

**Highland Fire District
Regular Meeting
August 11, 2026
7:00PM – St #1 – 25 Milton Avenue, Highland**

Commissioners:	Kevin Rizzo	(PRESENT)
	James Anzalone, Jr	(PRESENT)
	Alan Barone	(PRESENT)
	Charly Long	(PRESENT)
	Gina Hansut	(PRESENT)
District Secretary:	Leslie B. Benson	(PRESENT)
District Treasurer:	Fred DeMaio	(PRESENT)
Chief:	Jeffrey DiMetro	(PRESENT)

Chairman Rizzo called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 PM, led the salute to the flag, and asked for a moment of silence. Chairman Rizzo welcomed everyone to the regular meeting.

1. Executive Session

Motion for executive session moved by Commissioner Anzalone at 7:01PM for the board and Chief for the purpose of discussing the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation, seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain) 0 Absent
Motion was carried.

2. Motion to reconvene to business at 7:09PM by Commissioner Hansut, seconded by Commissioner Anzalone

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain) 0 Absent
Motion was carried.

3. Presentation of 2027 Proposed Budget – Treasurer Fred DeMaio

Treasurer DeMaio presented the proposed budget with the 2026 levy at \$1,314,107.00

He presented a few scenarios, we could leave the budget the same as 2026, stay under the 2% tax cap with discussion.

The total revenue for first pass is \$1,477,875.63. The tax rate could go from \$1.21 to \$1.24 per 1000 and had discussion line by line

SCBA has parked \$75,000.00 for this as we want to fully fund the bottles as they are due in 2030.

Discussion on fiber optics and mailbox as purchases and we want to reserve \$100,000.00 for soft costs.

Setting up a line item for St 2 soft costs for \$100,000.00

Conversation was raise to 2% levy or keep tax under 2%+

We will have more discussion next month. We need to adopt by September 30th – the next regular meeting is September 8th and will be rescheduled to September 10th. Concluded at 8:10PM

4. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval of the regular meeting minutes on **July 14, 2026**.

Motion: Commissioner Hansut moved to approve minutes from July 14, 2026, seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent

Motion was carried.

5. **Authorization to Pay Bills**

Chairman Rizzo presented the abstract for - 7/17/2026—8/11/2026

Prepays	\$ 4012.76
Late arrivals	\$ 48.00
Abstract	<u>\$144,287.36</u>
Total	\$148,348.12

Chairman Rizzo asked for approval to pay the bills as reviewed by Commissioner Barone, Commissioner Rizzo and Chief DiMetro on Monday, August 10, 2026, totaling \$148,348.12 from 7/17/2026—8/11/2026.

Motion: Commissioner Barone moved to approve payment of the abstract of bills totaling \$148,348.12 seconded by Commissioner Long

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent

Motion was carried.

6. **Correspondence:**

- Red Cross Blood Drive is Friday, August 14, 2026, from 12 noon – 5PM
- Letter from Kornfeld, Rew, Newman & Simeone – rates for 2027
- A fuel card was requested and received for 31-68
- Letter received from Chief DiMetro on 4 new members with 1 age restriction

Room Requests: (All dates are reserved on the calendar until approved by the BoFC)

The community room is not for individual use. Requests may only be made by Active, Life, Auxiliary members, Commissioners and Employees for their own use and by Not for Profit, non-political, community organizations of the Highland Fire District as approved through the Board.

The board agreed to keep the rules as is and no further motion is needed.

- #### 7. **New Members:** Tonight we welcomed returning member, John Halstead as he submitted a member status change to return to active member. Commissioner Rizzo said after tonight, you will schedule a physical and once completed – orientation will be scheduled.

Motion: Commissioner Barone moved to approve John Halstead to return to service as a probationary member dependent on passing his physical, seconded by Commissioner Anzalone.

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent

Motion was carried. Welcome back!

8. Committee Reports:**Building & Grounds, St #1** – Commissioners Barone and Long

V-Fire Grant Project Update: We have not been awarded the grant yet but there's an uploaded application in the portal but not approved yet. Commissioner Rizzo is very hopeful.

Leaks – In July we had some leaks, we will keep monitoring as there were 3 different leaks and no drip since then and could be a combination of wind/rain. The leak near the uniform closet seems to be resolved.

St #1 Monument/Landscaping – The committee needs to get some ideas and present.

Ceiling fan behind 31-60 needs to be checked.

IT Report: We received 2 quotes – MCS and IT Connection and need to approve contract for IT service. We will discuss it in new business.

Building & Grounds, St #2 - Commissioner Rizzo and Anzalone
Commissioner Anzalone has concerns on septic area and is there a way we can work around this. Could we remove it ourself? Commissioner Rizzo will speak with architect, Peter Cirillo. He will do borings etc.

Plan 2 for Station 2 – Pete was asked to hold off on the drawings as there were some concerns with the gear room. The board agrees to go back to plan 1.

9. Recruiting & Retention: Commissioners Rizzo and Anzalone
(Committee: Chief DiMetro, John Gallagher and David DeMaio)

Four new members completed orientation on August 8th and are in-service, we have two additional members returning that must complete orientation in the near future.

