



TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH TOWN COMMISSION MINUTES

**TOWN HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
3614 S. OCEAN BLVD., HIGHLAND BEACH, FL**

**Date: November 04, 2025
Time: 1:30 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moore called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Commissioner Jason Chudnofsky
Commissioner Judith Goldberg
Commissioner Donald Peters
Mayor Natasha Moore
Town Manager Marshall Labadie
Town Attorney Leonard Rubin
Town Clerk Lanelda Gaskins

ABSENT
Vice Mayor David Stern

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Town Commission led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

4. INVOCATION

None.

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Moore modified the agenda to add a Presentation in honor of Tom McCarthy's retirement as item 6.A., with the existing items moved down accordingly.

MOTION: Goldberg/Peters - A motion was made and seconded to modify the agenda accordingly, which passed unanimously 4 to 0.

6. PRESENTATIONS / PROCLAMATIONS

A. Presentation in honor of Tom McCarthy's Retirement.
Assistant Fire Chief Tom McCarthy expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to help establish Highland Beach Fire Rescue. He reflected on his three and a half

year journey with the town, noting it had been an amazing experience to start a new fire department and work with dedicated staff. He thanked the commission, Mayor, and Town Manager for their support throughout his tenure.

Fire Chief Glenn Joseph acknowledged McCarthy's critical role in establishing the fire department, describing his contribution as essential to the implementation of the fire rescue department. Chief Joseph presented Tom McCarthy with a plaque recognizing his "outstanding contribution and invaluable role in establishing the Highland Beach Fire Rescue" and noting that his "dedication, guidance, and service will never always be remembered."

B. Resolution No. 2025-027

A Resolution of the Town Commission of the Town of Highland Beach, Florida, ratifying the selection, appointments, and term of office of members of the Planning Board; and providing for an effective date.

Mayor Moore read the title of Resolution No. 2025-027 ratifying the selection, appointments, and term of office of members of the Planning Board; and providing for an effective date.

There were no Town Commission comments.

MOTION: Goldberg/Peters - A motion made and seconded to adopt Resolution No. 2025-027. The motion passed unanimously, 4 - 0.

C. Veterans Day Proclamation

Mayor Moore read the proclamation recognizing November 11, 2025 as Veterans Day.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Public Comments will be limited to five (5) minutes per speaker.)

Chief of Police Craig Hartmann presented the Police Department's Florida Commission on Accreditation Certification Award, noting that the department has now been accredited three times since 2016. He explained that the rigorous three-year assessment includes a comprehensive review of policies, standards, staff interviews, and officer ride-along. For the second consecutive term, the department received a flawless report—an uncommon achievement. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining high statewide standards, especially for a small agency.

Chief of Police Hartmann recognized Accreditation Training Manager/Officer Eric Horowitz for his 15 years of leadership in policy development and best practices. He presented Officer Aronowitz with a department commendation for his contributions.

Edward Atamian, President of the Board of Trustees at Villa Magna (2727 South Ocean Boulevard), addressed the commission regarding proposed signage for their property. He explained that Villa Magna has undergone \$22 million in renovations since 2018 and is now looking to complete the landscaping with new signage. He noted their unique situation with three driveways covering more than 375 linear square feet, creating safety issues as vehicles often enter the wrong driveway. Mr. Atamian showed images of current and proposed signage, emphasizing that larger, more visible signs would reduce congestion and potential accidents.

Town Manager Labadie explained that the issue was that the proposed signs exceed the town's size restrictions, with the main entrance sign being 20 square feet when code limits them to 10 square feet, and smaller signs at 12 square feet when limited to 3 square feet. He noted that unlike zoning code variances, there is no variance process available for signage under Section 23 of the town code, and the only option would be to modify the ordinance.

After discussion, the commission agreed to add this item to the December 2nd agenda for further consideration. Town Attorney Rubin noted he would need to research whether the town can modify the signage ordinance in light of Senate Bill 180, which restricts the town from making more burdensome regulations until 2027.

Maggie Chappelle provided comments.

8. **ORDINANCES** (Public Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker per item after Commission initial discussion.)

None.

9. **CONSENT AGENDA** (These are items that the Commission typically does not need to discuss individually, and which are voted on as a group.) Public Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker per item after Commission initial discussion.

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

October 07, 2025 Town Commission Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Goldberg/Peters - A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda, which passed unanimously 4 to 0.

10. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** (Public Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker per item after Town Commission initial discussion.)

A. Building Department Recertification Program Update

Town Manager Labadie provided an update on the Building Recertification program, noting 28 buildings have completed their recertification, 21 are currently under permit, and two buildings have been notified that they will need to complete recertification as they approach the 20-year mark. He also mentioned that fire

safety inspections are ongoing and have revealed more issues than initially anticipated, but the fire department is working with building owners on reasonable timeframes for compliance.

B. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) RRR Project Update

Town Manager Labadie reported that the FDOT project is in its final stages, with completion expected around November 16th. Although the final paving may be completed by that date, he noted that significant touch-up work remains, including driveways, ADA crossings, sod work, and minor grading, which could take another month. He also mentioned that the town's Sanitary Sewer Lining project is progressing very well behind FDOT work, with the side streets already completed and work on State Road A1A expected to begin in the next week or two.

11. NEW BUSINESS (Public Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker per item after Town Commission initial discussion.)

A. Introduction of a Proposed Ordinance providing reasonable accommodation procedure for certified recovery residences.

Mayor Moore read the title of this item.

