

Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting (In person)
Thirtieth Town Council of Highland
Monday, February 10, 2025

The Thirtieth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a study session on **Monday, February 10, 2025**, immediately at the adjournment of the February 10, 2025 Plenary Meeting (7:30 O'clock P.M)., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

*This meeting was convened as an in person meeting and lived streamed to the Town of Highland Facebook. Facebook permits the public to observe and record the proceedings but allows no interaction between and among the Town Council and members of the public. The public is able to participate in person. All Councilors were simultaneously seen and heard. Councilor Georgeff, Councilor Turich, Councilor Robertson, Councilor Black all participated in person. Councilor Philip Scheeringa was absent.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors George Georgeff, Doug Turich, Alex Robertson, Tom Black, Philip Scheeringa, were present in person as indicated. Councilor Philip Scheeringa was absent. The Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was present to memorialize the proceedings. *A quorum was attained.*

Officials Present: IT Director Ed Dabrowski, Public Works Director Mark Knesek, Superintendent of Parks and Metropolitan Police Chief Ralph Potesta were in person.

x. Discussion: Appointments.

Unless otherwise noted, all terms expire on the 1st Monday in January 2025 and or until a successor is appointed or qualified, not exceeding ninety (90) days.

• Statutory Boards and Commissions

Executive Appointments (May be made in meeting or at another time)

Regional Statutory Appointments.

- 1. Economic Development Commission.** (1) Appointment to be made by the municipal executive, but requiring nomination from the Town Council. *(Currently held by Blane Roberts, term ending 1st Monday February 2025 and up to 90 days after term expires if no action)*
- 2. Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors.** (1) Appointment by Town Council President. (NOT DUE UNTIL JUNE 30 2025) *(Currently serving Christine Cash) Appointing authority must give sole consideration to individuals who are knowledgeable about or employed as executives or managers in Hotel, Motel, Banking, Real Estate and hospitality. Cannot hold an elected or appointed political office*

Home Rule Commissions or Boards

3. **Main Street Bureau Board of Directors.** Town Council President appointment. (1) Appointment. Town Council Representative must be a member of the Town Council. *Term co-extensive with term of appointee. (Note: Currently serving is Alex Robertson)*
4. **Tree Board.** (2) Appointments to be nominated by the Town Council but appointed by the Town Council President. *(Note: Currently held by Richard Underkofler and Blane Roberts, term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) years*
 - a. Nomination by the Town Council. *(The council would pass a motion to nominate.)*
 - b. Appointment by executive. *(If nominee is acceptable, the Town Council President may appoint.)*
 - **Tree Board Chairperson.** The Town Council President also appoints the Chairperson to be selected from the membership of the board. (See HMC Section 8.25.030 (C)) *(Currently held by James Colias.)*

Legislative Appointments

1. **Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals:** (1) appointment to be made by Fiscal Body. *(Note: Currently held by David Helms, term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) years.*

Toya Smith (appointed by the Plan Commission to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals)
(Term co-extensive with her Plan Commission term – 1st Monday in January 2025)
3. **Park and Recreation Board.** (1) appointment to be made by the Town Council. *(Note: Current appointee is Carlos Aburto (D), term ending 1st Monday January 2025) Term is for four (4) years. (Current composition is 2 democrats and 2 republicans. Not more than 2 members may be of the same party.)*
4. **Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners.** (2) appointments to be made by the Town Council. *(Note: Current appointees are Mike Danko (R) and Larry Moses (R), term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) years. (Current composition for these five citizen positions is three (3) democrats and two (2) republicans)*

Regional Statutory Appointments

6. **Lake County Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors.** (1) No action necessary unless a change is desired. *(Note: Currently serving Tom Black) Must be a*

Home Rule Commissions

7. **Main Street Bureau Board:** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council.
(Note: Current Appointees are: Renee Reinhart, Ben Reinhart, Diane Barr-Roumbus, James Roumbus, Sandy McKnight, Al Simmons, Sandy Ray, Ben Tomera, Laura Pilewski and Desiree Biro, term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for two (2) years.
- x. **Discussion: Meeting Authorization.** Ratify the calling of a (special) meeting for x day, February x, 2025 to conduct interviews of prospective candidates, pursuant to HMC Section 2.05.130(A) (4) and Section 2.05.130(F).

After a brief explanation by the Clerk-Treasurer, Councilor Georgeff asked that a special study session be called for Monday, February 17, 2025 to discuss appointments and such other matters as may be deemed necessary or desirable.

