

**Enrolled Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Regular Meeting or Special Meeting
For the Thirtieth Highland Town Council Regular Plenary
Business Meeting (In person) Monday, February 17, 2025**

The Thirtieth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a special plenary session on Monday, February 17, 2025 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 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. Councilor Georgeff, Councilor Doug Turich, Councilor Alex Robertson, Councilor Tom Black and Councilor Philip Scheeringa all participated in person.

Pursuant to HMC Section 2.05.130(A)(2), the Town Council considered and reviewed the agenda in an informal proceeding in the plenary meeting room before the president called the meeting to order.

The Town Council President George Georgeff presided over the meeting. The Town Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak, was present to memorialize the proceedings. The meeting was opened with Councilor Tom Black reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and offering a prayer.

Roll Call: Present on roll call were Councilors George Georgeff, Doug Turich, Alex Robertson, Thomas Black, Philip Scheeringa were present. Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was also present. A quorum was attained.

Additional Officials Present: Ed Dabrowski, Director of Information Technology, John Reed, Attorney with JPR Legal Services were present.

Guests: Theresa Badovich (remotely) and Robin Carlascio (remotely) of the Idea Factory were also present.

Minutes of the Previous Meetings: The minutes of the February 10, 2025 Plenary meeting were approved by general consent.

Special Orders:

1. Ratify the calling of the special meetings for Monday, February 17, 2025, pursuant to HMC Section 2.05.130(A) (4) and .Section 2.05.130(F).

Councilor Black moved to ratify both the plenary and study session meetings . Councilor Turich seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five (5) affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The meetings were ratified.

Comments from the Public or Visitors: None

Staff Reports: none were filed.

Communications:

Tuesday's Garbage and Recycling will not be affected by Monday's holiday and pick-up will be as normal.

Sanitary Board – Tuesday – February 18 at 6:30

Plan Commission – Wednesday- February 19 at 6:30

Park Board – Thursday- February 20 at 6:30

Restaurant Crawl February 25th

South Shore Convention - 2025 Restaurant Weeks – February 17 to March 2nd

All on-street parking is banned when there is more the 2 inches of snow

Appointments:

• Statutory Boards and Commissions

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

Regional Statutory Commissions or Boards

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)*

Councilor Scheeringa moved that the Town Council nominate and recommend that the Town Council President appoint **Blane Roberts**, Highland Indiana, to the Economic Development Commission. Councilor Black seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five (5) five affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. Mr. Roberts was nominated.

The Town Council President accepted the nomination and appointed Blane Roberts to the Economic Development Commission, effective February 17, 2025, signing the appointment certificate on February 17, 2025. The Clerk-Treasurer noted he would prepare the proper certificates of appointment to be executed by the Town Council President.

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 Boards and Commissions

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 Richard Underkofler; Blane Roberts)*
 - 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)

2. **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.)*

Action. Councilor Scheeringa moved the appointment of **Jason Novak** (D), 8050 Spruce Street, Highland, to a four year term, on the Park and Recreation Board. Councilor Turich seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five (5) affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. Jason Novak was appointed to the Park and Recreation Board as indicated. The Clerk-Treasurer noted he would prepare the required certification of appointment as required.

3. **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 democrats and two republicans)

Regional Statutory Commissions or Boards

Home Rule Commissions

4. **Main Street Bureau Board:** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council. Term: Two years ending 1 Jan 2025. *Currently serving are Renee Reinhart, Alex Robertson, Diane Barr-Roumbus, James Roumbus Sandy McKnight, Al Simmons, Ben Reinhart, Sandy Ray, Ben Tomera, Laura Pilewski and Desiree Biro.*

General Orders and Unfinished Business:

New Business:

1. **Resolution No. 2025-02:** A Resolution Authorizing Temporary Interfund Loan or Transfer Pursuant to IC 36-1-8-4 of the Indiana Code and Section 3.20.040 of the Highland Municipal Code for the Corporation Bond and Interest Fund, the Park District Bond and Interest Fund, the Sanitary District Bond and Interest Fund and the Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund

Councilor Black moved the passage and adoption of Resolution No. 2025-02. Councilor Robertson seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there five (5) affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The resolution was adopted pending the signature of the municipal executive.