Town Attorney Rubin introduced a proposed ordinance mandated by the Florida Legislature requiring the town to establish procedures for certified recovery residences (formerly known as "sober homes"). He explained that under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Fair Housing Act, persons undergoing substance abuse treatment are considered disabled and entitled to reasonable accommodation in zoning regulations.

Attorney Rubin noted that, while this has been a contentious issue in neighboring cities such as Boca Raton and Delray Beach, Highland Beach has not previously needed to address it. The proposed ordinance would create a framework for processing accommodation requests, requiring applicants to demonstrate certification and undergo review by the building official, with final decisions made by a magistrate to remove politics from the process.

Town Commission discussions ensued regarding the proposed ordinances. In response to Commissioner Goldberg's question, Attorney Rubin clarified that the ordinance would not override condominium or HOA restrictions or rental or occupancy. He recommended adding language explicitly stating this. He also noted that without a town definition of "family" limiting the number of unrelated people in a dwelling, occupancy limitations in the International Property Maintenance Code would be the most restrictive element.

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to forward the proposed ordinance to the Planning Board for review.

B. Introduction of a Proposed Resolution adopting procedures for the initiation and adoption of Town ordinances.

Town Manager Labadie presented a proposed resolution to formalize the town's existing process for adopting ordinances. The process includes an introduction phase, board reviews, and opportunities for public input, with a champion or stakeholder helping to shepherd proposals through the process.

Mayor Moore opened public comments.

Rick Greenwald, a resident on Tranquility Drive, commented that while he supports the process, he had two concerns: whether formalizing the process through resolution might create grounds for appeal if not followed exactly, and whether requiring review by advisory boards might cause delays when boards have difficulty achieving quorums.

After discussion, the Commission reached consensus to revise the proposed resolution language to make advisory board review optional rather than mandatory. Also, add language indicating that the Commission may waive these requirements, and that the Town's failure to follow them will not invalidate the ordinance as long as all statutory obligations are followed. Town Attorney Rubin stated he would update the language and bring it back at the next meeting.

12. TOWN COMMISSION COMMENTS

Commissioner Jason Chudnofsky expressed concern about the flooding at the Milani Park property, asking whether the planned development there would include proper fill and elevation. He also noted issues with the rainwater collecting on sidewalks due to the raised road. Town Manager Labadie addressed both concerns, noting that detailed plans are not yet available, the developers will need to elevate the area and accommodate stormwater according to the stipulated settlement. The rainwater issues on sidewalks are being addressed through a requested state appropriation.

Commissioner Judith M. Goldberg praised the professionalism of the Police Department and Chief Hartman's evident pride in the agency. She also expressed appreciation for being part of the commission, calling it "a really esteemed pleasure." She is looking forward to attending the National League of Cities City Summit.

Commissioner Donald Peters thanked Tom McCarthy for his service, noting his contributions not only as a firefighter but also as a youth coach. He also expressed appreciation for the police department and acknowledged veterans in advance of Veterans Day.

Mayor Natasha Moore discussed the development of Milani Park, noting that while the original plan called for 100 parking spaces, the County has agreed to build only 46 spots (with 4 for county staff and 4 handicapped spaces, leaving 38 for the general public). She viewed this reduction as a positive outcome given that the county was

unwilling to abandon the park project entirely and expressed pleasure with the architect's beautiful design for the park.

13. TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Town Attorney Rubin had no report.

14. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Labadie congratulated Tom McCarthy again for his foundational work in establishing the fire department. He also commended Chief of Police Hartmann and the police department for their flawless accreditation.

He alerted the Commission of upcoming legislative discussions about property taxes, with potential proposals to eliminate homestead property taxes. He expressed concern that since homestead properties represent 43% of Highland Beach's tax roll, and 80% of ad valorem taxes fund public safety, any such change would significantly impact town finances.

Town Manager Labadie noted that strategic planning for the new fiscal year would begin in December through February, with updates on completed projects and discussions of new priorities. Finally, he reminded everyone about the "Mingle Jingle" event scheduled for December 4th at St. Lucy's Catholic Church from 5-8 PM.

15. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Moore announced the following:

Board Vacancies

Code Enforcement Board One (1) vacancy for a three-year term

Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board One (1) vacancy for an unexpired term end April 30, 2027

Mayor Moore read the announcements as follows:

Meetings and Events

November 05, 2025 11:00 A.M. Natural Resources Preservation Advisory Board Regular Meeting

November 11, 2025 Town Hall closed in observance of Veteran's Day

November 12, 2025 1:00 P.M. Special Magistrate Hearing

November 13, 2025 9:30 A.M. Planning Board Regular Meeting

November 27-28, 2025 Town Hall closed in observance of Thanksgiving

Board Action Report

None.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:48 P.M.

APPROVED: December 02, 2025, Town Commission Meeting.

Signed Minutes on file in the
Town Clerk's Office

ATTEST:

Natasha Moore, Mayor

Transcribed by
Lanelda Gaskins

12/02/2025

Lanelda Gaskins, MMC
Town Clerk

Date

Disclaimer: Effective May 19, 2020, per Resolution No. 20-008, all meeting minutes are transcribed as a brief summary reflecting the events of this meeting. Verbatim audio/video recordings are permanent records and are available on the Town's

Media Archives & Minutes webpage: <https://highlandbeach-fl.municodemeetings.com/>.