

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Special Study Session/Meeting (In person)
Thirtieth Town Council of Highland
Saturday, March 7, 2026**

The Thirtieth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a special study session on **Saturday, March 7, 2026, (9:00 O'clock P.M.)**, in the Community Room of the Highland Police Station, 3315 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

****This meeting is convened as an in person meeting. The public is able to participate 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, Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra, Metropolitan Police Chief Ralph Potesta, Public Works Director Mark Knesek, Fire Chief Glenn Schlessner, Building Commissioner Ken Mika and Park and Recreation Director Tim Diamond were in person.

Councilor Georgeff began by saying this meeting was open to the public and was properly advertised.

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: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026

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 SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026 AT 9:00 A.M. OF THE HIGHLAND TOWN COUNCIL. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY SESSION IS TO DISCUSS GOALS AND STRATEGIZE WITH THE DEPARTMENT HEADS, PURSUANT TO HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 2.05.130(A)(4) AND SECTION 2.05.130(F) AND SUCH OTHER MATTERS AS MAY BE DEEMED NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE.

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM AT THE HIGHLAND POLICE STATION, 3315 RIDGE ROAD, HIGHLAND. NO ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN OTHER THAN THE EXCHANGE AND RECEIPT OF INFORMATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT HEADS.

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

(IC5-14-L5-5).

Generation: 3/14/26 at 8:08 PM

Councilor Georgeff then went around the room asking each department to take a few minutes and update the Council on their Departments goals and strategies for the balance of 2026.

Ken Mika- Building Commissioner:

- 3/7/26 Dept. Head Mtg. w/ T.C. ^(audited)
- Bldg. / Provide customer serv.
 - T.C. / B2M projects comm. before us & coordinating those.
 - Code Enforcement / B.Licenses & Peddlers/solicitors.

- * ~~Code Enfc. / condition of parking lot~~
- + ~~Woodland Sp. / Prop. Maint~~

? Call in complaints (BTH PD)

- Children / Garage Sale Ord
- Land Use

Next Rev. from 2025

- Bus Lic.
- Fees

Ed Dabrowski- IT Director:

Mark Herak

From: Edward Dabrowski
Sent: Sunday, March 8, 2026 8:23 AM
To: Mark Herak
Subject: Department Head / Town Council Meeting - March 7, 2026 9am

IT Expectations and Goals

- Maintain all technology assets so they remain current, reliable, and fully functional.
- Continue monitoring and evaluating emerging technologies that could benefit the Town and improve operations or services.
- Operate within the approved IT budget and maintain responsible fiscal management.
- Continuously seek cost savings and operational efficiencies while staying within budget.
- Strengthen security and resilience, working toward standards that exceed national best practices for municipal technology systems.

Tim Diamond- Park & Recreation Director:

- PARKS 3/7/26
-
- 2026
- 5-yr Master Plan
 - Expand main SQ Playground and
April
 - Sheppard Park renovation
 - Parking
 - Field Design
 - walking path
 - Master Plan Focus
 - playgrounds - rebo / ADA
 - Gazebos
 - Lincoln Center
 - OP EX
 - Increase revenue
 - Reduce Expense
 - Evaluate Staffing Level
 - Funding
 - Grants
 - Extend Bond

Mark Knesek- Public Works Director:

Appendix A
 2026 Community Crossings Matching Grant Project List

Route Name	From	To	Estimate Cost
Parkway Dr	Terrace Dr	Frontage Rd	\$114,555.00
Terrace Dr	Parkway Dr	Branton Av	\$137,440.50
Southmoor Av	Terrace Dr	99th St	\$14,621.50
99th St	Southmoor Av	Branton Av	\$48,886.00
Wildwood Ln	Briarwood Ln	Northwood Ln	\$27,455.25
Wildwood Ln	Ramblewood Dr	Birchwood Ln	\$20,905.50
Whispering Oaks Ct	Prairie Av	Dead End	\$14,657.50
Timberidge Ln	Timberidge Ct	Prairie Av	\$41,327.00
Oakwood Ct	Timberidge Ln	Dead End	\$15,347.00
Timberidge Ct	Dead End	Dead End	\$37,537.00
Ridge Rd	Town Boundary	Indianapolis Blvd	\$318,265.35
Ridge Rd	575' W. of Cline Av	Cline Av	\$82,676.75
Wirth Rd	O'Day Dr	Grace St	\$508,534.75
			\$1,382,209.10

