

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting (In person)
Thirtieth Town Council of Highland
Monday, October 13, 2025**

The Thirtieth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a study session on **Monday, October 13, 2025**, immediately after the adjournment of the September 8, 2025 Plenary Meeting (7:45 O'clock P.M.), in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

**Pursuant to Enrolled House Bill 1167, this meeting is convened as an in person meeting and live 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. If you are in the audience and unwilling to be recorded and live streamed, we ask you to depart the meeting now, otherwise your continued presence in the meeting is your consent to be recorded and live streamed.

*All Councilors were simultaneously seen and heard. Councilor George Georgeff, Councilor Doug Turich, Councilor Alex Robertson, Councilor Tom Black and Councilor Philip Scheeringa all participated in person.

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

Officials Present: IT Director Ed Dabrowski, Metropolitan Police Chief Ralph Potesta, Highland Fire Chief Glenn Schlessler and Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra 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.

Home Rule Commissions or Boards

• *Legislative Appointments*

• *Regional Statutory Appointments*

• *Home Rule Commissions or Boards*

1. **Main Street Bureau Board:** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council. (Note: Current Appointees are: Diane Barr-Roumbus, James Roumbus, Sandy McKnight, Al Simmons, Sandy Ray, Ben Tomera and Desiree Biro, term ending 1st Monday January 2027). Term is for two (2) years.

x. Discussion: : Internal Posting: Removing the word “may” and making it mandatory for internal postings of job openings and promotions.

Attorney Reed passed out a revised draft of the Ordinance. He asked the Council to review and get back to him with any changes.

The Council President advised the Council that depending upon the number of suggested changes, he would either instruct the Clerk-Treasurer to place it on the October 27th plenary meeting or study session agenda.

ORDINANCE NO. ____
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.

WHEREAS, The Town Council is the fiscal and legislative body of the Town of Highland;

WHEREAS, IC 36-1-3-2 confers upon all local units the powers that they need for the effective operation of government as to local affairs;

WHEREAS, IC 36-1-3-6 (b)(1) prescribes that any such exercise of power shall be authorized through enactment of an ordinance passed by the legislative body; and

WHEREAS, IC 36-1-4, section 14 provides in pertinent part for the establishment of a system of employment for any class of employee; and

WHEREAS, The Town Council has determined that certain modifications to the program for compensation, benefits and personnel management for its public workforce, consistent with Indiana Statutes, would be of benefit to support and carryout the public purposes of the municipality;

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

Section 1. That *Section 3.21* of the Compensation and Benefits Ordinance Commonly Known as the Municipal Employees Handbook be repealed in its entirety, and replaced with the following:

§ 3.21 Promotions

§ 3.21 Promotions: Promotions are based on the belief that it is in the best interest of all of us to have the most qualified person assigned to every job. All promotions shall be made with the clear and unwavering intent to prioritize the Town's current employees. It is the Town's policy that ALL vacancies will first be posted internally and filled by current, qualified employees who deserve such promotions. Only in

the event that no internal candidates meet the minimum qualifications or demonstrate sufficient suitability for the role, or in the event of an emergency, as determined by the Department Manager and, for certain jobs, the governing board of the Town, may the position be opened to external applicants. ALL positions will be posted on the Towns and the particular departments bulletin board(s) for five (5) workdays. While the governing board of the Town or a particular department (as the case may be) can conduct a search simultaneously outside of the Town, qualified Town employees shall be interviewed first and given priority over all others. If you want to be considered for the position, notify your supervisor. Promotions will be made on the basis of factors such as job performance, efficiency, training, knowledge, job qualifications, skills, ability and the supervisors' evaluation of the employees' potential abilities. To be eligible for promotion, an employee must meet minimum requirements of the higher-level position and must have a current satisfactory performance rating in the present position. Final decisions whether to promote a current employee or to hire someone outside the organization resides solely with the Department Manager and, for certain jobs, the governing board of the Town.

A six (6) month trial period is required. After an employee accepts a promotion, the employee cannot return to the prior position unless the position is available.