TOWN of HIGHLAND
HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL BUILDING • 3333 RIDGE ROAD • HIGHLAND, INDIANA 46322
PHONE: (219) 838-1080 FAX: (219) 972-5097

OFFICE of the TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLIC NOTICE

DATE: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025
TO: AREA MEDIA AND PUBLIC

RE: SPECIAL STUDY SESSION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF HIGHLAND

PLEASE LET THIS SERVE AS NOTICE THAT A SPECIAL STUDY SESSION HAS BEEN CALLED FOR MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2025 AT 6:30 P.M. OF THE HIGHLAND TOWN COUNCIL. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY SESSION IS TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES, PURSUANT TO HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 2.05.130(A)(4) AND SECTION SECTION 2.05.130(F) AND SUCH OTHER MATTERS AS MAY BE DEEMED NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 3333 RIDGE ROAD, HIGHLAND. NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN OTHER THAN THE EXCHANGE AND RECEIPT OF INFORMATION FROM PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES FOR THE VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS.

THESE MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC TO OBSERVE AND RECORD.

TOWN COUNCIL of HIGHLAND
George Georgeff, President

BY: OFFICE OF THE HIGHLAND CLERK-TREASURER
MARK HERAK, CLERK-TREASURER

(IC 5-14-1.5-5).
Generation: 2/10/25 at 10:17 PM

- x. **Discussion:** Proposed Ordinance No. 1780-A: An Ordinance To Make a Technical Updating Amendment to the Highland Compensation and Benefits Ordinance Commonly Known as the Employees Handbook, Particularly Amending Section 4.03.13 Residency Stipend All Pursuant To IC 36-1-3 and other Relevant Statutes, and Amending some portions of Wage and Salary Ordinance.

After a brief explanation by the Clerk-Treasurer regarding some questions that were raised since the last meeting, such as, if a person retires before the end of the calendar year should they receive the stipend for the months they were on the department or if an officer leaves the department or is terminated before the end of the calendar year, should they receive the stipend for the months they lived in Highland and were on the department. Councilor Georgeff raised the question about retroactive. Councilor Georgeff then opened up the discussion to the Council asking the Council for their comments and feedback on Proposed Ordinance No. 1780-A. Councilor Turich said this was discussed last meeting and I thought it was very clear during the study session that the recommendation is that yes, they would be paid for the time that they were here. The way it is written right now, it is a prorated stipend, so if they move into Highland any time during the year, they would receive a stipend. He said the same idea should be applied if they leave, regardless of the reason. He re-emphasized it was clear just listen to the tape.

The Clerk-Treasurer said it wasn't clear because all of these questions were raised after the meeting which is why the Council President wanted to put it on the study session agenda to clarify.

Councilor Turich said if you start the year living in Highland and being employed by the police department and you leave early or prior to the year's end, you should be paid for the number of months that you are in the reside in the community and work for the police department. If you choose to move out, whether it's retirement or you choose another position outside of the Highland Police Department, you should be compensated for that time. He said the ordinance referenced by Larry Kondrat was adopted by the Council before this one. He said this is a new Council and we're looking at it from a different lens which is why we are looking to make adjustments.

Councilor Georgeff said he is okay with paying the officers for the time they lived in Highland but if they retire or move out of Highland or a terminated, they should a stipend but not to receive the stipend early but in January of the following years, like those who lived in Highland the entire year receive their check. He believed it was sometime in January of the following year when the checks are written. He told Councilor Turich that he did find out the number of employees who live in Town was 59.

Councilor Turich said that is for another discussion. He said I raised that question after talking with Public Works Director Knesek when he asked why not all employees who live in Town. He said he asked Mark Knesek to ask the department heads what they thought and come back with a proposal, realizing that it wasn't budgeted for in 2025.

Councilor Robertson said he is hesitant about making it retroactive. He felt this was the ordinance at the time and we shouldn't try to remedy this for just a single situation, for one particular individual. He agreed it should be revised but going forward and not retroactive.

Councilor Turich said he respects Alex's opinion and I know where he is coming from. He said it's all about betterment of the community, of the culture, of the morale of the departments. He said by revising the ordinance and making it retroactive we can increase the morale of the employees.

Hearing no further discussion, the Council President advised the Clerk-Treasurer to revise the language of proposed Ordinance No. 1780-A to reflect the discussion heard at today's study session and place Proposed Ordinance No. 1780-A on the February 24, 2025 plenary meeting agenda.

**ORDINANCE No. 1780-A
of the
TOWN of HIGHLAND, INDIANA**

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE COMPENSATION, BENEFITS AND PERSONNEL PROGRAM OF THE MUNICIPALITY, TO BE KNOWN AS THE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS ORDINANCE COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE EMPLOYEES HANDBOOK, PURSUANT TO IC 36-1-3 AND OTHER RELEVANT STATUTES, AND AMENDING SOME PORTIONS OF WAGE AND SALARY ORDINANCE.

