



# 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

Date: Monday, May 20, 2024 at 5:00 pm

Location: Virtual, via Zoom

In attendance: Mayor Crystal Chissell  
Commissioner Michele Fuller  
Commissioner William Hunter  
Commissioner Linda Newton  
Commissioner Sheila Murchison

1. Call to Order at 5:05 pm.
2. Review Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Journal Approval – The Commissioners reviewed Journals from meetings held on April 20, 2024, May 7, 2024, and May 13, 2024.  
Commissioner Newton moved for approval of the Journals, Commissioner Murchison seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.
5. Old Business

Contract for traffic signs – Commissioner Newton updated the Commissioners on signs needed throughout the community. The needed signs include 8 “no parking” signs, a speed limit sign, a sign next to the main pier listing restrictions, and a sign at the entrance to the town listing restrictions. Signs that do not meet recommended height will be placed on new posts. Commissioner Newton recommended entering a contract with Road Safety, LLC to provide and install the needed signs and posts. The total cost of the contract is \$2,939. Commissioner Newton moved for approval of the contract. Commissioner Fuller seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Traffic control – Commissioner Newton reported on the schedule for traffic control officers to begin on May 24. The current schedule will be Fridays 4pm to 8pm, Saturdays 12 noon to 8pm, and Sundays 12 noon to 8 pm. Two officers will be on duty on holidays, one officer from 10am to 6pm and a second officer from 2pm to 10 pm.

Drainage repair at Bay and Wayman Avenues – Commissioner Newton reported that the repair has been completed. Needed asphalt at the site has not yet been laid yet, but stone has been laid around the area of the repair. Asphalt will be laid after sufficient dry weather.

#### 6. New Business

For the taxable year beginning July 1, 2024, the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Highland Beach proposes to increase real property tax rates from \$0.1505 per \$100 of assessment to \$0.4000 per \$100 of assessment.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 5:00 pm on June 10, 2024 at Highland Beach Town Hall, 3243 Walnut Drive, Highland Beach, MD 21403.

Mayor Chissell presented rationale for the tax increase:

- Current revenue is not sufficient to cover the town's operating expenses
- The Commissioners postponed or cut multiple items in order to avoid exceeding the FY24 operating budget.
- The town's sources of revenue are fixed, except for the real estate tax revenue.
- The town has several large capital projects for which revenue is needed.
- The cost of many of the town's operating expenses have increased in recent years.
- Prior to 2017, the town's real estate tax rate was \$0.40 or more.
- The tax rate was reduced to \$0.2031 in 2017 and was not increased in subsequent years.
- Revenue from real estate tax has remained constant at \$52,020 since 2017.

Commissioner Murchison said she is in favor of the tax increase. She has seen other communities that have beautiful homes but dilapidated facilities.

Commissioner Newton said she is in favor of the tax increase. The town is not able to complete needed maintenance projects.

Commissioner Fuller said she doesn't like tax increases but supports the tax increase.

Commissioner Hunter said he is in favor of the tax increase.

Mayor Chissell presented a proposed FY25 Budget to the Board of Commissioners. A hearing on the budget will be held on June 10, 2024.

7. Public Comment – several citizens, including Treasurer Ronald Stokes, spoke in favor of the tax increase.
8. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 6:21pm.

Submitted by:  
Crystal Chissell  
Mayor