Section 2. That this ordinance is to be construed as a companion ordinance complimentary to any ordinance passed from time to time establishing a system of employment and known as the salary ordinance;

(A) That this ordinance shall be effective to the extent that it is not in conflict with Federal or State law;

(B) That all other ordinances and resolutions related to the subject matter of this ordinance and not in conflict with its provisions, and the enabling instruments dealing with public employee retirement plans, remain in full force and effect;

(C) That all other ordinances and resolutions in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed and have no further force or effect;

Section 3. That this ordinance shall become and remain in full force and effect from and after the date of its passage and adoption upon its signature by the executive as attested thereto by the clerk-treasurer, in the manner prescribed by IC 36-5-2-10(a).

Ordinance No. _____

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Memorandum of Meeting
Monday, October 13, 2025

Introduced on the ___ day of June 2025.

DULY ORDAINED and ADOPTED this ___ Day of June 2025, by the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana, having been passed by a vote of in favor and opposed and abstention.

TOWN COUNCIL of the TOWN of
HIGHLAND, INDIANA

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

Attest:

Mark Herak
Clerk-Treasurer (IC 33-16-4-1;IC 36-5-6-5)

Ordinance No. _____
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x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance No. xxxx: An Ordinance to amend Chapter 18.05.260 (D) of the Town of Highland Municipal Code as it pertains to short term housing. (Attorney Reed distributed a memorandum).

Attorney Reed explained the changes. He said the biggest change centered around the definition section where he better defined short-term. He said I think we previously had something that allowed very transient rentals and in the revised version, he used six (6) months or 180 days. He said those numbers were used in other communities for rentals and they passed the muster.

Ken Mika said he had a few questions. He said he doesn't see this ordinance passing till the end of the year or even the beginning of next year as it has to go to the Plan Commission first. At the Plan Commission, they will have to have a public hearing and ultimately make a recommendation to the Council.

Attorney Reed said by changing the verbiage in the definition we'll be able to address the issue that Mr. Rosignol is experiencing. Attorney Reed said he understood it is a pretty significant issue.

Mr. Mika said they have kept an eye on the property and the property is being maintained and outside of the more recent incident when the PD was called, they haven't had any problems except it was obviously being occupied on a short-term basis. He asked Attorney Reed if the 180 days would be the minimum that they have to rent for? With this ordinance not being passed until the end of the year, would this property then be grandfathered?

Attorney Reed said it would be grandfathered but only until the current rental lease expired, at which time they would have to apply to the current statute. Attorney Reed advised the Council there are ways to get around it. If the owner enters into a 180 day lease and any time up to 180 day the renter defaults, then the lease is terminated. That could be pre-planned between the owner and the renter. Another situation that could happen and this happens a lot in the medical field, where the hospital or clinics rent the property, sometimes in very nice neighborhoods like the one in Highland, allow their visiting staff to stay while they are working in the hospital or clinic. Sometime the contract for the visiting staff is only two (2) or three (3) months and then they rotate new staff in but the contract with the owner is for one (1) year. He said that is very hard to control because the renter (the hospital or clinic) has signed a one (1) year lease and people are coming and going. The problem is obviously transients don't have the same care and respect for the community as permanent residents do. Why sweep the walk or pull the weeds as they are only going to be there a few weeks.

Mr. Mika brought up another question about owner occupied. Our current ordinance says the owner of the property must reside on the property. The property in question, the owner lives in California.

Attorney Reed added that the owner is still getting a homestead exemption. He said he alerted the auditor's office and that exemption will be taken off. With his property taxes going up significantly, it is going to start becoming cost prohibitive to do rentals not only here but in other areas.

From: John Reed
To: Highland Town Council and CT
Date: September 15, 2025
Re: Proposed Ordinance Changes – Town of Highland

MEMORANDUM

This memorandum summarizes the substantive changes between the current *Chapter 3.15 – Public Works Projects – Procedures for the Selection of Professional Consulting Services* - of the Highland Town Ordinance and the newly proposed Ordinance 2025-15, which is entitled "*An Amended Ordinance Establishing Responsible Bidding Practices and Submission Requirements on Public Works Projects and Projects Receiving Economic Incentives from the Town of Highland,*" Ordinance Number 2025-15. As written, the proposed revision is intended to replace §3.15.100 through §3.15.150 in their entirety. All other sections contained within the current Chapter 3.15 shall remain in full force and effect, unless in conflict herewith.