WHEREAS, Title 36, Article 1, Chapter 5 of the Indiana Code provides that the legislative body of a unit shall codify, revise, rearrange, or compile the ordinances of the unit into a complete, simplified code excluding formal parts of the ordinances;

WHEREAS, The legislative body of this unit, the Town of Highland, is the Town Council, pursuant to IC 36-1-2-9(5) and IC 36-5-2-2;

WHEREAS, The present general and permanent ordinances of the Town of Highland, formally codified in 2012, are in need of technical and substantive modifications not confined to any particular Title, Article or Chapter but nevertheless desirable to further improve and perfect the Code; and,

WHEREAS, The Town Council, is persuaded that it is necessary and desirable to adopt the several technical and substantive modifications necessary to carry out this requirement and to further improve and perfect the Code,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, as follows:

Section 1. That the Highland Municipal Employee Handbook of the

Compensation and Benefit Ordinance, be hereby amending Section 4.03.13, which shall read as follows:

4.03.13 Residency Stipend pay for Officers residing in the Town of Highland.

Retroactive to 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 prior to the end of the calendar year, if the Officer is either, still a member of the department or retired from the department, they will be paid the stipend on a pro-rata basis for each full month they lived in Highland, however, if the Officer has left the department either voluntary or involuntary, they will not be entitled or paid a residency stipend.

Section 2. The provisions of this Ordinance shall be effective from and after January 1, 2024.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall be effective from and after its passage and adoption, as evidenced by the signature of the Town Council President and attested thereto by the Clerk-Treasurer, all pursuant to IC 36-5-2-10 and IC 36-5-2-10.2.

Introduced and Filed on the 24th day of February 2025. Consideration on same day or at same meeting of introduction was not sought pursuant to IC 36-5-2-9.8.

DULY ORDAINED AND ADOPTED this 24th Day of February 2025, by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, having been passed by a vote of in favor and opposed.

**TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of
HIGHLAND, INDIANA**

George Georgeff, President (IC 36-5-2-10)

Attest:

Mark Herak,
Clerk-Treasurer (IC 33-42-4-1; IC 36-5-6-5; IC 36-5-2-10.2)

- x. **Discussion:** An Ordinance To Amend Ordinance No. 1808 to Establish the Wage and Proposed Ordinance No. 1808-B: Salary Rates of the Elected Officers, the Non-Elected Officers and the Employees of the Town of Highland, Indiana particularly amending the Residency Stipend Provision in the Metropolitan Police Department.

The Clerk-Treasurer explained that proposed Ordinance 1808-B is the companion to 1780-A, which was previously discussed. The changes made to the Highland Municipal Code also need to be incorporated into the adopted 2024 Salary Ordinance. Councilor Georgeff then opened up the discussion to the Council asking the Council for their comments and feedback on Proposed Ordinance No. 1808-B. The Council didn't have any questions.

Hearing no further discussion, the Council President advised the Clerk-Treasurer to put proposed Ordinance No. 1808-B on the February 24, 2025 plenary meeting agenda.

ORDINANCE No. 1808-B
of the
TOWN of HIGHLAND, INDIANA

AN ORDINANCE to AMEND ORDINANCE No. 1808 to ESTABLISH THE WAGE and SALARY RATES of the ELECTED OFFICERS, the NON-ELECTED OFFICERS, and the EMPLOYEES of the TOWN of HIGHLAND, INDIANA PARTICULARLY CREATING A RESIDENCY STIPEND PROVISION IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT.

WHEREAS, Title 36, Article 1 Chapter 4 of the Indiana Code confers certain general corporate powers on the several units of government in Indiana;

WHEREAS, Section fifteen of that chapter specifically provides that a unit of government may fix the level of compensation of its officers and employees;

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-5-3-2 provides in pertinent part that the town legislative body shall provide reasonable compensation for the other town officers and employees;

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-5-3-2(b), further provides that the Town Legislative body shall, by ordinance fix the compensation of its own members and the Town Clerk-Treasurer;

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-5-3-2(c) still further provides that the compensation of an elected town officer may not be changed in the year for which it is fixed, nor may it be reduced below the amount fixed for the previous year;

WHEREAS, The Town Council of the Town of Highland, as the Town Legislative body, now desires to amend the ordinance that was adopted to fix the compensation of its elected officers, appointed officers and employees of the Town for the year 2024 and thereafter as amended;

WHEREAS, The Town Council of the Town of Highland, as the Town Legislative body, has been advised that to encourage residency in Highland, it is desirable to offer a Residency Stipend to the sworn personnel of the Highland Metropolitan Police Department in the amount of \$200 per month, not to exceed the per year sum of \$2,400, for every month they reside in Town, to be paid in one (1) lump sum; and

WHEREAS, The Town Council of the Town of Highland, as the Town Legislative body, has been further advised that it is not necessary to modify the fix rate or annual sum of the Stand-By Duty Pay Provisions for all other workers, based upon the needs of the Metropolitan Police Department; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, that the Wages, Salaries, and special detail levels of the Officers and Employees of the Town of Highland, are hereby established, modified and fixed, pursuant to the provisions indicated herein and as follows:

