

**VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK**

1650 Highland Park Drive North

Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

**Regular Meeting**

**IN ATTENDANCE** Mayor Brandon McWhorter, Commissioner Amanda Updike, Commissioner Derek Camann, City Manager Ric Busbee, Village Clerk Blair Updike, Clerk’s Assistant Lita O’Neill, City Attorney Andrew Hand (via telephone), Resident Mark Smith

**CALL TO ORDER** Mayor McWhorter called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** led by Mayor McWhorter

**ROLL CALL** taken by the Clerk’s Assistant Lita O’Neill

Commissioners present included Mayor Brandon McWhorter, Commissioner Amanda Updike, and Commissioner Derek Camann. A quorum was present.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Adoption of previous meeting minutes from May 28, 2025

Commissioner Updike made a motion to adopt the previous meeting minutes from the May 28, 2025 regular meeting of the Village Commission. Vice-Mayor Camann seconded the motion.

A voice call vote was taken. All were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Mr. Busbee made the following announcements:

1. Florida DOGE sent out a request to municipalities to report back on information related to FY 2023 and FY 2024. The Treasurer completed that report last Saturday.
2. The golf course property is listed for sale at $6,000,000.
3. The City Manager spoke to the owner of at La Casa de Josefina about the overgrown grass. The property owner has hired a new lawn maintenance company to take care of the yard maintenance.
4. There was a water outage on Sunday, but the Village ran on the backup interconnect for a day. The cause was repaired within a couple of days.
5. The tree at the top of the hill will be removed soon. It is the last of the three water oaks that needs to be removed.
6. Resident Blair Updike has paid excess fire assessments for two years on her tax bill. Staff is working to resolve the coding issue for her current property with Polk County Property Appraiser. She should only be billed $143 this upcoming fiscal year for a single multi-family unit. Since Ms. Updike has overpaid $324 over two years (2023 and 2024), the Village needs to reimburse her this amount. This is the only case like this in the Village.
7. The Water Rate Study from the Florida Rural Water Association is complete. Mr. Busbee presented a copy to each of the Commissioners for review and discussion. He noted key items from the report, including the charts on page 4 that compare the annual revenue for the Enterprise Fund based on current rates and the projected income based on proposed rates. Mr. Busbee explained the current rate structure on page 12 and proposed rate structure on pages 13-14. The base rate would increase from $40 to $50, and the usage rate “Blocks” would increase as shown on page 15 in the report.

The City Manager invited the Commission to review the report and contact him individually with any questions. Commissioner Updike commented that the 3% Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase built in each year would be helpful. The City Manager stated that it has been about sixteen years since the water rates have increased. If the Village had implemented a 3% CPI each year since the last rate change, the base rate would have increased 45% by now (as opposed to the 25% increase that is proposed this year). The City Manager commented that costs are going up in general, and we must respond.

The Mayor opened the floor for any questions. Resident Mark Smith noted that the increase in rates is needed.

Commissioner Updike asked what the time frame is to change the rates. The City Manager responded that the rates could go into effect by the start of the new fiscal year, October 1, 2025, at the will of the Village Commission.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

The Treasurer presented the FY 2024-2025 budget summary and budget vs. actuals report for October 2024 through September 2025. Ms. Bradley noted that with two months left in the fiscal year, the budget is as planned other than the fact that insurance was under budgeted by $50. Therefore, a budget amendment will need to be approved by resolution no later than the first sixty (60) days of the next fiscal year, which would be in October or November of 2025.

**COMMISSION AGENDA**

1. Ordinance 2025-01 (Village-initiated Rezoning)

Mayor McWhorter read Ordinance 2025-01 by title into the record.

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK, SPECIFICALLY AMENDING NINETEEN (19) PARCELS OF LAND COMPRISING +/-11.85 ACRES, GENERALLY LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF HIGHLAND PARK DRIVE NORTH, FROM THE ZONING OF R-2T, TRADITIONAL SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO R-2, SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Mayor McWhorter asked if staff had any information related to this item. There have been no changes since the first reading.

Mayor McWhorter opened the floor for public comment. Being none, the floor was closed. Commissioner Updike commented that this is a fine idea and is glad it is getting done.

Mayor McWhorter made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-01, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Camann.

A voice call vote was taken. All were in favor, and none were opposed.

The motion passed unanimously.

1. Resolution 2025-01 Preliminary Rate Resolution for Non-Ad Valorem Fire Assessment

Mayor McWhorter read Resolution 2025-01 by title into the record.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS; PROVIDING AUTHORITY, PURPOSE, AND DEFINITIONS; PROVIDNG LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS; DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF ASSESSING FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSMENT COSTS AGAINST PROPERTIES WITHIN THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK; DETERMINING THE FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSED COST AND INITIAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS; DIRECTING THE PREPARATION OF AN ASSESSMENT ROLL; AUTHORIZING A PUBLIC HEARING AND DIRECTING THE PROVISION OF NOTICE THEREFOR; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Mayor McWhorter opened the floor for public comment. Being none, the floor was closed. Commissioner Updike commented that this is a fine idea and is glad it is getting done.

Mayor McWhorter made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-01, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Camann.

A voice call vote was taken. All were in favor, and none were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

**RECOGNITION OF CITIZENS** No citizens provided comment.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Updike asked whether curbing and fixing potholes can be a priority in the budget for FY 2025-2026. Discussion ensued about patching potholes.

Commissioner Updike asked about the building at the bottom of the hill being in disrepair. The Village Clerk noted that this structure is situated partly on the golf course property and partly on Village property. The City Manager explained that when the administration building was being planned the golf course owners were approached about purchasing the property where the structure sits to clear up the title; however, no negotiations were made at that time.

The Village Clerk also commented that the power poles on the Lake Amoret side of North Highland Park Drive do not provide power. She noted that it has been discussed in the past to put these electrical lines underground. The Village would need to inquire with Duke Energy about costs.

Commissioner Updike asked about some criminal activity within Village limits. Mr. Busbee responded that he spoke with the Sheriff’s office about the occurrence, and it was noted that this was a wellness check.

Commissioner Updike then asked whether it was possible to have renters complete background checks because she had to complete one when she was a renter and she also had her tenants fill out a background check when she was a landlord. Attorney Hand responded that ultimately individuals must agree to complete a background check. As a local municipality, the Village is limited by what it can do. There are legal limitations for a public entity. Homeowners’ associations (HOAs) are private, legally incorporated organizations.

The next meeting of the Village Commission will be a special meeting on August 27, 2025, at 6:00 pm, at such time Resolution 2025-02 Final Rate Resolution for Non-Ad Valorem Fire Assessment will be considered. A budget discussion will also take place at that meeting.

The Commission agreed to the date for a special meeting and public hearing to consider the tentative budget and proposed millage for FY 2025-2026. The meeting date is set for Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 6:00 pm. The Commission also acknowledged approving the certification of TRIM forms to prepare for the September budget hearings.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Blair Updike

Village Clerk

**Approved:**

*Minutes of Village Commission meetings may be obtained from the Village Clerk’s Office. The minutes are recorded, but not transcribed verbatim. Persons requiring a verbatim transcript may make arrangements with the Clerk to duplicate the recording. The cost of duplication will be the expense of the requesting party. In accordance with Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact the Village Clerk’s Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the meeting at 863-455-6518, or via email at* *clerk@highlandpark-fl.org.*