While the substantive content of the ordinance remains largely unchanged, the proposed revision includes a restructuring and reformatting of the original language. The intent of this update is to make the Ordinance easier to interpret and apply by organizing related provisions into a more concise and logically flowing format. Overall, this enhances the Ordinance's readability without altering its core policy objectives. Moreover, the proposed revisions also incorporate updates to reflect current state laws, ensuring that the Town remains compliant with applicable state requirements. Each section scheduled for replacement has been clearly identified below.

x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance No. xxxx: An Ordinance to amend Chapter 3.05.050 (D)(1)(2) of the Town of Highland Municipal Code as it pertains to duties and responsibilities of purchasing agents.

Councilor Georgeff was following up with a suggestion made by Public Works Director Mark Knesek to increase the threshold of the Department Heads (Purchasing Agents) of \$15,000 to \$25,000 before having to get approval from the Works Board.

The Clerk-Treasurer said the state only begins to regulate purchases \$50,000 and greater and left purchases below \$50,000 at the discretion of the Purchasing Agency.

The general consensus of the Council was to increase the threshold to \$25,000.

The Clerk-Treasurer said he would prepare the documentation for the next meeting.

x. Discussion: Ordinance Regulating Garage Sales
(this is a place holder, Ken Mika to provide an update).

x. Discussion: Ordinance Regulating chickens and roosters
(this is a place holder, Ken Mika to provide an update).

x. Discussion: Food Truck Ordinance
(this is a place holder, Ken Mika to provide an update).

Ken Mika said he didn't have an opportunity to really work any further on these. He said he has the fine points but he's never written an ordinance before and he realizes it is not rocket science but he spoke briefly to Attorney Reed and they decided that he was going to give the fine points to Attorney Reed and Attorney Reed would create the Ordinance. Mr. Mika did ask the Council, in particular Councilman Robertson regarding the food truck ordinance. He questioned the need for one since the state is adopting statutes that will regulate food trucks which will take much of the power away from the individual towns and cities. This is to take place in 2027 so a town ordinance would be in effect for a little over a year. He said Alex put together a very comprehensive ordinance which if the Council wants to proceed, needs simplification in Ken's mind.

Councilor Robertson said he thought the changes with the State, affected our ability to, give out licenses, permits, and collect those fees. The proposed legislation will go through the County's Health Department. He said it becomes a question of do we want to implement it and try to collect some fees over the next year or two (2) and once the legislation goes into effect, have a companion ordinance that compliments the state legislation and allows Highland to collect some fees? He said we could at least spell out where in Town food trucks can operate, since they are a transient merchant facility and not affect the brick and mortar establishments. Councilor Robertson said he would work with Mr. Mika and simplify before presenting it to the Council again.

x. Discussion: IT Director Ed Dabrowski has requested the Town buy back ten (10) vacation days. Per the employee handbook, section 5.02.09, an employee is only able to sell back ten (10) days but must receive approval from their department head which in Ed's case is the Council.

Councilor Scheeringa told the Council that Ed Dabrowski had sent him an email requesting to sell back ten (10) vacation days which requires Council approval and Councilor Scheeringa failed to forward it on to the Council. He then asked Mr. Dabrowski to give a brief explanation.

Mr. Dabrowski said he realizes that the request for a buyback of vacation time usually comes a little later in the year, around November, December but due to recent changes in the way the Town pays for bought back vacation and with SB1 happening soon, he was asking early for consideration so he could use 2025 funds to sell back ten (10) vacation days. He said he was concerned if he waited and the money would be rolled over into 2026 and he won't have the funds in the budget. He said he identified in the current budget where the funds could come from. He said he even asked if other employees were in need of additional vacation time and was told no. He said because of the line of work he is in, its hard to take vacation, so he's lost vacation days while he's been here. He said it is quite hard sometimes to take vacation time this time of year because other people taking vacation time. He said when the policy was updated last year, from five (5) to ten (10), it saved him some money but he's in the same situation as he wants to sell an additional ten (10) above the ten (10) days the policy permits but he needs Council approval.

The general consensus was they didn't have a problem with Ed's request.

President Georgeff asked if there were any other items to be discussed tonight. Hearing none, he adjourned that meeting at 8:10 o'clock p.m.

• **Plenary Business Meeting of Monday October 27, 2025**

- Minutes of the Meeting of Monday, October 13, 2025
- Additional appropriation hearing
- Ordinance No. 1835
- Accounts Payable Voucher