Section 1. That in Section 10 of Ordinance No. 1808 be amended by adding a successor subdivision, to be styled as Section 10 subdivision (J) which shall read as follows:

Section 10. *Metropolitan Police Department.* That subject to the provisions of this ordinance, the salary and wages for the non-elected officers and employees of the Town of Highland are hereby fixed for its **Metropolitan Police Department** as follows:

(J) Residency Stipend Provision:

Residency Stipend Provision. Retroactive to 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 prior to the end of the calendar year, if the Officer is either, still a member of the department or retired from the department, they will be paid the stipend on a pro-rata basis for each full month they lived in Highland, however, if the Officer has left the department either voluntary or involuntary, they will not be entitled or paid a residency stipend.

Section 2. That if any part of this ordinance shall be held invalid, such part shall be deemed severable and the invalidity thereof shall not affect the remaining parts of this ordinance;

Section 3. Any and all such ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are

hereby repealed and are of no further force nor effect;

Section 4. That except where otherwise noted herein, other compensation and benefits matters not expressly provided herein for salaried and hourly employees and the Clerk-Treasurer shall be as set forth in the Compensation and Benefits Ordinance, commonly called the Employee Handbook as amended from time to time;

Section 5. This ordinance shall become and be in full force and effect *retroactively from January 13, 2024*, and after its passage and adoption upon its signature by the executive in the manner prescribed by IC 36-5-2-10(a).

Section 6. That the Clerk-Treasurer shall have authority to implement the provisions of this ordinance pursuant to the authority expressly set forth in IC 36-5-6-6 (a) (3) & (4).

Introduced and Filed on 24th day of February 2025. Consideration on same day or at same meeting of introduction sustained a vote of in favor and opposed, pursuant to IC 36-5-2-9.8.

DULY ORDAINED and ADOPTED this 24th Day of February, by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, having been passed by a vote of in favor and opposed.

**TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of
HIGHLAND, INDIANA**

George Georgeff, President (IC 36-5-2-10)

Attest:

Mark Herak
Clerk-Treasurer (IC 33-42-4-1; IC 36-5-6-5; IC 36-5-2-10.2)

- x. **Discussion:** Proposed Ordinance No. 1804-A: An Ordinance to Amend the Chapter 9.05 of the Highland Municipal Code, entitled *Fire Department*, making modifications and technical correction to Chapter 9.05; Section 9.05.07(4) regarding the residency requirements of the Fire Chief to read as follows:.

(4) Licenses, Certificates, Age, Residency.

The fire chief should possess a minimum of National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Fire Officer 1 certificate, Instructor 1 certificate, Fire Officer Strategy/Tactics certificate, Fire Inspector 1 Certificate, (preferred) Associate Degree in Fire science, (preferred) Current EMT certification, NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400 & 700, a valid hazardous material technician certificate, a valid Indiana driver's license, and should

be at least 21 years of age.

The Clerk-Treasurer explained the changes he made to Proposed Ordinance No. 1804-A as he thought reflected the Council's wishes. The Clerk-Treasurer removed the requirement that the new Fire Chief would be required to relocate to Highland within eighteen (18) months of assuming the Fire Chief's role. Councilor Georgeff then turned it over to Captain Morgan Wright of the Highland Fire Department. He said they have gone through one round of interviews and at this time, our most qualified candidates don't live in Highland and are not able to or unwilling to relocate to Highland. Because of their unwillingness to move, the best qualified candidates did not apply for the position. He said in his opinion, he thought I think we do need to allow them to live outside the Town of Highland. That gives us an opportunity to get the best talent around the area who understands our business model. A lot of the fire departments in our area are moving to a full time fire department style. Right now, the Highland Fire Department is a paid on call fire department that employs only the fire chief and administrative assistant as full-time employee and it becomes a challenge to have people that understand how this process works. As he listened to the explanation of the changes made by the Clerk-Treasurer, Captain Wright said the changes don't indicate the wording as proposed by the Personnel Committee. Their proposal was to let the new Chief live within a certain circumference from Highland. The Personnel Committee would like to propose the potential candidate living in an adjoining community.

The Clerk-Treasurer asked Captain Wright if he could send to him a copy of the proposal from the Personnel Committee and he would incorporate it.

Councilor Georgeff said he is fine with the Fire Chief living in an adjoining community but he felt the salary ordinance needed to be modified. The salary of \$105,000 being discussed was for the Fire Chief to live in Highland. If they are not going to live in Highland, then the salary should be reduced. If we are not giving stipends to Officers who don't live in Town, we shouldn't give the Fire Chief the higher salary when they don't live in Town. He felt that if they didn't live in Highland, they should not be paid as much as a Chief that lived in Highland.