C
 B
 G
 A
 D
 A
 Ramps
 136,000
 102,000
 Grant
 Milestones

\$ 647,288.13 grant
 Bid - 1,294,576.26
 Milestones

- 1. NEW Pump Station?
- 2. 2- NEW 20" WATERMAIN GARAGE FEED LINES
- 3- LINCOLN ST RENN TO LUDY ^{water main} PROJECT
Road Repair ADDING BIKE LANE - updated Railway crossing
- 4. LEAD SERVICE INVENTORY
- 5. FEDERAL LINING GRANT 1000000 5th ST ^{interceptor}
- ~~6. 48,500 ft. per year cleanup TV trailers~~
~~85 miles~~
~~ST FORD~~

Ralph Potesta- Metropolitan Police Chief:

03/07/2026

Town Council Special Study Session Notes:

This years goals:

Equipment – Drone replacement – We actually use these a lot. Ours are outdated. We will be using grant money our social worker was able to obtain to purchase at least one new one right away...once the money comes in. Working on more grant money to put towards this purchase.

Radio replacement – Mrvan Community Project Funding grant submitted.

Animal Shelter – would love to try to break ground this year

Training – We were able to get Natelborg registered for the next Staff and Command Class using money from 2025. Because of this, we have plenty of training money for 2026. Anaya requested to go to a report writing class being sponsored by I think Hobart. I'd like to focus on more of this type of training and less conference type training. Although I feel our Field Training Officers do a great job, we have one of the strictest programs around but, I feel that some of our younger officers have regressed on the simpler aspects of this job.

VIPS - Want to work on building up VIPS and getting them better equipment (i.e. cars).

Code Enforcement – want to work more on our partnership with Code Enforcement. Want to look into specific designated software systems that will help speed up resolution of reported code violations. Basically want to make it easier for our residents to report issues AND, ensure a quicker response by Orth and Carl Porter as well as our Officers when needed. There appears to be an issue with residents being able to get ahold of a code enforcement officer in a timely manner.

Grants – more involvement – Grant officers are in the process of reregistering for the Federal Grant database which will give us more options to apply for more federal grants.

Grant season is just beginning so a lot are opening up.

Currently working on:

Spirit of Blue grant – for safety equipment – Tourniquets and lapel lights

Norfolk Southern opens up in April – we will be applying again – drones

Motorola – radios, body cams, and drones

Firehouse subs - submitted

Community Project Funding grant - submitted

Directed Patrol – Would like to do more of this but budget cuts may prevent.

(traffic / retail theft / park patrols / bike patrols [during events])

EBike Ord – Done - Get approved ASAP

Staffing – Looking to hire 1 over what we are budgeted for due to Commander Banasiak's early 2027 retirement. Academy starts late July / Early August this year. Sending 3. Will not be on their own until Spring 2027.

Glenn Schlessler- Fire Chief:
Maria Becerra- Redevelopment Director:

03/07/2026

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Revision of Outdated Plans & Development of New Plans

- **Safety Action Plan Federally Funded**
 - Plan completed use as a Guide for Street Safety Improvements, review annually
- **Roadway Safety Audit**
 - NIRPC - awarded a Grant for Kennedy & 45th, this is in progress
- **Comprehensive Master Plan Updating from 2006**
 - Final Draft to be presented to Plan Commission 4-1-2026 followed by Public Hearing
 - Town Council Approval of Final Plan May 2026
- **Redevelopment Plan**
 - in progress to be presented to the Redevelopment and Planning Commission 4-1-2026

New and Ongoing Programs

- **New Homeownership Program - First Responders and Municipal Employees**
 - Launched 2026
- **Commercial Property Grants Program**
 - Commission will be revising the current program - 2026
- **Downtown Improvements & Main Street**
 - Main Square Fence installed
 - Installed of Year-Round Decorative Lighting Jewett (Kennedy to 5th)
 - Explore Downtown Link to businesses was launched December 2025
 - Main Street Group – Successful 1st Retail Crawl, continued Restaurant Monthly Crawls expanded the number of Restaurants that participated Coordinated 2 Big Restaurant Crawls.

New Initiatives

- Develop T.I.F. Development Guidelines

The Council expressed concerned over a number of accidents (2), that the Council was not informed of until several days later. They also expressed concern that there is no consistency among the departments on how the accidents are handled.

Councilor Georgeff said the Town Council would become the ad hoc Safety Committee. The Council put in place the initial frame work:

The Department's Liaison is to be notified of the accident within the hour of which it happened.

They want a consistency on how each department handles an accident.

If the accident involves an injury (either to the employee or pedestrian) the police need to be called and police supervisor will conduct an investigation.

