



TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH

(INCORPORATED 1922)

3243 WALNUT DRIVE

Highland Beach, Maryland 21403

Telephone (410) 268-2956

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: September 9, 2023

Attendees: Mayor Crystal Chissell and Commissioners Michele Fuller, William Hunter, Shiela Murchison, and Linda Newton

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

Citizens' Input

Comments were received from citizens.

Journal Review and Approval

Mayor Chissell moved to approve the Journal from the August 19, 2023 Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuller and was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Murchison resigned as Treasurer prior to the meeting. Mayor Chissell delivered the Treasurer's report. The full Treasurer's report has been posted on the Town website. The current cash balance is approximately \$136,072. As of the last meeting, the largest expenditure was for the solar battery project, including equipment, installation, and electrical work. This Fiscal Year 2024 budget has not yet been amended. The town is \$61K over budget for the current fiscal year. The Mayor will work with the new Treasurer to revise the budget and draft a budget amendment.

Mayor's Report

Treasurer Position

MOTION:

Mayor Chissell moved to establish compensation for the Town Treasurer at the rate of \$45 per hour through the end of the fiscal year. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fuller and was unanimously approved.

It is not yet clear how many hours the Treasurer position will require. The current bookkeeper will be asked to assist in the transition of her duties to the new Treasurer. The current bookkeeper has had responsibility for processing cash receipts, accounts payable, bank statement reconciliation, audit support, and financial statement preparation, but provided little in the way of budgeting, grants, and financial planning.

MOTION:

Mayor Chissell moved that Ron Stokes be appointed Treasurer. The appointment was unanimously approved by the Commissioners.

Town Bank Account – The Town maintains accounts with PNC Bank. The accounts was opened years ago with the predecessor of PNC Bank and before electronic record-keeping. Transitioning the records and signatures could not be accomplished because 1) PNC did not have electronic records for the account, and 2) the account is in the name of “Commissioners of Highland Beach” instead of the formal entity name, “Town of Highland Beach”. It will be necessary to open a new bank account using the correct name.

MOTION:

Mayor Chissell moved that 1) a bank account be opened in the name, “Town of Highland Beach”; 2) that, in accordance with the Town Charter, there will be two signatories on the account at all times, the Mayor and the Treasurer; and 3) that after reconciliation, all funds be moved from the currently existing account at PNC Bank in the name of “Commissioners of Highland Beach” to the new bank account in the name of “Town of Highland Beach.” The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunter and was unanimously approved.

130th Anniversary – Mayor Chissell thanked the Highland Beach Citizen’s Association for planning and executing a beautiful 130th Anniversary weekend of events, including the attendance of Governor Wes Moore.

Chesapeake Bay Foundation – A delegation from Highland Beach visited the Chesapeake Bay Foundation to discuss the town’s shoreline erosion issue. The delegation included Mayor Chissell, Commissioner Newton, Commissioner Hunter, Ron Stokes, Charles Newton, and a representative from Venice Beach. They met with CBF Maryland Executive Director, Allison Colden; Director of Fleet and Facilities, Andrew Wood; and Restoration Scientist, Rob Schnabel. The goal was to discuss the shoreline and a creek that the town shares with CBF, as CBF has expertise in the area of Chesapeake Bay shoreline restoration and erosion. The prospect was raised of a joint shoreline project, and possible partnership with CBF. The CBF representatives expressed interest in the project. CBF has been monitoring the shoreline and are planning to include a study in their upcoming budget. Participants discussed involving all parties who have an interest in this area of the shoreline, including private property owners and other communities.

Commissioner Newton shared with CBF information on the community outreach that the Shoreline Erosion Committee has done. Like Highland Beach, CBF is very sensitive to the engagement of the community. CBF expressed concern about the effects of any project on

Black Walnut Creek. They also stressed the importance of any plan taking into consideration the community's continued use of the beach.

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Hunter, Planning and Zoning – No new permit applications have been submitted in the past month. The Bruce Ave. litigation is under appeal and the town's counsel is waiting to receive briefs from the appellants.

Commissioner Murchison, Financial Planning – No report.

Commissioner Newton, Public Works – The traffic control contract has ended for the season. The security firm provided several recommendations, including suggestions regarding golf cart safety. Once the recommendations have been reviewed Commissioner Newton will present a proposal to address traffic control and safety prior to the start of the next season.

Anyone interested in participating in any of the three advisory committees - Security and Traffic Control, Building and Maintenance, and Beach Erosion - should reach out to Commissioner Newton.

A lockbox has been installed on the pavilion. The structure of the door will not accommodate a keypad lock. Anyone needing to use the pavilion should contact one of the commissioners, all of whom have access to the lockbox.

Commissioner Newton asked citizens to share what they thought was a good time frame to store the beach chairs for the winter. For now the chairs will be available through October.

An electrical inspection for the solar batteries at the town hall and museum is scheduled for next week. Commissioner Fuller asked if the solar batteries are needed for the museum and whether they can be sold back. Comm. Murchison raised the possible need for the solar batteries to preserving the artifacts housed in the museum. Mayor Chissell responded that all options regarding the batteries are being investigated, and a discussion will be held with museum representatives regarding the value of installing batteries there.

Commissioner Fuller, Government Operations – Commissioner Fuller has been assigned by the Mayor as liaison to the FDMCC board to develop a memorandum of understanding regarding how the town and the museum board will work together for the best interest of the FDMCC. The next meeting of the FDMCC board of directors is scheduled for September 19th.

An advisory committee of 6 citizens has been assembled to advise on policies for use of town facilities.

Old Business

Bruce Ave. Pier – Although the permit to replace the Bruce Ave. pier was approved, the project is temporarily on hold at this time pending appropriation in a budget amendment and consultation with the community about the specifications of the new pier.

New Business

The Commissioners now have dedicated town email addresses, which can be found on the town's website.

Next month's Board of Commissioners meeting will follow the Citizen's Association meeting. After that the meetings will be held on the third Saturday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

Citizens' Input

The meeting was again opened for citizens' input.

Set next meeting date and adjourn

The next meeting was scheduled for October 21, 2023 at 11:00.
The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Miller Scott
Secretary/Clerk and Town Manager