Councilor Turich asked if we didn't do a market analysis to determine the appropriate salary range? Councilor Turich said the decision to require department heads to live in Highland, was a decision of the previous Council. It wasn't a decision of this Council. He said he personally feels the mindset to require your department heads to live in Highland is narrow minded. He believes the Fire Chief can still care for this community and still live in another community. He said in the private sector when you offer someone a job you don't stipulate where they can or cannot live. . He said the Fire Department is dealing with life and death situations and you have to have a leader that's making the right decisions. That is why he doesn't think reducing the salary of the Fire Chief if he doesn't live in Highland is the right approach.

The Clerk-Treasurer said a range was established based upon the salaries found in Gateway. And the salary in the salary ordinance is simply a place holder. The Council

will have to determine the exact salary. He suggested that they agree upon a salary before the Personnel Committee goes into the second round of interviews. You will want to make sure you are on the same page.

Councilor Georgeff said when he was hired to be a Highland Police Officer in 1982, officer were required to live in Highland.

Councilor Robertson asked if the Fire Chief was required to live in Highland, would his response time increase or decrease? He felt living in an adjoining community would be acceptable if they were able to respond within x number of minutes. He wanted to know if there was a standard expected response time and can that response time be tracked. He said the reason why he would support the Fire Chief moving into Highland is if decreased response time.

Councilor Turich responded that it could via radio communication as to when the Chief arrives on the scene. He said to Councilor Robertson, you are new to the liaison position but you'll find, as you get more comfortable, that the Chief doesn't have to show up to every fire. Chief Potesta doesn't respond to every crime scene. Again, that was the mentality of the old Council that the Fire Chief needed to respond to every call. He reminded everyone that interim Fire Chief Pipta isn't going anywhere soon. He may be changing his number but he'll still be around to help the new chief.

Captain Wright said the idea of getting the most qualified and talented person to come and follow up in the legacy of Chief Timmer and Chief Pipta. To be clear, we had candidates who would have moved to Highland but they were not the top candidates on our list. He said he thought it would be very detrimental to this hiring process if the Council was to lower the range in the salary ordinance as that would probably eliminate a lot of the candidates that may take the position if they don't have to move to Highland. He said they are beginning the process anew, advertising or reposting without the residency requirement. This will be a new, complete search. Hopefully, some of those who live outside the Town of Highland will apply.

Councilor Robertson said what if you changed the requirement from eighteen (18) months to twenty-four (24) months to relocate to Highland?

Captain Wright said in talking with the prospective candidates, it had more to do with upheaving the family and with interest rates and housing costs increasing. They have kids in school and playing sports and they don't want to uproot them.

Hearing no further discussion, the Council President advised the Clerk-Treasurer to put proposed Ordinance No. 1804-A with the changes on the February 24, 2025 plenary meeting agenda. The Clerk-Treasurer asked Captain Wright to send him the Personnel Committee's proposal.

ORDINANCE No. 1804-A
of the

TOWN of HIGHLAND, INDIANA

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 9.05 OF THE HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL
CODE ENTITLED FIRE DEPARTMENT**

WHEREAS, In consequence of the execution of its public safety powers, set forth in IC 36-1-4, and IC 36-8, the Town of Highland through its Fire Department, the Town Provides Fire prevention, suppression, life and limb and other emergency public safety services; and

WHEREAS, I.C. 36-1-3-4 et sequitur, provides that a unit of town government possesses all powers granted it by statute and all other powers necessary or desirable in the conduct of its affairs, even though not granted by statute; and

WHEREAS, It has been determined that several provisions of Chapter 9.05 need to be modified and enhanced to reflect the current job description for the Fire Chief; and

WHEREAS, The Town Council has determined the municipal code requires amendment in order to the current job description of the Fire Chief.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, as follows:

Section 1. That Chapter 9.05; Section 9.05.07(4) of the Highland Code of Ordinances is hereby amended to read as follows:

(4) Licenses, Certificates, Age, Residency.

The fire chief should possess a minimum of National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Fire Officer 1 certificate, Instructor 1 certificate, Fire Officer Strategy/Tactics certificate, Fire Inspector 1 Certificate, (preferred) Associate Degree in Fire science, (preferred) Current EMT certification, NIMS 100, 200, 300, 400 & 700, a valid hazardous material technician certificate, a valid Indiana driver's license, live in the

- x. **Discussion:** Stipends for the members of the Council of Community Events Commission. Originally introduced by Councilor Robertson, a request from the Liaison to the Council of Community Events Commission to revisit paying a stipend to members of the Commission.

The Clerk-Treasurer explained that this was originally brought up by Councilor Robinson and was most recently brought up by Park Superintendent Brown on behalf of the HCCE

Liaison regarding paying stipends to members of the HCCE. Councilor Georgeff then opened up the discussion to the Council asking the Council for their comments and feedback.