If the accident involves an injury, the employee will be required to take a blood test.

If alcohol is suspected in the accident, the employee will be required to take a blood test.

There was much discussion but no consensus as to when a blood test would be required.

Each Councilor commented on each of the department head's goals and strategies.


Councilor Turich introduced a number of KPI's he would like to have the Council implement. There was no general consensus amongst the Council but they did agree to look at them later before implementation.

The Clerk-Treasurer, who will be absent from Monday's meeting due to mandatory training in Indianapolis, reviewed the March 9, 2026 Plenary Council Meeting:

Agenda
Fifty-Seventh Regular or Special Meeting
of the Thirtieth Town Council of Highland
Regular Plenary Meeting of Monday, March 9, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
Agenda organized pursuant to Section 2.05.090 of the Highland Municipal Code

Topic: Town of Highland, IN - Town Council Plenary Meeting
Time: March 9, 2026 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

*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 room now, otherwise your continued presence is your consent to be recorded and live streamed

Prayer:	Philip Scheeringa
Pledge of Allegiance:	Philip Scheeringa
Roll Call:	
	George Georgeff
	Doug Turich
A GREAT PLACE TO CALL HOME	Alex Robertson
	Thomas (Tom) Black
	Philip Scheeringa

Minutes of
Previous Session: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of 23 February 2026.

- Special Orders:
1. Ratify the Meeting: Ratify the special meeting held on Saturday, March 7, 2026 in the Community Room of the Highland Police Station, 3315 Ridge Road, pursuant to HMC Section 2.05.130(A) (4) and Section 2.05.130(F).
 2. Consideration of Proposed Additional Appropriations: (controlled And non-controlled funds): Proposed Additional Appropriations in Excess of the 2025 Budget for the Legacy Foundation Grant Fund in
-

The Town of Highland acknowledges its responsibility to comply with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. In order to assist individuals with disabilities who require special services (i.e. sign interpretative services, alternative audio/visual devices, etc.) for participation in or access to Municipal sponsored public programs, services and or meetings, the Town of Highland requests that individuals make requests for these services forty-eight (48) hours ahead of the scheduled program, service and or meeting. To make arrangements, contact the ADA Coordinator for the Town of Highland at (219) 972-7595.

the amount of \$17,500.00.

- (a) Attorney verification of Proofs of Publication: Gateway
- (b) Public Hearing.
- (c) Action on **Appropriation Enactment No. 2026-01:**
An Enactment Appropriating Additional Moneys in
Excess of the Annual Budget for the **Legacy Foundation**
Grant Fund, all pursuant to I.C. 6-1.1-18, and I.C. 36-5-3-5

**the hearing will be March 23, 2026.*

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC or VISITORS This portion of the Town Council Meeting is reserved for persons who desire to address the Town Council regarding matters on the agenda. Persons addressing the Town Council are requested to limit their presentations to **two (2) minutes** and encouraged to avoid repetitious comments.

Staff Reports:

- Building & Inspection Report.
- Fire Department Report.
- Workplace Safety Report.

Communications: Chamber - Breakfast with the Easter Bunny – Saturday, March 14, 2026
Garage Sale –Saturday, March 14, 2026 at Lincoln Center
Bunny’s Trail Adventure – Friday, March 20, 2026 at Lincoln Center
Community Band Concert – March 18, 2026 at Monbeck Auditorium
Senior Social – March 31, 2026
Park Clean-up Day – Saturday, April 25, 2026
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

Home Rule Boards and Commissions

Legislative Appointments

Regional Statutory Commissions or Boards

Home Rule Commissions

1. **Main Street Bureau Board:** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council. Term: Two years ending 1 Jan 2027. *Currently only 8 of 17 appointed.*
-

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**Unfinished
Business &
General Orders:**

1. **Proposed Ordinance No. 1810-A:** An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 5.20.02 of the Compensation, Benefits and Personnel Program of the Municipality to be known as the Compensation and Benefits Ordinance commonly known as the Employees Handbook, entitled Clothing Allowance, pursuant to IC 36-1-3 and other relevant statutes. *(Introduced Only by Councilor Black at the February 23rd plenary meeting)*