TOWN of HIGHLAND RESOLUTION NO. 2025-02

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TEMPORARY INTERFUND LOAN or TRANSFER PURSUANT to IC 36-1-8-4 OF THE INDIANA CODE AND SECTION 3.20.040 OF THE HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE FOR, THE CORPORATION BOND AND INTEREST FUND, THE PARK DISTRICT BOND AND INTEREST FUND, THE SANITARY DISTRICT BOND AND INTEREST FUND AND THE WATERWORKS DISTRICT BOND & INTEREST FUND.

Whereas, The Clerk-Treasurer has advised the Town Council that cash balances in the **Corporation Bond and Interest Fund, Park District Bond and Interest Fund, Sanitary District Bond & Interest Fund, Waterworks District Bond & Interest** are not sufficient to meet their regular expenses prior to the receipt of the semi-annual distribution of ad-valorem revenues so it has become necessary to temporarily borrow money to enhance the debt service funds;

Whereas, The Clerk-Treasurer has further advised that there is sufficient money on deposit to the credit of the **Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund** and the **Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund** that can be temporarily transferred, pursuant to IC 36-1-8-4 and HMC Section 3,20.040;

Now, Therefore Be it Resolved by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana as follows:

Section 1. That the amount of **\$470,000.00** be borrowed for the **Sanitary District Bond and Interest Exempt Fund** with the amount of **\$470,000.00** to be loaned by the **Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund**, as authorized by HMC Section 3.20.040 and IC 36-1-8-4;

Section 2. That said loan in the amount **\$470,000.00** be repaid to the **Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund** of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the **Fund** with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2025, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b).

Section 3. That the amount of **\$650,000.00** be borrowed for the **Park District Bond & Interest Non-Exempt Fund** with the amount of **\$650,000.00** to be loaned by the **Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund**;

Section 4. That said loan in the amount of **\$650,000.00** be repaid to the **Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund** of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the **Park District Bond & Interest Fund** with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2025, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b).

Section 5. That the amount of **\$260,000.00** be borrowed for the **Corporation Bond & Interest Fund** with the amount of **\$260,000.00** to be loaned by the **Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund**;

Section 6. That said loan in the amount of **\$260,000.00** be repaid to the **Economic Development Local Income Tax Fund** of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the **Corporation Bond & Interest Fund** with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2024, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b);

Section 7. That the amount of **\$140,000.00** be borrowed for the **Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund** with the amount of **\$140,000.00** to be loaned by the **Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund**, by HMC Section 3.20.040 and IC 36-1-8-4;

Section 8. That said loan in the amount of **\$140,000.00** be repaid to the **Municipal Cumulative Capital Development Fund** of the Town of Highland upon receipt of sufficient tax or other monies in the **Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund** with such loan to be repaid no later than December 31, 2025, subject to IC 36-1-8-4(b);

Section 9. That for the temporary loans made by the Town of Highland to the Sanitary District Bond and Interest Fund, the Park District Bond and Interest Fund and the Corporation Bond & Interest Fund and the Waterworks District Bond & Interest Fund for the purposes of HMC Section 3.20.040(B)(1), this resolution shall serve as evidence of the obligation and that under Section 3.20.040(B)(4) no interest will attain.

Duly Adopted by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, this 17th day of February 2025. Having been passed by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 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)

2. Proposed Ordinance No. 1780-A: 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 Employee Handbook, in particular to Section 4.03.13 Residency Stipend, Pursuant to IC 36-1-3 and other Relevant Statutes.

Councilor Turich introduced and moved for the consideration of Ordinance No. 1780-A which included a retroactivity provision as part of the motion due to the nature of the stipend as it is being characterized as a fringe benefit, all pursuant to law, at the same meeting of its introduction. Councilor Scheeringa seconded.

Discussion: Councilor Scheeringa said he did a little research after watching last week's meeting and did come to the conclusion after discussion with Attorney Reed that the stipend is considered a fringe benefit, which is mandatory to be paid. He questioned, whether if an employee leaves before the end of the year, can he be denied to receive his stipend early and not required to wait until the following January. He said he didn't know if we could legally hold a person's money

Councilor Turich said that per our discussion last week, that the stipend checks will be cut at the same time for all those who qualify for a stipend. Everyone will receive their stipend check at the same time.