The question was asked how many members would receive payment.

Councilor Turich said that hasn't been decided yet as the Park Board is in the process of rewriting the by-laws. He said he heard from various Park Board members that they are considering the number to be five (5). The topic will be discussed at the next Park Board meeting. He assured the Council that it wouldn't be the eighteen as mentioned in the current by-laws.

The Clerk-Treasurer reminded the Council that only the Council can pass, adopt or modify the salary ordinance. The Park Board can only recommend to the Council but the Council ultimately adopts.

Councilor Turich said he envisions them to be paid or compensated like any other board or commission member is being paid or compensated. He said whether they attend a meeting for not, they should get paid. He said he is going on record that he is going to propose to the Park Board that they follow the example of the other boards and commissions and not recreate the wheel.

The Council didn't have any more questions.

No further action was required at this time until the Park Board makes their recommendation.

x. **Discussion:** Proposed New Trash Rates effective April 1, 2025

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Current
Republic Services Base (monthly)	\$ 22.90	\$ 24.05	\$ 25.25	\$ 26.76	\$ 20.91
Town Services (monthly)	\$ 5.50	\$ 5.78	\$ 6.07	\$ 6.37	\$ 7.15
Total Trash Services (monthly)	\$ 28.40	\$ 29.83	\$ 31.32	\$ 33.13	\$ 28.06
Recycle Service (monthly)	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.15	\$ 3.31	\$ 3.51	\$ 0.86
Total Residential Rate	\$ 31.40	\$ 32.98	\$ 34.63	\$ 36.64	\$ 28.92

Total charged to residents (monthly)- 2024-25 \$28.92

Public Works Director passed out the following information:

Memorandum of Meeting
Monday, February 10, 2025

Trash and Recycle Bid - (4) Years Plus (2) Optional Years - Bid Tabulation

Bid Opening Friday, January 31, 2025		Republic Services					Total Disposal			
Year	Est. Units	Unit	Monthly Trash	Monthly Recycle	Monthly Total	Annual Total	Monthly Trash	Monthly Recycle	Monthly Total	Annual Total
1	8,121	EA	\$ 22.90	\$ 3.00	\$ 210,333.90	\$ 2,524,006.80				
2	8,121	EA	\$ 24.05	\$ 3.15	\$ 220,891.20	\$ 2,650,694.40				
3	8,121	EA	\$ 25.25	\$ 3.31	\$ 231,935.76	\$ 2,783,229.12				
4	8,121	EA	\$ 26.76	\$ 3.51	\$ 245,822.67	\$ 2,949,872.04				
5 opt.	8,121	EA	\$ 28.64	\$ 3.75	\$ 253,039.19	\$ 3,156,470.28				
6 opt.	8,121	EA	\$ 30.64	\$ 4.01	\$ 281,392.65	\$ 3,376,711.80				

Total 6 year base bid trash and recycle **\$ 17,440,984.44** **\$ -**

Additional Roll-off containers in excess of amount provided for in contract

Year	Est. Units	Unit	40 CY	30CY		Total	50 CY	40 CY		Total
1	1	EA	\$ 440.00	\$ 400.00		\$ 840.00				
2	1	EA	\$ 460.00	\$ 420.00		\$ 880.00				
3	1	EA	\$ 481.00	\$ 441.00		\$ 922.00				
4	1	EA	\$ 507.00	\$ 467.00		\$ 974.00				
5 opt.	1	EA	\$ 540.00	\$ 500.00		\$ 1,040.00				
6 opt.	1	EA	\$ 575.00	\$ 535.00		\$ 1,110.00				

Total 6 year base bid with excess roll-offs **\$ 17,446,750.44** **\$ -**

Affidavit of Compliance
Contractor's Bid for Public Works - Form 96
Certification Regarding Unauthorized Aliens
5% Bid Security

Memorandum of Meeting
Monday, February 10, 2025

2025 Bid Amount				Resident's Billed
Trash	Recycle	Total	Town Services	Amount
\$22.90	\$3.00	\$25.90	\$7.15	\$33.05
Current Amount				
\$20.91	\$0.86	\$21.77	\$7.15	\$28.92
Difference				4.13

Possible adj. to Town Service Rate to offset increase	
2025 Amended Budget total for 6601 - Solid Waste	\$2,633,279.00
less SN Solid Waste Services	\$2,100,000.00
	\$533,279.00

Divided by avg homes (8121)	\$65.67
Divided by 12 months	\$5.47

Proposed Rates				Resident's Billed
Trash	Recycle	Total	Town Services	Amount
\$22.90	\$3.00	\$25.90	\$5.50	\$31.40
Difference				\$2.48

Councilor Turich asked if we had many responses to our RFP?