10. Insurance/Worker's Compensation: Commissioners Barone and Hansut**11. Service Awards:** Next update will be November 10, 2026**12. Ulster County Association of Fire Districts:** Next meeting is 9/17/26 at Port Ewen FD.**13. Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer DeMaio emailed the financial report for July 2026.

\$228,328.85 balance of 2026 budget left to spend, not counting 2025/24/23/22 surplus.
No issues perceived or expected but dependent on the station #2 project expenses.

INVESTMENTS:

CD 2026 apparatus reserve allocation 384,464.70 matures 9/8/26

CD 2026 building reserve allocation 24,100.00 matures 9/8/26

Apparatus Reserve CD: \$1,384,319.16, 3.15%, matures 9/8/26

Building Reserve CD: \$199,380.08, 3.15%, matures 9/8/26

XXXX5638 SCBA Reserve CD \$25,000.00, matures 9/8/26

XXXX4329 Excess Funds CD \$400,000.00 matures 8/16/26

XXXX1981 Excess Funds CD \$300,000.00 matured 8/11/26

Treasurer DeMaio will add \$75,000.00 to SCBA

TREASURY DIRECT: Is a good option, not used yet

Audit 2025 – Is complete. Copy emailed.

Treasurer DeMaio discussed RBT's schedule of findings. RBT was bought out. Next audit RBT will come here.

14. Chief's Report:

Report emailed to all commissioners and if there are any questions, please let him know.

Rotary presentation was on 8/5/26 and we had burgers. We demonstrated the equipment that we have purchased from their previous donations. This year, we are looking to purchase equipment to outfit new standpipe bags with their donation.

Volleyball Game – The Hose Co versus the Police department on 7/19/26. We had 1 member sustain an injury.

Two in/Two out mutual aid coverage to Plattekill, Modena and Wallkill should be up. Coldenham is expected to resume their normal responses soon.

31-12 – On board compressor replaced

31-35 – Erichsen's will replace the real oil seal

15. Old Business:

HFD Website: No updates

Fiber Optics: Elevated Computing ran cable on 8/4/26... We will need IT to complete the process. With the new fiber optics, we will need to update our router. We have pricing.

31-45 Auto Stow – This was discussed with Kenny Finke, Chief DiMetro and Assistant Chief Schaeffer. Kenny agreed to any issue with auto stow they will take care of. He did ask that we keep a log every time we fly the ladder. Record the level, slope and where flying it. Assistant Chief Schaeffer will create a log

IT Update – MCS contract revised. They provide a service for us.

IT Connections are very familiar with fire departments. It is a small operation, and his contract is year to year, and they don't bill the same. We could get the same service. We may consider someone local for things, printer issues but they're not going to solve our problem. We can stay for 1 year and see how it goes. We will ask MCS to consider a 1-year contract as there is also a price increase.

Policies that are being worked on: travel, credit card, accident and photo policy. We will go with the IRS recommendations on mileage and meals. Personal Use versus District use odometer readings must be recorded.

The travel and expense reimbursement policy was discussed as accident reporting and notification requirements were added. Commissioner Barone recommended having the policy reviewed by legal counsel before we accept.

Router – will wait on this

ID/Badge maker – Assistant Chief Schaeffer has it up and running.

Capital Project: Title Search

16. New Business:

Acceptance of Treasurer's Report for July 2026

Commissioner Anzalone moved to accept the treasurer's report for July 31, 2026 as read, seconded by Commissioner Hansut

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent

Motion was carried.

Major road closures – we need a written notice

FB Property & Facility Maintenance – Frank is working on the back and parking lot

17. Liaison to Town - Supervisor Weiss not in attendance

18. Public Comment:

Any topic may be addressed except for personnel or specific Board Member issues.

The Highland Fire District Board encourages public participation at its meetings. To allow for efficiency in conducting meetings and to give each speaker a fair opportunity to present their views, the following shall apply to the public speaking portion of the agenda.

- Each Speaker shall state their name;
- Each Speaker shall be limited to a time (approximately 3 minutes) which is agreed upon by the Board;
- The Board will not permit discussion involving individual personnel.
- Direct all remarks to the chair. Community members may not poll individual

Board Members nor debate with other community members in attendance.

Once again, members of the community are encouraged to attend and speak during public comments. Undue interruption or other interference with the orderly conduct of the Board of Business will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. While individuals have the right to email the District Secretary with questions or concerns at any time, the Board will not read emails aloud during the public participation portion of the meeting.

Comments: No comments

- 19. Executive Session:** *(The Board requests for anyone requesting an executive session submit their request to Secretary, Leslie Benson, by the first Wednesday of the month to be added to the agenda.)*

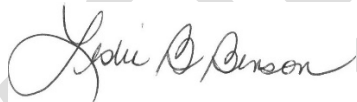
20. Adjournment:

There being no further business, Commissioner Anzalone moved to adjourn at 9:35 PM, seconded by Commissioner Hansut.

Vote: 5 Yes 0 No 0 Abstain 0 Absent

Motion was carried.

Respectfully submitted



Leslie B. Benson
District Secretary

APPROVED BOFC 9-15-26