Councilor Robertson said he is against the retroactive pay as he felt it would open up the Town to a sticky situation and then moved to amend the motion, striking the word retroactive from Ordinance No. 1780-A. Councilor Robertson's motion failed to receive a second and died for a lack of a second. Upon a roll call vote on the original motion, a

unanimous vote being necessary for consideration on first reading, there were four (4) affirmatives and one (1) negative, with Councilors Georgeff, Turich, Black and Scheeringa voting in the affirmation and Councilor Robertson voting in the negative. The motion failed for not having a unanimous consent. The Ordinance only could be introduced.

**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 Employee 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, that Section 4.03.13 is hereby amended , and 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 up to 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 regardless of whether they still reside in Highland or are employed by the Highland Metropolitan Police Department.

Section 2. The provisions of this Ordinance shall be retroactively 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 17th day of February 2025. Consideration on the same day or at the same meeting of introduction was not sought pursuant to IC 36-5-2-9.8.

DULY ORDAINED AND ADOPTED this 17th 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)

3. Proposed Ordinance No. 1808-B: 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.

Councilor Turich introduced only. No further action was taken.

**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 up to 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 regardless of whether they still reside in Highland or are employed by the Highland Metropolitan Police Department.

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 the 17th day of February 2025. Consideration on the same day or at the same meeting of introduction was not sought 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)

4. Authorizing the proper officer to publish legal notice of a public hearing: A Public Hearing to consider additional appropriations in the amount of \$265,000.00 in the Redevelopment Capital Fund. If approved, the public hearing will be held on March 10, 2025, at 6:30 P.M. O'clock in the Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland.

Councilor Black moved to authorize the proper officer to publish legal notice as indicated. Councilor Scheeringa seconded. Upon a roll call vote, there were five (5) affirmatives and no negatives. The motion passed. The proper officer was authorized to publish the notice as indicated.

Comments from the Town Council:

(Good of the order)

• **Councilor Doug Turich:** *Park and Recreation Board Liaison • Liaison and Plan Commission Member • Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals Liaison • Liaison to Building & Inspection Department*

Councilor Doug Turich had no report.

• **Councilor Alex Robertson:** *Redevelopment Commission Member • Fire Department Liaison • Public Works Liaison • Liaison to Main Street Bureau • Liaison to the Tree Board • Liaison to the Highland Neighbor for Sustainability.*

Councilor Alex Robertson had no report.

• **Councilor Thomas (Tom) Black:** *Redevelopment Commission Liaison and Member • Member of the Lake County Solid Waste Management District Board • Member of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIPRC) • Shared Ethics Representative • Liaison Traffic Safety*

Councilor Tom Black had no report.

- **Councilor Philip Scheeringa:** *Redevelopment Commission Member • Information Communications and Technology Department Liaison • Metropolitan Police Commissioners Liaison.*

Councilor Scheeringa began by apologizing for missing last Monday's meeting as he had a work commitment. He said the Highland High School Girls Basketball Team won sectionals and regionals and now advance to semi-state. He said this is something to be proud for our Town. The police and fire departments escorted them back into Town after their victories.

Councilor Scheeringa was absent from the meeting due to a work commitment. .

- **Councilor George Georgeff:** *Town Executive (I.C. 36-1-2-5-(4); I.C. 36-5-2-2; I.C. 36-5-2-7); • Board of Trustees of the Police Pension Fund, Chair (By Law) • Budget Committee Chairman • Redevelopment Commission Member • Liaison to the Board of Water Works • Liaison to the Sanitary Board*

Councilor Georgeff began by giving an update on the upcoming events at the Highland-Griffith Chamber of Commerce. He said the Chamber of Commerce will be holding their annual breakfast with the Easter Bunny, Saturday, March 29th at the Highland High School Cafeteria. He said there will be two (2) settings, one at 9 o'clock am. to 10 o'clock am. and the second from 10:30 o'clock am. to 11:30 o'clock am. Tickets can only be purchased online at the Chambers Website. Ticket are \$7 each and the deadline to purchase tickets ends on March 23rd. He said the annual Chamber Golf Outing is scheduled for Thursday, July 10th, at Wicker Park. He concluded that there was a nice four (four) page write-up in the Northwest Indiana Business Magazine. He said someone has already posted it on line. It was written by former Times Reporter Doug Ross.

Comments from Visitors or Residents: None

Councilor Georgeff asked if there were any other comments. Hearing none, the Town Council President declared the regular plenary meeting of the Town Council of Monday, February 17, 2025, adjourned at 6:45 o'clock p.m.

Mark Herak
Clerk-Treasurer

Approved by the Town Council at its meeting of February 24, 2025.