Public Works Director Knesek said they had three (3) companies pick up the bid package but only Republic Services submitted a bid. The other two (2) companies were present at the bid opening but only to record the pricing. He said he had a long discussion with them about recycling and he personally thinks getting rid of recycling is not a good thing. He said as he drives around on Tuesday, he says he sees roughly 90% of the residents recycling. He would not commit as to whether they are recycling correctly. He said Republic is going to talk with their drivers and start enforcing proper recycling. If they are recycling incorrectly, the drivers will place a sticker on the residents container to tell them they are not recycling correctly. If it happens again, the driver will take the recycling can. He said he thought the numbers would come in 25 to 30% higher than our current rate because the cost of equipment is so expensive and the costs of hauling the garbage from the transfer station to the land fill continues to rise, so he was surprised that it only came in at 19% higher. He said to lessen the cost on the residents, he reduced the town service fee (picking up branches and leaves) from \$7.15 to \$5.25. He said the \$3.00 a month recycling fee appears high but you couldn't load up your car and take the recyclables to the transfer station for \$1.50 every two (2) weeks. He said he thought we did pretty good with our bid as he expected it to be a lot worse. He said the contract is for four (4) years with two (2) option years. He said around year four (4) they will start talking to Republic about the option years. He hopes fuel costs will come down by then and the option years costs would come down.

Councilor Turich asked if we had eliminated recycling from the bid, would there have been more bidders or would the cost would have come in differently?

Mark Knesek said he thought the costs would have come in higher because the residents would not be able to fit their garbage and recyclables in one (1) can so they would have to have two (2) garbage cans. Republic would still have to pick up two (2) cans and would have to empty their trucks more often. He said Highland did try going to multiple day pick-ups several years ago but the costs came in higher.

Councilor Turich said if I read the matrix correctly, it is \$28.40 for trash and another \$3.00 for recycling for a total of \$31.40. If we removed the recycling, wouldn't the cost be \$28.40?

Mark Knesek said, you have to figure in a second garbage can and Republic emptying their trucks more often. If you did eliminate recycling, you would have to go out to rebid and from my experiences the bid would come in higher because Republic knew no one else bid so they could come in with a higher bid. He said tonight is simply to give the Council heads up as the Sanitary Board will approve the new rates at their next Sanitary Board Meeting and forward to the Council for approval. The Council does not have to approve the new rates. If the Council rejects, he said he couldn't guarantee Republic would honor the current contract and continue to pick-up the garbage and recyclables.

Councilor Turich said his confusion comes from looking at two (2) different sets of data. When I look at the matrix in our packet, it is different than what was just passed out. He asked what rate is the correct rate?

Mark Knesek said the correct rate is the \$31.40 per household per month with the current rate \$28.92.

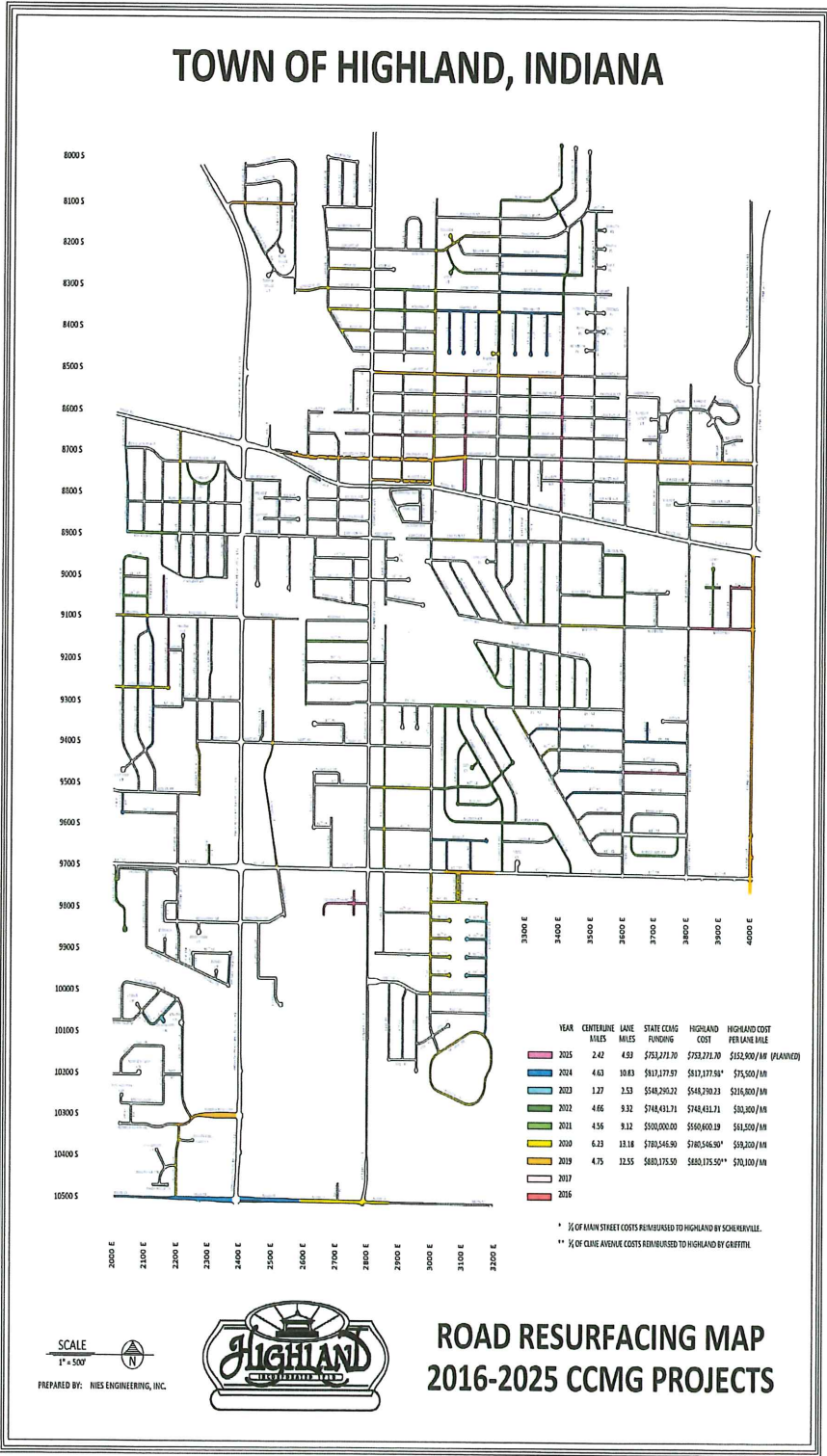
Council Robertson asked if we could pick-up the trash ourselves?

