscaping will conclude on March 31. The town has received a proposal for groundskeeping

services for April 1 – December 31, 2025. The proposal is for a total cost of \$15,050 and includes the following services:

Monthly lawn and beach maintenance - \$9,450
Spring and Fall cleanup - \$4,000
Water drain maintenance - \$1,600

Commissioner Newton recommended renewing the contract with Marvin's Construction and Landscaping. The town engaged in a competitive bidding process last year for the groundskeeping services. Marvin's proposal had the lowest cost. Marvin's work has been very good.

Motion to accept the proposal from Marvin's Construction and Landscaping for \$15,050 for groundskeeping services made by Commissioner Newton, seconded by Commissioner Fuller. Unanimous approved.

Preventing sand on Wayman Avenue – A Highland Beach resident and a Venice Beach resident who live near the Wayman Avenue pier have asked that the Commissioners look into ways to prevent sand from washing into Wayman from storms. Commissioner Newton will explore this. Possible solutions could also prevent unlawful parking on Wayman Avenue.

Vacancies on Boards and Commissions – Mayor Chissell reported that the following vacancies need to be filled by citizens:

- Planning and Zoning Commission – 1 vacancy
- Planning and Zoning Commission Board of Appeals – 1 vacancy
- Board of Elections – 1 vacancy
- Public Ethics Commission – 3 vacancies -
- Election for 2 Commissioner positions coming up in July

Once monthly meeting – Mayor Chissell proposed that the Board of Commissioners go back to meeting once monthly. The Commissioners agreed. Monthly meetings will take place on the second Monday of each month at 5:00 pm.

Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center – As the FDMCC continues its planning, Mayor Chissell has requested that the FDMCC Board of Directors collaborate with the town on surveying citizens regarding FDMCC activities that will impact citizens.

Public Comment

- Will the playground equipment be replaced? There are no current plans to replace the playground equipment.
- How should we use the rainscaping park? There was discussion of whether to locate a playground at the Douglass Avenue rainscaping park.
- Will the new Town Hall railing be stained? Yes, that work will be done in the spring.
- Maintenance of Pavilion ramp and floor – the HBCA is planning to submit a proposal to the Board of Commissioners.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Newton, seconded by Commissioner Fuller. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11pm.