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Approval and instruction.** Action to approve and instruct the Town Council President to affix his signature to the Transmittal Letter Committing Highland to Participate with the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission for the Purchase of Zero (Electric) Vehicles dated March 9, 2026.
2. **Proposed Ordinance No.1847:** An Ordinance to amend Chapter 9.10.010 (c) fixing the authorized strength of the Highland Metropolitan Police Department.
3. **Approval of the Applicant for the Redevelopment Down Payment Assistance Program.**
4. **Action regarding Community Crossings Grant Project for 2026.**
 - (a) **Works Board Order No. 2026-04:** An Order of the Works Board Accepting the Bid of Milestone Contractors, L.P. for the 2026 Community Crossing Matching Grant Street Improvement Project Being the lowest responsive and responsible bid in the amount of One Million Three Hundred Eighty-Two Thousand Two Hundred and nine Dollars and ten cents (\$1,382,209.10).
 - (b) **Works Board Order No. 2026-05:** An Order Approving and Authorizing An agreement between NIES Engineering, Incorporated and the Town of Highland to perform Professional Engineering Services during Construction for the 2026 Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) Street Improvement Project in the amount not-to-exceed \$120,000.
 - (c) **Works Board Order No. 2026-06:** An Order of the Works Board Accepting the Bid of Milestone Contractors, L.P. for the 2026 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Being the lowest responsive and responsible bid in the amount of One Hundred Forty-One Thousand Three Hundred and Twenty-eight Dollars and no cents (\$141,328.00).

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5. **Controlled Event Permit.** Action regarding permission to conduct

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a festival of the Main Street Bureau on a public way submitted by it, March 2, 2026.

This is a controlled event under Chapter 5.25. Section §5.25.020(B) requires action by the Town Council in an open regular or special session. The Council will also need to fix the amount of liability insurance, pursuant to §5.25.020 (D). Pursuant to that section, the Town Council has previously directed that the applicant procures liability insurance for the event which names the Town of Highland as an additional insured in the amount of One million dollars (\$1,000,000) and provide a certificate or proof of this insurance before the event and those businesses serving alcohol need to name the Town of Highland as an additional insured on their liability Insurance policy.

- (b) Request from Main Street Bureau seeking permission for its events of August 25, 2026, September 29, 2026 and October 27, 2026 as a controlled event.

When the applicant is the municipality, through its executive departments, its administrative bodies, or agencies, no formal application is required provided that a request shall be filed in sufficient time to permit the town council to act in a regular or special meeting in advance of the event.

The Town Council must act in a regular or special meeting upon the application or request, where it may, in its discretion, issue such permit and likewise, in its discretion, may refuse the issuance of a permit.

******The motion should be to move to approve the special event with alcohol permit (SEAP) for the Main Street's Restaurant Crawl to be held August 25, 2026, September 29, 2026 and October 27, 2026. The Street Closure will be Highway Avenue from 5th Street to Kennedy Avenue and the additional liability insurance established at \$1,000,000 and each business serving alcohol (if the alcohol is to be carried out of the business onto Highway Avenue) needs to name the Town of Highland as an additional insured on their liability insurance policy prior to the event.

Comments or	Councilor George Georgeff
Remarks from the	
Town Council:	Councilor Doug Turich
(Good of the Order)	Councilor Alex Robertson
	Councilor Tom Black

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Memorandum of Meeting
Saturday, March 7, 2026

Councilor Philip Scheeringa	
COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC or VISITORS	This portion of the Town Council Meeting is reserved for persons who desire to address the Town Council. Depending on the nature of the comments, the Town Council may direct the staff to address the topic or follow-up on matters that may arise from public comments. If necessary, the matter may be set for action at a future meeting. Persons addressing the Town Council are requested to limit their presentations to two (2) minutes and encouraged to avoid repetitious comments.
ACTION TO PAY Accounts Payable Vouchers	Accounts payable vouchers February 25, 2026- March 10,2026, in the amount of \$482,267.33 General Fund, \$297,618.69; MVH Fund, \$28,783.30; LAW Enforcement Continuing Education Training and Supply Fund, \$190.00; Public Safety Income, \$9,673.00; Community Crossing Grant, \$124,636.32; MCCD, \$3,074.89; ICT Fund, \$9,025.30; Insurance Premium, \$9,265.83 Payroll Docket for payday of March 6,2026 by fund: General, \$348,739.54 Payroll Docket for payday of March 6, 2026: Office of Clerk-Treasurer, \$15,925.02; Building and Inspection Department, \$11,622.93; Metropolitan Police Department, \$159,721.05; Public Works Department (Agency), \$88,287.86; Fire Department, \$6,304.99 and Information and Technology Department, \$4,441.37. Total Payroll: \$286,303.22
ADJOURNMENT	The Town Council February 23, 2026 study session immediately following the Regular Meeting. <i>Posted pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-4(a)</i>

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The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 o'clock am.

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