Mark Knesek said we don't have the manpower or equipment to pick-up our own trash. He re-emphasized that it is important to continue recycling. He said Hobart did away with recycling and are now bringing it back.

Councilor Turich said he is concerned only one (1) bidder. He felt we must entice more people to put in a bid. Maybe we have to go and knock on their doors. He said he didn't mean to derail the conversation but he feels it important that we get more bidders.

x. Discussion: Community Crossings Matching Grant Fund

Public Works Director passed out the following information:



Community Crossing Match Grant

	State	Highland	Miles	Project Cost
2016	\$472,671.00	\$551,362.82	1.48	\$1,024,035.30
2017	\$379,273.88	\$379,273.88	1.69	\$758,549.45
2019	\$880,175.50	\$880,175.50	4.75	\$1,760,355.75
2020	\$780,546.90	\$780,546.90	6.23	\$1,561,100.03
2021	\$500,000.00	\$560,600.19	4.56	\$1,060,604.75
2022	\$748,431.71	\$748,431.71	4.66	\$1,496,868.08
2023	\$548,290.22	\$548,290.22	1.27	\$1,096,581.71
2024	\$817,177.97	\$817,177.97	4.63	\$1,634,360.57
2025	\$753,271.70	\$753,271.70	2.42	\$1,506,545.82
Total	\$5,879,838.88	\$6,019,130.89	31.69	\$11,899,001.46
Highland Certified Miles			89.357	

Public Works Director Knesek said he was asked by Councilor Turich to put together a map showing the streets we've done using the Community Crossing Grant. Since 2016, with the State money from the Community Crossings Grant, Highland was able to pave about 1/3rd of the Town. He said in 2021 the State raised the matching grant to \$1 million and in 2024, they raised the matching grant to \$1.5 million.

Councilor Turich commented that the price of asphalt increased by 80% between 2024 and 2025.

Mark Knesek said the mileage of streets repaved is down because the costs continue to rise. Making it more expensive is when we have to install handicap ramps and replace concrete curbs. They've cut costs by replacing only sections of curbs and not the whole curbs. It may not look pretty but the water flows. If they weren't to replace the curbing, puddles would form and destroy the new pavement. That is one of the reasons why costs of street fluctuate. It depends upon how much concrete has to be replaced. He went on to say how much money the Town would lose if a wheel tax wasn't enacted. He said he assumes House Bill 1461 will pass and Highland will be required to implement a wheel tax or else lose the Community Crossings Funds. He said he wasn't sure that without a wheel tax, Highland wouldn't qualify for NIPRC Funds anymore.

Councilor Turich said that the wheel tax has been the hottest topic on social media the last two (2) weeks. He suggested we just sit on our hands to see if House Bill 1461 passes. We can see what happens and if necessary put it on a study session at a later date.

Councilor Black said that when he and Councilor Georgeff were talking with Senator Dernulc, Senator Dernulc said there were some modifications yet to be made and he would keep Highland apprised of the changes.

Councilor Georgeff asked if there were any additional agenda items. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.